JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2022, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 16 PAGES

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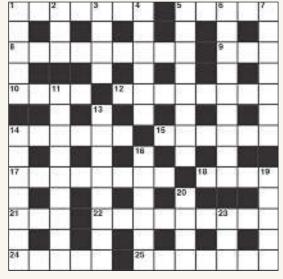
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CROSSWORD 4934



ACROSS

1 Got out of a grave situation (7)5 Specialists expressed in plain language (5) 8 Dead body found in the garden (4,5) 9 An attack may be appropriate

10 Spare list (4) 12 Humiliating return from a summit meeting?(8) 14 A new affair that's binding

15 They have jobs in the theatre or in religious work (6) 17 Just the same it means you had the right money (2,6) 18 Flower girl (4) 21 Robin has a sash for his

middle(3) 22 Keen rep in trouble is one who may take orders

24 Canny sort of girl?

25 Iron kind of cup (7)

DOWN

1 Ninety in general to rise and shine (5) 2 He gains nothing in an aura of glory(3) 3 First movement if loud is seen to irritate (4) 4 Monster in women's

clothing?(6) 5 Bearing gifts we hear vaguely 6 A shade less than well (3-6) 7 Nurse in bizarre sex case holds

out(7)11 Tender feeling from a foe in fact is odd (9) 13 There's a lot of laughter when a girl swallows it (8) 14 In poor health - result of a car accident? (3,4) 16 A note sent out by representatives (6) 19 Belt is broken in parts (5) 20 Each one a fairy (4) 23 The standard is taken from

Solutions Crossword 4933: Across: 1 Strapped, 5 Chop, 9 Whale, 10 Reissue, 11 Philatelists, 13 Pass up, 14 Editor, 17 Shake the head, 20 Laertes, 21 Gaffe, 22 Step, 23 Zeppelin. Down: 1 Sows, 2 Reaches, 3 Poet laureate, 4 Errata, 6 Hosts, 7 Pleasure, 8 Filled the gap, 12 Epistles, 15 Tearful, 16 Chaste, 18 Anele, 19 Mean.

Paris (3)

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson

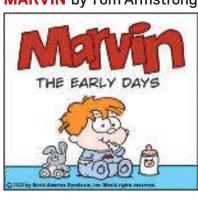








MARVIN by Tom Armstrong





JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

If there were no bad people, there would be no__ ___. - Charles Dickens (4,.,7)

AWAER								
PWC	OOS							

ORUDLY AEHIGW

Answer: If there were no bad people, there would be no **good lawyers.** - Charles Dickens SOLUTION: AWARE, SWOOP, DOURLY, AWEIGH

Difficulty Level 5s Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s =

	9	7	4	1		7.		2
9	2	1.		6		4		
		4		9			8	7
6		9		5	6	8	3	
8					7			5

3	8	7	1	2	6	4	9	5
9	1	6	5	7	4	8	3	2
5	4	2	8	3	9	1	7	6
2	7	1	4	9	3	5	6	8
4	9	8	7	6	5	2	1	3
6	5	3	2	8	1	9	4	7
1	3	5	6	4	8	7	2	9
8	2	9	3	1	7	6	5	4
7	6	4	9	5	2	3	8	1

DAY TODAY

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You're known as a good social performer, which is precisely why today's planetary patterns suit you down to the ground. Lively people hold the key to your relationships, and you should take any and every opportunity to broaden your social circle. Listen to people you might once have thought were beneath you.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) Professional concerns must be

of paramount importance for all of you who are currently pursuing a vital working objective. Whatever your ambitions, you should see yourself as moving forward as part of a large family rather than as a solitary individual. You're not alone.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) Long-distance and travel interests

require attention although, from today's picture, it doesn't seem that anything is going wrong. Perhaps it will do you good to check, though. Also, give a little more space to any mystical or religious beliefs and aspirations.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) Wrap up all agreements and

arrangements over the coming days, although there's no real sense of urgency, even as far as money is concerned. Indeed, if someone has been pressing you to make a financial decision, you might be well advised to put the brakes on. Pause for thought.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Partnerships hold the key to your happiness today, although it does seem very likely that you are feeling resentful or even bitter. You must choose whether to face up to people who have given you a hard time, or mix only with amiable and easygoing types

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) This certainly

good moment to deal with long-standing complaints

seems to be a time to keep busy but, quite aside from the inevitable work, you should put a little thought into your physical well-being. The Moon's recent relationship with Pluto suggests that this is a

BY PETER VIDAL

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) The overall planetary

picture is still pressured, but it just so happens that what may be difficult for other people seems to be relatively easy for you. Perhaps you will gain from someone else's bad luck. If so, please see to it that they share in your good fortune.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23) Having put long-



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22) Tie up any loose ends in the financial area

need to occupy the moral

high ground

over the next few days - today if possible. You must realise that if you ignore any outstanding business, you could be in danger of tipping a vast amount of money down one of those mysterious black holes that appear from time to time.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) It's a pleasant day

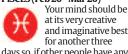
for distractions like shopping, or even just plain old-fashioned windowshopping. However, on the personal note, it is quite important to make sure that everyone is absolutely clear about your thoughts, opinions and intentions.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19) The tide of fortune



concern is that you could be a little overemotional, but then this might be no bad thing if you have been refusing to face up to certain awkward feelings. You will get nowhere by denying your desires. Instead, you need to understand them.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)



days so, if other people have any sense, it is you to whom they should turn if they want to ask the pertinent questions and receive original answers. A romantic affair, though, could

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I.Naresh Gupta, S/o-Bali Ram,R/o B-5/327, Sector-8.Rohini.New Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Naresh Kumar Gupta, for all future purposes. 0040646836-1

I.Akash Mittal S/o Bhawani Shankar Mittal R/o-B1/109.Shantidoot Apartments, Vasundhara Enclave Delhi-110096,Have $Changed\,My\,Name\,To\,Aakash$

I, Shalendra Kumar, S/o

Janardan Sharma, R/o 37-A/38-B. Deep Shree Enclave. Dayal Bagh, Agra, Uttar Pradesh-282005, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Shailendra Kumar. 0070819183-1

I. Saleem S/o Ikram R/o D514B

Sec-11, Pratap Vihar, Ghaziabad, UP-201001, have changed my name to Saleem Ahmad. 0070819221-1

I, Rajinder Kaur, W/o Paramjit

Khunan, Fatehabad, Haryana-

Singh R/o Khundan(114).

125051, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rajvant Kaur.

0070819188-1 I, Hema, W/o Mukesh Banga, R/o B-244, Third Floor, Jhilmil Colony, Shahdra, East Delhi, Delhi-110095, have changed my name and shall hereafter

be known as Hemlata.

0070819179-1

R/o Nirmani, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh-251001, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ankit Khemu.

I, Ankit Kumar, S/o Jeevan Ram,

I, Alok Aggarwal, S/o Jai Bhagwan Aggarwal, R/o BQ-47. Shalimar Bagh, North West Delhi-110088, I have changed the name of my minor Daughter Chanel Aggarwal. aged about 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as Shanaya Aggarwal.

0070819185-1

LVINOD KUMAR.S/O GIRISH CHANDER BAHUGUNA, ADD-FLAT NO- 202, D - 105 MAHAVIR VIHAR SECTOR - 1.DWARKA DELHI 110075, changed my name to VINOD KUMAR BAHUGUNA, for all future

0040646384-1

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U.P. State Industrial Development Authority UPSIDC Complex, A-1/4, Lakhanpur, Kanpur-208024

Notice for Public Objection / Suggestion on Part Layout Plan of Industrial Area Growth Centre Shahjahanpur Distt. bareilly by which Industrial Plot No. G-2, G-3, H-41, H-42, H-43 & H-44 has been amalgamated and created a new Plot No. G-3/4, H-41-42/43-44 (Measuring-13600.00 Sq.m.).

1 (a) The Part Layout Plan of Industrial Area Growth Centre

Shahjahanpur Plot No. G-3/4, H-41/44 of Uttar Pradesh State

Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) situated in Industrial Area Growth Centre Shahjahanpur District Bareilly has been (b) A copy thereof will be available for inspection at the Regional Manager of the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority, 1116 Janakpuri Ramjanki Mandir ke Samne Sivaji Park ke

Pass, Bareilly between 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on all working days till the date mentioned in Para 3 hereafter as well as Website: www.onlineupsidc.com 2. Objections and Suggestions are hereby invited with respect of the

Draft Layout/Amalgamation Plan.

3. Objections and suggestions are shall be sent in writing to the office of Regional Manager UPSIDA at 1116, Janakpuri, Ramjanki Mandir Ke Samne Sivaji Park ke Pass, Bareilly within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice mentioning subject as "Regarding Public Objection / Suggestion on Draft Layout / Amalgamation Plan for Industrial Area Growth Centre Shahjahanpur Distt. Bareilly. Any person making the Objections or Suggestions should also give his / her full name & address, Email id and contact number.

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(Regional Manager)

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No. T/TB-I/62/2022/13

PRESS NOTICE

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Bldg.), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids for the following work from eligible contractors having requisite experience in similar nature of work. Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement website www.assamtenders.gov.in

Sl No.	Name of Work	Approx. bid Value (Rs. in lakh)	Time of Completion	Bid Security	Tender Cost (Rs.)
1.	Modernization of Assam State Zoo (Construction of Amazonian walk-through aviary at Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden under SOPD Scheme)		12 (Twelve Months)	(2% on bid value for General & 1% for Reserve Category)	5,700.00

Note :-

1. Value of work may vary during uploading of DNIT for which no claim will be entertained. 2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

JANASANYOG/C/16920/22

Sd/-Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Bldg.), Assam Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

l Jai Kumar S/o Late Karan Singh R/o H No.717 Near Railway Station, VPO, Ghevra Delhi 110081, inform that in my LIC Policy No.123124185 my name & Date of Birth was written as Jai Kanwar instead of Jai Kumar and 02/07/1980 in stead of 12/12/1987 and my father name as Karam Singh instead of Karan Singh. Jai Kumar & Jai Kanwar is same person. Karam Singh & Karan Singh are same person

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5059

8

PUBLIC NOTICE "This is to inform the public at large or behalf of Our clients "SURJEET TAKKAR AND RANJANA TAKKAR" both residents of GB-15, Upper forund Floor, Shivaji Enclave, Tagore Garden, Delhi-110027, that our Clients are joint owners of the below mentioned properties: (hereinafter referred to as the the "Said Properties")

DELHI-110027 2. R 438, J J COLONY, RAGHUBIR NAGAR, WEST DELHI 3. 7TH & 10TH FIOOT HB TWIN TOWER, PEARLS BUSINESS PARK, MAX HOSPITAL BUILDI NETAJI SUBASH PLACE, PITAMPURA, DELHI-110034

4. B-125, JANTA COLONY, RAGHUBIR NAGAR, TAGORE GARDEN, S.O., WEST DELHI, DELHI-110027 DANUEN, S.U., WEST DELHI,
DELHI-110027,
SAG-HUBIR NAGAR, TAGORE
GARDEN, S.O., WEST DELHI,
DELHI-110027,
MEST DELHI,
DELHI-110027,
MEST DELHI,
DELHI-110028,
S.O., WEST DELHI,
CLOTH MILLS DELHI-110006
7, 856/9, G.F. NAHAR ADDELHI
CLOTH MILLS DELHI-110006
8, HOUSE NO. 84, GROUND
FLOOR, POCKET-12, ROHINI, NEAR
NDPL OFFICE, SECTOR
20, DELHI-110008
9, 8-56,7, VIKAS SURYA PLAZA,
SECTOR-7, ROHINI, DELHI-11008

9. B-5,6,7, VIKAS SURYA PLAZA, SECTOR-7, ROHINI, DELHI-110085 10. B-119, GROUND FLOOR, JANT, COLONY, RAGHUBIR NAGAR, TAGORE GARDEN, S.O, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110027 In case any person(s) other than the Our Clients above mentioned claims to be constituted of intibility. Our Clients above mentioned claims to have any kind of right, litle or interest over the said properties or has entered/or may enter into any agreement of any nature whatsoever with any person(s) claiming any interest or title over the said properties, shall considered to be entering into a deal/sale bargain which shall totally be void and illegal unless the same is acted upon without the due written consent of our clients for which they should contact our clients or their counsel at the

clients for which they should contact Our clients or their counsel at the under mentioned contact details. As by way of this public notice it is made clear that any person(s)/body corporate dealing with regard to the aforesaid properties with any person(s) shall be doing so at its/the n cost(s), risk(s) and conseque d our clients shall not sponsible/liable for any loss mage as may be caused in any nner whatsoever." Mr. Surjeet Takkar C.No.: +91 9899616671

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THE TATA POWER COMPANY LIMITED Registered Office: Bombay House, 24, Homi Mody Street, Mumbai 400 001, Tel: 91 22 6665 8282 Fax: 91 22 6665 8801 CIN: L28920MH1919PLC000567 Email: tatapower@tatapower.com , Website: www.tatapower.com

The Tata Power Company Limited-Distribution Business in Mumbai (Tata Power-D) is inviting bids for Procurement of Short-Term Firm Power for April-23 to June-23 through competitive bidding process.

For more details of tender, please visit https://www.mstcecommerce.com (DEE)



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क्रमांक-कौविसं/स्टेट सेल/2022/1716

रिक्वेस्ट फॉर प्रपोजल-आईटीआई में ऑनलाईन परीक्षा हेत

ाध्यप्रदेश राज्य कौशल विकास एवं रोजगार निर्माण बोर्ड भोपाल द्वारा मध्यप्रदेश में स्थित विभिन्न आईटीआई में प्रशिक्षणरत प्रशिक्षणारि की ऑनलाईन परीक्षा आयोजित कराने के लिये एजेंसी का चयन किया जाना है। जिसके लिये आरएफपी दिनांक 28.04.2022 04.06.2022, 13.07.2022 से 27.07.2022 तथा पुनः 06.10.2022 से 19.10.2022 जारी की गई थी, जिसमें प्राप्त निविदायें अपा पाई गई । पुनः आयेदन हेतु दिनांक 27.12.2022 से 09.01.2023 तक ऑनलाईन निविदारों आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। पूर्व में आवीर्ट एजेंसी भी पुनः आयेदन कर सकती है। निविदा प्रपत्र तथा संबंधित शर्ते एवं संपूर्ण विदरण www.mptenders.gov.in ए www.dsd.mp.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।

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New Delhi

(मध्यप्रदेश राज्य कौशल विकास एवं रोजगार निर्माण बोर्ड)

कौशल विकास संचालना

*TheIndian EXPRESS

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Narendra Modi Prime Minister Science & Technology Led Growth

Shivraj Singh Chouhan Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh

LAUNCH OF MADHYA PRADESH SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION POLICY 2022

by

Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Chief Minister Madhya Pradesh

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In presence of

Dr. Vijay Kumar Saraswat Member, NITI Aayog, Gol

> Prof. Rajat Moona Director, IIT, Gandhinagar

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Om Prakash Sakhlecha Minister, MSME and S&T, GoMP

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Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi Vice Chairman, MPSPPC & AIGGPA

Dr. Sudheer Kumar N Director (CBPO), ISRO, Bengaluru Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood Principal Scientific Adviser to Gol

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26 December, 2022 I 7:30 P.M.

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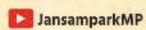




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New Delhi

Department of Science & Technology, Government of Madhya Pradesh

Beigned by M.P. Madbyans 2022

Pope Francis addressed some 70,000 people in his Christmas message Sunday making an impassioned plea for an end the Russia-Ukraine conflict, decrying it as "senseless". Francis also prayed for conflicts in the Middle East, Yemen, Iran-Myanmar, and Africa.



Abdulla Yameen. Reuters

MALDIVES Former Maldives President gets 11 years in jail

Male: The criminal court of Maldives on Sunday found the country's former president Abdulla Yameen guilty on corruption and money laundering charges related to receiving kickbacks from a private company. The court said it expects to announce the sentence soon. Yameen has denied any wrongdoing. Yameen, who lost power in 2018, was sentenced to five years in jail and fined \$5 million in 2019 for embezzling \$1 million in state funds. which the prosecution said was acquired through the lease of resort development rights. After sentencing, Yameen was shifted to house arrest in 2020 but was freed months later.He is the declared presidential candidate for the 2023 elections.

UNITED NATION

UN fears 180 Rohingya dead in stranded ship

UN: The United Nations said it feared that some 180 Rohingya refugees stranded for weeks in the Andaman Sea may have died, while hope emerged that some of those adrift on a second crowded boat had been rescued in Indonesia. In a statement on Saturday, the U.N. refugee agency said it had received unconfirmed reports that the vessel had left Bangladesh several weeks ago, had started cracking early December before its likely sinking. If the boat's loss is 2022 one of the deadliest in recent years for Rohingya refugees.

Taliban kill

six soldiers in Balochistan Karachi: Tehreek-e-

Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has claimed the lives of six security personnel and injured a few others in the last two days by carrying out several attacks in the Balochistan restive province, Pakistan Army's media wing said on Sunday. According to a statement released by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), a terrorist and a soldier were killed during an exchange of fire between militants and the security forces in an intelligence

TOPOFTHE Putin says Russia ready for negotiations over Ukraine

GUY FAULCONBRIDGE MOSCOW, DECEMBER 25

RUSSIA IS ready to negotiate with all parties involved in the war in Ukraine but Kyiv and its Western backers have refused to engage in talks, President Vladimir Putin said in an interview aired on Sunday.

Russia's February 24 invasion of Ukraine has triggered the most deadly conflict in Europe since World War Two and the biggest confrontation between Moscow and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

There is, thus far, little end in sight to the war.

The Kremlin says it will fight until all its aims are achieved while Kyiv says it will not rest until every Russian soldier is ejected from all of its territory, including Crimea which Russia annexed in 2014.

"We are ready to negotiate with everyone involved about acceptable solutions, but that is up to them - we are not the ones refusing to negotiate, they are," Putin told Rossiya 1 state television in the interview.

CIA Director William Burns said in an interview published this month that while most conflicts end in negotiation, the CIA's assessment was that Russia was not yet serious about a real ne-

gotiation to end the war. An adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Putin needed to return



Putin blamed Kyiv for not negotiating. File

to reality and acknowledge that it was Russia which did not want any negotiations

"Russia single-handedly attacked Ukraine and is killing citizens," Mykhailo Podolyak said on Twitter. "Russia doesn't want negotiations, but tries to avoid responsibility."

Putin said Russia was acting in the "right direction" in Ukraine because the West, led by the United States, was trying to cleave Russia apart. Washington denies it is plotting Russia's collapse.

"I believe that we are acting in the right direction, we are defending our national interests, the interests of our citizens, our people. And we have no other choice but to protect our citizens," Putin said.

Putin said the West had begun the conflict in Ukraine in 2014 by toppling a pro-Russian president in the Maidan Revolution protests.

Ukraine and the West say Putin has no justification for what they cast as an imperial-style war of oc-

All clear for Ukraine after air-raid alarm

Kyiv: Air raid sirens wailed in Kyiv and across all Ukrainian regions on Sunday morning but no new Russian attacks were reported, officials said. The all-clear was later given. Yuriy Ihnat, a spokesperson Ukraine's air forces, told national television earlier on Sunday that Russian military jets were flying virtually around the clock. "But we have increased readiness - everything that takes off must be under our control," Ihnat said. **REUTERS**

cupation which has sown suffering and death across Ukraine.

"As for the main part - the 99.9% of our citizens, our people who are ready to give everything for the interests of the Motherland - there is nothing unusual for me here," Putin said.

"This just once again convinces me that Russia is a unique country and that we have an exceptional people. This has been confirmed throughout the history of Russia's existence.'

China's foreign ministry signals deep Russian ties

Beijing: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi defended what he said was his country's position of impartiality on the war in Ukraine on Sunday and signaled that China would deepen ties with Russia in the coming year.

Wang, speaking by video to a conference in the Chinese capital, also blamed America for the deterioration in relations between the world's two largest economies, saying that China has "firmly rejected the United States' erroneous China policy."

China has pushed back against Western pressure on trade, technology, human rights and its claims to a broad swath of the western Pacific, accusing the U.S. of bullying. Its refusal to condemn the invasion of Ukraine and join others in imposing sanctions on Russia has further frayed ties and fueled an emerging divide with much of Europe.

Wang said that China would "deepen strategic mutual trust and mutually beneficial cooperation" with Russia. Warships from the two countries held ioint naval drills in the East China Sea last week.

China has found common ground with Russia as both come under Western pressure

Zhejiang reports over one million daily cases

CHINA'S COVID CASES EXPECTED TO DOUBLE

Beijing narrows its definition for reporting Covid deaths

BERNARD ORR & ROXANNE LIU

BEIJING, DECEMBER 25

CHINA'S ZHEJIANG, a big industrial province near Shanghai, is battling around a million new daily Covid infections, a number expected to double in the days ahead, the provincial government said on Sunday.

Despite a record surge of cases nationwide, China reported no Covid deaths on the mainland for the five days through Saturday, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention said on Sunday.

Citizens and experts have called for more accurate data as infections surged after Beijing made sweeping changes to a zero-Covid policy that had put hundreds of millions of its citizens under relentless lockdowns and battered the world's secondlargest economy

Nationwide figures from China had become incomplete as the National Health Commission stopped reporting asymptomatic infections, making it harder to track cases. On Sunday the commission stopped reporting daily figures, which the China CDC then published.

"The infection peak is estimated to arrive earlier in



People in PPE kits outside a funeral home in Shanghai. Reuters

Zhejiang and to enter a period of elevated level around New Year's Day, during which the daily new infection number will be up to two million," the Zhejiang government said in a statement.

Zhejiang, with a population of 65.4 million, said that among the 13,583 infections being treated in the province's hospitals, one patient had severe symptoms caused by Covid, while 242 infections of severe and critical conditions were caused by underlying diseases..

China narrowed its definition for reporting Covid deaths, counting only those from Covidcaused pneumonia or respiratory failure, raising eyebrows among world health experts. The WHO has received no data

from China on new Covid hospi-

talisations since Beijing eased its restrictions. The organisation says the data gap might be due to the authorities struggling to tally cases in country with highest population in the world.

The cities of Qingdao and

Dongguan have each estimated

tens of thousands of daily Covid infections recently, much higher than the national daily toll without asymptomatic cases. Visits to Zhejiang fever clinics

hit 408,400 a day - 14 times normal levels - in the past week, a Zhejiang official said. Daily requests to the emer-

gency centre in Zhejiang's capital, Hangzhou, have recently tripled on average from last year, state television reported on Sunday, citing a Hangzhou health official.

Seven more protesters held in Iran

2 dual-nationals among them

REUTERS DUBAI, DECEMBER 25

media.

REVOLUTIONARY Guards arrested seven people on Sunday, including dual nationals linked to the United Kingdom, over anti-government protests that have rocked the country, according to a

statement published l

"Seven main leaders of the recent protests related to the UK were detained by intelligence services of the IRGC (Revolutionary Guards) including dual nationals who were trying to leave the country," the statement read.

The unrest was triggered by the Sept. 16 death in detention of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian who was arrested for wearing "inappropriate attire" under Iran's strict Islamic dress code for women.

The protests, in which demonstrators from all walks of life have called for the fall of Iran's ruling theocracy, has posed one of the biggest challenges to the Shi'ite Muslimruled Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution.

The government has blamed the unrest on demonstrators bent on destruction of public property and says they are trained and armed by enemies including the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia.



US: 24 die in massive storm amid cancelled flights, power outages

CAROLYN THOMPSON & JAKE BLEIBERG

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 25

MILLIONS OF people hunkered down against a deep freeze Sunday morning to ride out the frigid storm that has killed at least 24 people across the United States and is expected to claim more lives after trapping some residents inside houses with heaping snow drifts and knocking out power to several hundred thousand homes and businesses.

The scope of the storm has been nearly unprecedented, stretching from the Great Lakes near Canada to the Rio Grande along the border with Mexico. About 60% of the U.S. population faced some sort of winter

weather advisory or warning, and temperatures plummeted drastically below normal from east of the Rocky Mountains to the Appalachians, the National Weather Service said.

Some 1,346 domestic and international flights were cancelled as of early Sunday, according to the tracking site FlightAware.

Forecasters said a bomb cyclone - when atmospheric pressure drops very quickly in a strong storm — had developed near the Great Lakes, stirring up blizzard conditions, including heavy winds and snow.

The storm unleashed its full fury on Buffalo, with hurricaneforce winds and snow causing whiteout conditions, paralyzing emergency response efforts – New York Gov. Kathy Hochul city was stranded Saturday and shutting down the airport through Tuesday morning, according to officials. The National Weather Service said the snow total at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport stood at 43 inches (109 centimeters) at 7 a.m. Sunday.

Daylight Sunday revealed cars nearly covered by 6-foot snowdrifts and thousands of houses, some adorned in unlit holiday displays, dark from a lack of power.

With snow swirling down untouched and impassable streets, forecasters warned that an additional 1 to 2 feet of snow was possible in some areas through early Monday morning amid wind gusts of 40 mph. AP

US flags attack in Pak amid safety concerns

ASSOCIATED PRESS ISLAMABAD, DECEMBER 25

THE US Embassy in Islamabad on Sunday warned its staff of a possible attack on Americans at a top hotel in Pakistan's capital as the city was already on high alert following a suicide bombing earlier in the week. The US government is aware of information that "unknown individuals are possibly plotting to attack Americans at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad sometime during the holidays", the embassy said

The advisory banned its American personnel from visiting the hotel over the holidays.

The US mission also urged all personnel to refrain from nonessential travel in Islamabad during the holiday season.

The embassy directive came two days after a suicide bombing in the capital killed a cop and wounded ten others.

refuse entry to Sikhs with beards, turbans

US court: Marines can't

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 25

A US COURT has ruled that Marine Corps cannot deny entry to Sikhs sporting a beard and wearing a turban, in a major victory for three recruits from the community who can now join the elite unit's basic training without having to forfeit their religious beliefs. The trio of recruits - Aekash

Singh, Jaskirat Singh, and Iilaan Singh Chahal - had sought an exemption from a Marines grooming rule requiring them to shave their beards, with the men arguing it was their expression of commitment to their religious faith.

The Marine Corps told three Sikh men they could serve only if they shaved before going through basic training. They appealed to the US Court of Appeals

Another

THE US Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard all accommodate the religious requirements of Sikhism, The Marines, however, ban it in

> basic training and combat zones. This ruling strikes down the violation of the Religious Freedom

for the DC Circuit after a lowercourt denied their request for a injunction that would have allowed them to enter training with their articles of faith.

"No one should have to choose between serving God and country," Eric Baxter, representing lawyer, tweeted.

3 aid groups stop work in Afghanistan after Taliban ban women from NGOs

RIAZAT BUTT

KABUL, DECEMBER 25

THREE MAIOR international aid groups on Sunday suspended their operations in Afghanistan following a decision by the country's Taliban rulers to ban women from working at nongovernmental organizations.

Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council and

CARE said they cannot effectively reach children, women and men in desperate need in Afghanistan without the women in their workforces

The NGO ban was introduced a day earlier, allegedly because women weren't wearing the Islamic headscarf correctly.

The three NGOs are providing healthcare, education, child protection and nutrition services and support amid plummeting humanitarian conditions

"We have complied with all cultural norms and we simply can't work without our dedicated female staff, who are essential for us to access women who are in desperate need of assistance," Neil Turner, the Norwegian Refugee Council's chief for Afghanistan, told The Associated Press on Sunday.

He said the group has 468 female staff in the country.

IN IQRIT, EVERYTHING BUT THE CHURCH WAS DESTROYED BY THE ISRAELI FORCES

A Christmas tree binds Palestinians to a village they were expelled from

RAJA ABDULRAHIM IORIT. DECEMBER 25

AMID THE limestone ruins of homes in a village razed by Israeli forces long ago, a Christmas tree adorned with red and gold baubles went up on a recent evening, watched by a crowd of former residents and their descendants.

Shahnaz Doukhy, 44, her husband and two sons were among about 60 people who attended the tree lighting in the shadow of a roughly 200-yearold church, the only structure left standing after soldiers destroyed the Palestinian Christian village

during Christmas 1951.

"It's good for our kids to come and know that this is the land of their ancestors," Doukhy said.

"And for them to continue with their kids," added her husband, Haitham Doukhy, 53. "This is what connects us here, even if the village is no longer here."

The couple put up a tree for the first time last year, hoping to start a tradition for the families of people expelled from Igrit decades ago, whose attempts to return to live there have been repeatedly blocked by the Israeli government and military.

They come to the church for monthly Mass, Easter, weddings and baptisms, driving from miles away across northern Israel, past Jewish towns that did not exist when Igrit was a small but thriving village.

'We observe the main stations of our life - birth, marriage and death," said Shadia Sbeit, 50, whose two children were baptized in the church. "What we miss is the years between.'

On December 26, the church will hold a Christmas Mass – an observance mixed with joy and bitterness given Iqrit's history. The church, at the top of a hill

overlooking agricultural lands and the village cemetery, was founded in the early 1800s by a priest from Syria, who is buried inside. Small imprints of crosses



and crescents line the top of its bricks, a nod by its Muslim architect to the closeness of Islam and

Christianity Igrit's faithful say the church is about more than just religion.

It represents feeling at home and a small salve for the pain of displacement, bringing them closer to the stories passed on by their grandparents. Hundreds of depopulated

and destroyed Palestinian villages in present-day Israel share a fate similar to Igrit's left behind as some 700,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled their homes in 1948 during the war surrounding Israel's establishment as a state. Palestinians call the mass expulsions the Nakba, or catastrophe.

On November 8, 1948, the Israeli military ordered Iqrit's nearly 500 residents to leave so it could create a military buffer zone near the border with Lebanon. They were told that they could return in two weeks, according to court documents and residents.

But their return pleas were rejected by the regional military governor, records show. In 1951, they appealed to

Israel's Supreme Court. That July, the court ruled that they were "permitted to settle the village of Iqrit." But the military blocked their return Then, during Christmas, the

army blew up their homes, leaving only the church standing, according to a telegram sent to an Israeli state lawyer by Iqrit resi-

In 2003, the residents appealed again to the court. This time, it ruled against them.

Israel maintained that it could not allow them to return "due to the heavy consequences such a step would have on the

political level," according to the

court decision The right of return for the hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians and millions of their descendants has long been a key demand during Palestinian-Israeli peace negoti-

Still, many hope to return to their ancestral villages.

largely rejected.

ations, but one that Israel has

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

EXPLAINED



DEA EXCHANGE The Indian Express

> newsroom held insightful conversations with newsmakers every week of the year. Here's a glimpse into some of these PAGE 14

TV actor 'dies by suicide', her co-star held on charge of abetment





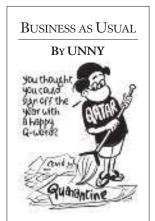
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, DECEMBER 25

A DAY after actor Tunisha Sharma, 20, allegedly died by suicide, police arrested her costar, Sheezan Khan, on charges of abetment of suicide on

Khan, 28, was arrested on the basis of a complaint filed by blamed him for the death. In the FIR, Vanita alleged that Sharma was earlier in a relationship with Khan and was upset for the past

15 days over their break-up. Based on her complaint, police registered a case against Khan under IPC Section 306 (abetment of suicide) and arrested him. Khan was produced before a court in Vasai, which sent him to police custody for four days, said a police officer.

On Saturday, while shooting for a television serial, Ali Baba: CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



WANG YI'S FIRST COMMENTS AFTER LATEST ROUND OF TALKS

Ready to work with India for 'steady, sound growth' of bilateral ties: China

Both sides have maintained communication, committed to border stability: China foreign minister

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

IN HIS first comments after the latest round of talks between Indian and Chinese military commanders, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Sunday that China is ready to work with India for the "steady and sound growth" of bilateral ties and the two countries are committed to upholding sta-

bility at the border areas. His comments come days after Indian and Chinese military commanders held a fresh round of talks on December 20 to resolve the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh - the first high-level talks after troops of the two sides clashed in Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh on December 9.

Addressing a symposium on the international situation and China's foreign relations in 2022, Wang said: "China and India have maintained communica-



counterpart Wang Yi. PTI/File

S Jaishankar with Chinese

tion through the diplomatic and military-to-military channels,

and both countries are committed to upholding stability in the border areas... We stand ready to work with India in the direction toward steady and sound growth of China-India relations." Wang, along with National

Security Advisor Ajit Doval, is the Special Representative of the India-China boundary mechanism which has remained dormant in the current standoff.

India and China have held 17 rounds of talks so far to resolve the standoff. A joint statement

issued last Thursday after the 17th round, said the talks were "frank and in-depth" and "in line with the guidance provided by the leaders of the two countries to work for the resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest"

"In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western sector," it said, referring to the eastern Ladakh region.

In September, Indian and Chinese troops disengaged in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Window for FTAs shrinks as India braces for set of non-tariff barriers

Trade talks becoming more about non-trade issues, say govt officials

AANCHAL MAGAZINE

& ANIL SASI NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

AS INDIA pushes the pedal on free trade agreements (FTAs). non-tariff issues such as carbon emission norms, climate action, labour and gender balance standards, that comprise an increasingly substantive part of these new pacts, are weighing on these ongoing negotiations.

Policymakers in New Delhi have flagged concerns these issues could pose hurdles for India in reaping the gains of its comparative labour advantage, with officials of the view that these incremental issues need to be dealt with "cautiously" in the ongoing FTA negotiations with the UK, the European Union, as well as the India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Co-operation Agreement (CECA).

There is also a considered view in policy circles here that the window for wrapping up these FTA talks could narrow by early next year, given that New Delhi's focus would invariably shift to the series of events linked to India's G20 Presidency and that political lobbying from influential lobby groups such as

The shadow on FTAs

AS TRADE talks with LIK

EU and Australia enter a crucial phase, Indian policymakers realise they are fighting against not just time as India prepares for the G20 Summit next year. and national elections the year after, but also a new set of non-tariff issues that have become substantive now. Recession in the developed world also stokes protectionist tendencies there, to which they respond by erecting walls not necessarily based on tariff — to stall imports from other countries.

farmer unions and the auto sector could intensify in the run up to the 2024 national elections.

In much of the negotiations currently under discussion, climate action, carbon emissions and labour issues are taking precedence over pure trade issues. Indian negotiators view CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Backed by Oli, other parties, Prachanda appointed Nepal PM



Prachanda submits his application for appointment as PM to Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari, Sunday. ANI

Stop seeing killings in Kashmir on the basis of religion: J&K L-G Manoj Sinha

REMEMBERING VAJPAYEE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha said it is a fact that some Kashmiri Pandits became victims of tar-

geted killings, but the country should **EXCHANGE** stop seeing this on the basis of religion since a lot of other people have also

been killed. "Ye suchh hai ki kuchh durb-



J&K L-G Manoj Sinha during the Idea Exchange on Friday

hagyapurn ghatnayen hui hain aur kayi Kashmiri Pandit lakshit humlon ke shikar hue hain, lekin

ek dusra paksh bhi hai. Ise dharm ke aadhaar par dekhne ki koshish desh ko band kar deni chahie. Kafi sankhya mein dusre log bhi maare Kashmiri Pandit became victims of targeted killings. But there is another side too... The country should stop seeing this issue on the basis of religion. A lot of other people have also been killed," he said on Friday at the Idea Exchange on Friday.

PM Narendra Modi and others pay tributes to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his 98th birth anniversary, at the former PM's memorial in New Delhi, Sunday. Amit Mehra P9

1,200 HOUSES FOR KASHMIRI PANDITS BY APRIL, ANOTHER 1,800 BY NEXT DECEMBER, SAYS SINHA

"I want to say that people from the Kashmir valley are also killed. There are also labourers CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Lowest in six years: Fewer than 100 joined J&K militant ranks in 2022 till November

NAVEEDIQBAL

RECRUITMENT TO militant ranks in Jammu and Kashmir has not only seen a significant decline in the current calendar year 2022, but is also the lowest over six years

In 2022, it stayed below 100. Until November end, militant recruitment stood at 99, all from Kashmir. Of this, 63 have been killed, 17 arrested and 19 still re-

The dip in numbers, howdescribed as "shadow" or "faceless militancy" that drew concern from the security establishment in the Valley this year. A number of targeted killings in the Valley were attributed to "faceless militants" or individuals who were not officially counted among militants in police records or in many cases reported as missing persons.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Citing damage to ancient rock carvings, experts red-flag mega oil refinery project

OMKAR GOKHALE & VALLABH OZARKAR MUMBAI. DECEMBER 25

THE SITE proposed for a mega oil refinery in Barsu village of Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district is at the centre of a row over whether it might damage ancient rock carvings found in the area.

The rock art, or petroglyphs, estimated to be 20,000 years old and classified as protected monuments by the state archaeology



The petroglyphs near the site in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri are estimated to be 20,000 years old. Nisarga Yatri Sanstha

department Archaeological Survey of India. have been added to the tentative list of UNESCO's world heritage

Known as Ratnagiri oil refinery and petrochemical complex, the project is being developed by Refinery Petrochemicals Limited, a joint venture of Indian Oil Corporation Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

EXPRESS NETWORK



MANY MINISTRIES NOT SHARING RECORDS: NATIONAL ARCHIVES HEAD

MANN KI BAAT: PM **URGES CAUTION DURING FESTIVITIES**

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE KATHMANDU. DECEMBER 25

a pre-poll five-party alliance led by Nepali Congress president and outgoing Prime Minister Bahadur Communist Party of Nepal Maoist Centre) chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' ioined hands with rival K P Sharma Oli, chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), and other smaller parties to be appointed as the new Prime Minister of Nepal on Sunday.

HOURS AFTER he walked out of

Prachanda has claimed the support of 170 parliamentarians from six parties and four Independents - in the 275member House.

The general elections last month failed to produce a clear

winner. The Nepali Congress is the single largest party with 89 seats, while CPN-UML and CPN-MC have 78 and 32 seats respeca statement, the

President's office said Prachanda has been appointed as the Prime Minister of Nepal as per Article 76(2) of the Constitution – his third time in office. He is set to take oath on Monday. A PTI report said Prachanda

and Oli have reached an understanding to lead the government on rotation basis, and Oli agreed to make Prachanda Prime Minister in the first round, as per his demand.

Earlier in the day, Prachanda walked out of the Nepali Congress-led pre-poll alliance after Deuba rejected his bid to become the Prime Minister in the first round. Deuba and Prachanda had earlier reached a **CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**

1,200 workers, 24x7 shifts, hundreds of crores: Rourkela set for hockey WC

SUJIT BISOYI ROURKELA, DECEMBER 25

WHEN CHIEF Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone for a new hockey stadium at Rourkela on February 16, 2021 in the middle of a pandemic and announced that it would be a second venue for the Men's FIH Hockey World Cup, many, even within the government, were sceptical about its timely completion. So much so that the International Hockey Federation had to give the state a deadline of November 30 to complete the main structure and lay the turf.

For two years since then, over 1,200 migrant workers - many of them from Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal - worked round the clock in three shifts to construct the stadium. And less than three weeks before the first match, the grand saucer-shaped steel structure, with a seating capacity of around 21,000, stands tall over 16 acres of land.

The Chief Minister is expected to inaugurate the structure, the country's biggest hockey stadium, early in January. Along with the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, it will host the World Cup from January 13 to 29. A total of 20 matches will be

played in the new stadium to be named after freedom fighter and tribal icon Birsa Munda

At the stadium site, workers continue to toil round the clock to put things together. Though the stadium work has already been completed and the ground was used for a practice match between junior teams of India and South Korea, large cranes have been deployed to fix the aluminium facades and glass windows, and finish other structural work. Some other workers were racing against time to complete roads, lawns, parking lots and other ancillary work on the stadium premises.



The Rourkela hockey stadium, India's biggest with a seating capacity of 21,000, will be inaugurated early January. Sujit Bisoyi

Sabarish, the project manager at the site, said they built the stadium in just 15 months as they started the work in August

"When we started, the patch of land was a jungle with thousands of large trees and bushes, which has now been turned into the country's largest stadium. We faced several difficulties while carrying out work with regulations. Transportation of materials, especially steels which were transported from Bhilai and the synthetic turfs which were imported from Germany, was

also a challenge," said Sabarish.

The Monsoon rainfall also affected the work for several months.

Around 3,600 tonnes of structural steel and 4,000 tonnes of TMT steel were used to build the stadium. Each seat has been designed to provide an uninterrupted view and spectators will be closer to the pitch than at any other hockey stadium in the world, claimed an engineer without wishing to be named.

The state's BJD government has not given any official figure on the amount spent for building the stadium at Rourkela. Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera, in a written reply on November 24,

has been spent for construction of Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium and upgradation of the Kalinga Stadium. An official said over Rs 500 crore has been spent to build the new stadium.

said that a total of Rs 875 crore

Unlike other cities, players will not have to travel much in Rourkela during the event as their accommodation, practice pitch, main stadium, swimming pool and gym are located in close proximity. The newly developed airport is also adjacent to the stadium.

in the hospitality sector in the city, the Odisha CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Considering the limitations

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VICKY KAUSHAL ON BOLLYWOOD FILMS FAILING AT THE BOX OFFICE: THE AUDIENCE HAS CLEARLY TOLD US 'ACCHHI PICTURE BANAO'

Vicky Kaushal talks about the churn in Bollywood and an exciting 2023

TECHNOLOGY



IN MEMORIAM: FROM **BLACKBERRY TO IPOD, TECH WE LOST IN 2022**

We said goodbye to many loved gadgets

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50 shades of Christmas in India, with Jerry Pinto and Madhulika Liddle

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In Indian Christmas, writers Jerry Pinto and Madhulika Liddle bring together essays that capture unique flavors of an Indian Christmas. They join host Sandip Roy

BJP, Cong workers clash over unveiling of Atal's statue in Bhilai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE RAIPUR DECEMBER 25

SUPPORTERS OF the BIP and the Congress clashed in Bhilai city in Durg district of Chhattisgarh over the unveiling of a statue of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his 98th birth anniversary on Sunday, following which police had to beef up security arrangements and impose norms related to unlawful assembly in the area.

The scuffle began when BJP workers, led by party MP Vijay Baghel, arrived at Atal Smriti Garden in Camp 2 area in Bhilai to unveil the statue and a group of Congressmen opposed the event saying permission had not been

taken from the district collector. The BJP workers said they were celebrating Vajpayee's birth anniversary in the garden for the last five years. However, a local Congress leader said the BJP had not followed laid-down norms and hence, the statue un-

veiling must not be permitted. The argument snowballed into a physical fight following which additional police force was

Christian group targeted over conversion claims in Uttarkashi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE DEHRADUN, DECEMBER 25

AFTER A group of Christian misby more than 30 men armed with sticks on Friday in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi district over allegations of forced conversions, local police officers said

the situation is under control. Both sides have lodged police complaints, based on which a cross FIR has been registered at the Purola police station. No arrest has been made so far.

Police said Pastor Lazarus Cornelius from the Union Church in Mussoorie and his wife Sushma Cornelius were leading prayers at an under-construction building in the Chhiwala village when the local group arrived at the spot. There was an altercation between both groups over allegations of religious conversion. People from both groups received

minor injuries, said the police. "It was alleged by the locals, led by one Virendra Singh Rawat from VHP. that some outsiders have arrived in the Chhiwala village and they are doing religious conversions. Based on a complaint by Rawat, we have registered an FIR against the pastor and others," police said, adding that another complaint was filed from the other side and an FIR filed.

rushed to the spot to disperse the workers. The police also sealed the garden to avoid further ruckus.

mission from Bhilai Steel Plant but not from the district collector. Police kept the statue in a safe place and sealed the garden in the presence of the sub-divisional magistrate," SP Abhishek Pallava told PTI. Meanwhile, IPC Section 145 (ioining or continuing to be part of unlawful assembly despite it being commanded to disperse) has been imposed in the area, the SP added

After the incident, MP Baghel criticised the Congress for opposing the unveiling of the statue. He said the garden's land belongs to the Bhilai steel plant. On demand of the residents in 2019, the authorities had written to the steel plant authorities seeking permis-

"The Congress is insulting the great leader who gave statehood to Chhattisgarh. The Congress members serve only one family... They are so ungrateful that they are resorting to violence and stone pelting to stop unveiling of Atal ji's statue," said Baghel.

WITH PTI INPUTS

HIMACHAL

BJP submits memorandum against move to shut institutions

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE SHIMI A DECEMBER 25

THE BIP, now in the Opposition in Himachal Pradesh Assembly, on Sunday submitted a memorandum to HP Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar against the Congress's move to shut down several government institutions in the state after coming to power in the hill state.

The BJP claimed that the Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu-led government has wound up over 500 institutions, including tehsils, primary health centres and community health centres, Patwari circles, revenue sub-division sections, police stations, etc., across the state. The memorandum was submit-

"The BIP contingent had per-

sion to unveil the statue.

ted by Jai Ram Thakur. Congress responded to BJP's allegations stating that these de-

partments had been created for the purpose of vote bank. "The previous BJP government in the state had opened over 590 institutions at the fag end of its tenure without making any budgetary provisions and without recruiting the required staff. It was done with the sole objective of wooing voters. During the last six months. it went on a spree opening health, education, revenue and other in-

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Ready to work with India for growth of ties: China

Gogra-Hot Spring area, the last of the acknowledged "friction points" that were discussed over 16 rounds of Corps Commander level talks that began in June 2020, after Chinese incursions at several points weeks earlier.

Tensions in Ladakh continue over the presence of Chinese troops in Depsang, intrusions in Demchok and the rapid Chinese infrastructure build-up, including two bridges over Pangong Tso that will reduce Chinese mobilisation time on the lake's southern bank.

Indian and Chinese troops clashed in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang sector in the early hours of December 9, assaulting each other with sticks and canes in their closest encounter since the

Militant ranks

ranks saw an uptick again in

2020 and remained under 150

killed in the 11 months of the

year so far in 113 counter-terror

operations resulting from over

17,000 cordon and search oper-

ations conducted across J&K.

Senior security officials attribute

several factors including quicker

arrests, difficulty in procuring

weapons and the changing na-

Express, I&K Director General of

Police Dilbag Singh had earlier

pointed out that the modus

operandi of militant handlers

has changed and they now "im-

mediately ask them (terror re-

cruits) to commit an act of terror

violence – throw a grenade, fire

at somebody, or kill someone.

Once they are involved, it be-

comes a way of preventing their

killings this year, the perpetra-

tors involved have little to no

past history, however, recruit-

ment via internet materials re-

though the number of militancy

related incidents have reduced,

"the social media phase of mili-

tancy may be over but the pro-

clivity to violence has not come

down". Therefore, overt militant

recruitment is lower but attacks

are still taking place in the Valley

and the phenomenon of shadow

or "hybrid" militancy still per-

gun attachment of properties of

those believed to be directly or

indirectly linked to terrorism in

the Valley. The UT's year-old

State Investigation Agency has

also begun seizing properties al-

legedly linked to terrorism.

The J&K Police have also be-

Senior officials also said that

In most of the targeted

In an interview to The Indian

ture of terrorism.

return to society.

mains a factor

petuates

Over 170 militants have been

for the next two years again.

deadly Galwan incident in eastern Ladakh in June 2020.

Asked whether the incident in Arunachal Pradesh was raised during the talks, the MEA spokesperson had refrained from giving a direct response. "We can all speculate but since I don't have a confirmation, I am not going to be able to confirm that. We did talk about, to be honest, the Western sector. So if it has not been raised. I wouldn't be surprised. Let me not make a comment either," he had

"We have been emphasising that our soldiers will stand firm to guard our frontiers. So I don't want to say anything beyond that," he had said

In his lengthy address on

China's diplomatic work, Wang, who was elevated to the ruling Communist Party of China's (CPC) political bureau during the recent party Congress, focused more on China's troubled ties with the US and burgeoning relations with Russia, despite the

Ukraine war. "We have deepened goodneighbourliness, friendship and cooperation with Russia, and made China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination more mature and resilient," Wang said. "Over the past year, China and Russia have firmly supported each other in upholding respective core interests, and our political and strategic mutual trust has been further consolidated," he said.

Wang also spoke about China's opposition to "bloc confrontation". Beijing has always opposed the Quad grouping comprising the US, India, Australia and Japan, as well as the AUKUS alliance of the US, Australia, and the UK.

"We have continued to reject bloc confrontation and zero-sum competition, and maintained strategic stability in relations with other major countries,' Wang said.

Wang also briefly touched on China's ties with Pakistan, saying the two countries have "continued to firmly support each other, uphold the invaluable allweather strategic partnership, and consolidate the iron-clad friendship".

Prachanda appointed Nepal PM

tacit understanding to lead the new government on a rotational

After talks with Deuba failed, Prachanda reached Oli's private residence to seek his support. He was joined by leaders of other smaller parties, making it clear that Oli had done the groundwork to

bring the parties together. Deuba, who was re-elected as leader of the Nepali Congress parliamentary party, was all set to stake claim and submit the list of his supporters, when the events unfolded.

Interestingly, the parties supporting Prachanda include the pro-monarchy Rastriya Prajatantra Party, the Rastriya Swatantra Party, Janata Samajbadi Party, and regional outfits like the Janamat Party and Nagarik Unmukti Party.

Staking his claim before the deadline given by President Bidhya

Devi Bhandari expired at 5 pm on Sunday, Prachanda, 68, was accompanied to the President's office by Oli, RSP president Ravi Lamichhane and RPP chief Rajendra Lingden among other top

"We are clearly for the monarchy and Hindu Rashtra, and we are supporting this alliance from outside for political stability," said Lingden.

Both Prachanda and Oli are seen as pro-China. In July 2021, Prachanda had withdrawn support to Oli, thus dislodging him from office, after Oli failed to honour the condition on a rotational government

Prachanda led the decade-long armed struggle from 1996 to 2006 that ultimately ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November

Manoj Sinha

Over the last six years, 2018 who come from Bihar, Odisha, witnessed the largest recruit-Jharkhand during the apple seament of 206 to the militant son... There were two-three inciranks. Since then, police have dents, but a (false) narrative is recorded a steady decline every spread," he said. "There are a few people who year. After staying under 150 in 2019, recruitment to militant

describe them as locals or outsiders...We shouldn't get into this. People who are residents (domicile) believe they (labourers) have a huge role to play in the UT's economy. Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India. Anybody can work in any state...they have the right to work here. The same goes for Kashmir. There's a majority in Kashmir who appreciate this and want other people to come and work. We also take care of them (migrants)... push for their insurance. During the apple season, we had guidelines regarding their safety and security - financial and socie-

On Kashmiri Pandits, the L-G aid, the Central government had announced a rehabilitation policy. "The first phase entailed 3,000 iobs, 3.000 homes. Same in the second phase. A total 6,000 homes were to be built, but only around 700 houses were completed. When I reached there August 2020), the jobs proposed in the second phase were not filled, and there were some vacancies from the first phase too. These vacancies were voluntarily kept empty citing some technical issues. Today, I can say that all but 134 posts have been filled," he said.

Sinha was sworn in as L-G on August 7, 2020.

He said it was true that without houses, Kashmiri Pandits were facing difficulties. But today, land has been made available for all 6.000 houses, and all tenders for construction, barring two have been completed, he said. "1,200 homes will be given to Kashmiri Pandits in April; by December next, 1,800 more houses will be allotted. A big housing complex is being constructed in Srinagar and it is our priority to finish the work quickly," he said.

On targeted killings of

Kashmiri Pandits, Sinha said he

could understand their outrage in

the Valley. "I personally met a lot

of people and some organisations.

The issues they raised, I am speak-

ing here with great responsibility.

Itried solving those issues personally. First, they wanted to relocate to safer places. Slowly we have managed to post people in the district headquarters. Now if the employee is from the rural development department, he cannot be posted in the city. So, he is posted in the village neighbouring the district headquarters. A few are in the tehsil headquarters but the police had said it is secured," he said. perts appointed by the Union Ministry of Science and Technology visited Ratnagiri to in-

Rourkela set for host hockey WC

government has developed 2254star category rooms, the management of which has been handed over to the Taj Group during the tournament. Over Rs 84 crore has been spent on developing accommodation for players, support staff and officials.

"Of the 225 rooms, we have already completed and handed over 150 rooms to Taj Group. The remaining 75 rooms will be ready by the end of this month. The accommodation facility can cater to the needs of at least eight teams at a time. The swimming pool and state-of-the-art gym for players are also ready to use," said Bhupendra Singh Poonia, managing director of state-owned Idco that oversees the development of stadium and accommodation fa-

which will be used during the tournament. The staff quarters of the Biju Patnaik University of Technology have also been upgraded as temporary accommodation facilities. The steel city also has around 60 hotels with around 1,500 rooms, which the administration said can be used by visitors and rel-

ministration has also reserved over

100 rooms in different govern-

ment guest houses in the city

cilities in Rourkela. The Sundargarh district adfor flyers coming to the nearest air-

atives of players coming to watch

their teams in action.

to Rourkela ahead of the Hockey World Cup, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has granted a license to Rourkela Airport for public use. The Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), which owns the airport, has reportedly received permission to operate 72seater aircraft. Subhankar Mohapatra, Rourkela Additional District

In a major connectivity boost

Magistrate, said players will be directly flown to the city by chartered flights hired by the state government, "For public use, Alliance Air is tentatively to start commercial operation from Bhubaneswar to Rourkela from January first week," he said. The administration has also planned to start a shuttle service

Rourkela, the second smart city Odisha apart from Bhubaneswar, has undergone a massive transformation — wider roads, refurbished pavements, illumination, improved drainage,

renovated parks and fountains,

To strengthen urban mobility

during the event, the state govern-

ment will introduce a fleet of 25

gardens and sanitation work.

port at Jharsuguda, which is a 2.5-

hour drive from Rourkela.

buses under the city bus project.

TV actor

Dastan-e-Kabul, in which she and Khan played the lead roles, Sharma had locked herself inside the washroom. When police reached the spot and broke open the door, she was found hanging. She was taken to hospital late Saturday night, where she was declared dead.

Police said no suicide note was found. A post-mortem conducted at JJ Hospital Sunday showed no injuries on Sharma's body. It appears she died due to asphyxiation, said anofficer.

Meanwhile. BIP MLA Ram

Kadam said the investigation will

also probe if it was a "case of love

jihad". "The case will be thor-

oughly probed and all aspects

will be considered, including whether it is a case of love jihad or anything. The accused will not be spared. Tunisha's family will get justice 100%," he said. Police sources said the ments of all those present on the set of the TV serial and Sharma's personal staff would be recorded. Sharma started her career as a child actor. She also featured in

the young Katrina Kaif). Popularly known for his role as the young Akbar in TV serial Jodha Akbar, Khan appeared in other shows like Silsila Pyaar Ka, and Ek Thi Rani Ek Tha Raavan.

Baar Baar Dekho and Fitoor (as

Citing damage to ancient rock carvings, experts red-flag mega oil refinery project The original plan to develop entire country and the world ommend that to the government."

the project in Nanar village of Ratnagiri district was dropped in 2019 by the Devendra Fadnavisled government due to opposition from local residents and then BJP ally Shiv Sena. Thackeray later wrote to the Centre suggesting Barsu-Solgaon as the new site. However, the alternative site

with residents of Barsuvillage who have been citing land acquisition and environmental reasons, but conservationists and archaeologists, who say it will end up damaging the petroglyphs. Last month, a committee of ex-

Professor Vasant Shinde, the team included scientists, historians and too has run into trouble, not just archaeologists from premier institutes of India.

Shinde told The Indian Express that the team visited the sites to assess and make a proposal for funds required to conserve "the heritage and to study how a project can be undertaken to make the

Led by senior archaeologist

serving them.

aware of the importance of the sites as they are unique.' "The government should have spect and study the petroglyphs scattered across several villages conducted a joint survey before aland propose measures for con-

lotting land for the refinery project. It should do so in future whenever it has to fix another land for the refinery project. The petroglyphs are on the tentative UN-ESCO list. If the project starts at Barsu, the rock carvings will get destroyed due to construction and chemical reaction at the site," Shinde said. "The petroglyphs can be saved

if the project is shifted 5-6 kilometres away from the sites. We'll rec-

More than 250 petroglyphs have been identified in the area where the petrochemical refinery will be built. Shinde said the rock carvings have not received the attention they deserve due to a lack

of funding.

that the Barsu site for the refinery has not been finalised yet and is "only being considered". "The talks are going on at a serious level. The decision to finalise the refinery site will be taken only once all the local stakeholders are taken into confidence," the official said.

A state government official said

Petroglyphs are drawn by re-

that do not graduate into full-scale

FTAs are exposed to legal chal-

moving part of a rock surface by incising, picking, carving or abrading. Ratnagiri district has more than 1,500 petroglyphs, also called katal shilpa, spread across 70 sites. The carvings are in the shape of human figures, birds, animals and geometric forms, though they vary in shape and size from site to site.

Nisarga Yatri Sanstha, a

Ratnagiri-based non-profit organisation, has been working for the last few years to find and preserve petroglyphs in Konkan region. Led by a local conservationist, Sudhir Risbud, Nisarga has discovered over 1,700 petroglyphs from more than 72 villages.

Window for FTAs shrinks as India braces for set of non-tariff barriers

these as instruments that could potentially offer partner countries a handle to trigger non-tariff protectionist measures, especially as developed nations stare at recessionary conditions.

"There are significant differences between the old (FTAs negotiated prior to 2015) and the new FTAs under discussion currently. Earlier, predominantly trade-related issues used to dominate; rules, operations, tariffs measures. Earlier there used to be about a dozen chapters, now in the new FTAs, the number of chapters has doubled with non-trade issues such as gender balance, labour standards, environment and climate issues dominating these FTAs. That's why we are putting our foot down. We have to negotiate these (FTAs) properly given this ficial involved in the negotiations told The Indian Express. Developed countries such as

the US, for instance, have brought up the issue of carbon emissions in the process of manufacturing melted steel as a non-tariff related issue. While India mostly produces steel generated from iron ore. which in turn comes from mining, most developed countries have resorted to methods to generate it from scrap, which results in lower carbon emissions, a senior official

involved in the negotiations said. ...in our country, it (production of steel) is a primary process, while for some developed nations, they are converting scrap to steel which is being compared to our steel, and then there may be a levy

of carbon adjustment tax...in this

way, non-tariff barriers are becoming a feature," the official said. "We have to be very cautious

in the FTA negotiations...tomorrow we may benefit from the GSP (Generalised System Preferences), but if they put in a non-tariff barrier by citing labour or environment, then it becomes an issue... in name of standards. adjustments, child labour, a number of countries are doing this. Then we lose our comparative advantage because of these non-tariff barriers and are not able to fully use (the advantages of an FTA)," the official noted.

India had been a beneficiary of the US' GSP programme since November 1975, under which beneficiary countries are allowed to export thousands of products to the US without the added burden

of duties, which was then withdrawn by the Donald Trump administration in 2019. The European Union has also

proposed a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to tax carbon-intensive products, such as iron and steel, cement, fertiliser, aluminium and electricity generation, from 2026, Under the CBAM system, EU importers will buy carbon certificates corresponding to the carbon price that would have been paid, had the goods been produced under the EU's carbon pricing rules. Many developing countries including India are expected to challenge this For the India-Australia trade

pact, the government will begin the tougher rounds of negotiations for the full pact which would dwell

dairy and agri products after the interim deal signed in April comes into effect from December 29. "The FTA with Australia has

on the more contentious issues of

been the best case... given the complementarities between the key export products of both countries...it comes into force on 29th December. It is (an) early harvest (scheme), now we have to go fullfledged (FTA) in which other tougher issues will be there (sic). The easier ones are sorted and we had benefits in this. We need raw material from there and we need to access the market for manpower there. We will get better facilitation in terms of visa for Australia, after student visa, we will get better facilitation for work visa. But, other countries such as the UK and EU are not agreeable

prominently in bilateral discussions (for those pacts)," the official

on this, so such issues figure

The problem, though, is that some of these early harvest schemes of the kind signed with Australia and under discussion with other countries potentially target the low-hanging fruits, leaving the tougher goods and services for later. This strategy can lead to significant delays in wrapping up the more broad-based FTAs, which could potentially lead to impediments. For now, a number of Australian products have been excluded by New Delhi from tariff reductions under the early harvest agreement including dairy products, rice, wheat, chickpeas, beef. sugar, apples, iron ore and toys.

Also, early harvest agreements

New Delhi

lenges from other countries that are members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), an organisation that was formed on the premise that member countries should not discriminate between their trading partners. The exceptions to the rule are full-scale FTAs, subject to some conditions. One rider, incorporated in

Article XXIV.8(b) of GATT, stipulates that a deal should aim to eliminate customs duties and other trade barriers on "substantially all the trade" between the WTO member countries that are signatories to an FTA. "For the purposes of this Agreement... a freetrade area shall be understood to mean a group of two or more customs territories in which the dubetween the constituent territories in products originating in such territories," the Article states. The trade pact with the UK is also awaiting closure even as both countries had launched negotiations for the FTA in January with

ties and other restrictive regula-

tions of commerce... are elimi-

nated on substantially all the trade

an aim to conclude talks by Diwali (October 24), but the deadline has now been missed. India and the UK have so far completed six rounds of negotiations. UK's Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch visited India on December 12-13 for the sixth round of negotiations and the seventh round is due to take place early next year. Badenoch had told the Financial Times that she was no longer willing to commit to a deadline for the India-UK FTA.

SERVICES HIT FOR AN HOUR ON MAGENTA LINE

Delivery drone carrying vials of blood falls on Metro tracks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

A DELIVERY drone, carrying a box filled with vials of blood, fell on the tracks of the Delhi Metro's Magenta Line on Sunday afternoon, causing panic and disrupting services on the line for nearly an hour.

According to officials, the services on the line were closed down as there was concern regarding a security breach. The line connects Janakpuri to Noida's Botanical Garden station and is one of the longest lines in DMRC's network. The section that was impacted because of the drone was between the Iasola Vihar/Shaheen Bagh to Botanical Garden stations.

The drone fell on the line near the Jasola Vihar/Shaheen Bagh station around 2.45 pm. "Services are not available between Jasola Vihar Shaheen Bagh to Botanical Garden due to security reasons," DMRC said in a tweet in the afternoon.

Services restarted around 3.45 pm, before which police were called to examine the drone. "We were alerted that an



The drone fell on the line near Jasola Vihar/Shaheen Bagh station around 2.45 pm. ANI

unidentified object, that looked like a drone, was present on the tracks. As per protocol, we halted the service and called police. They examined the drone and after some time cleared the stretch," said a source.

Police, meanwhile, said the drone belongs to a private pharma company based in Noida and accidentally fell on the tracks. "It was carrying a box filled with vials of blood. There was no other object. The pharma company has all the papers and required licences for the drones.

They use drones to supply medicines or carry samples at times," said a senior police officer. No case has been registered in the matter yet, police said.

In June, the Indian Council for Medical Research released a guidance document for use of drones in healthcare. It was based on trials conducted in parts of Manipur and Nagaland, where drones were used to deliver Covid-19 vaccines, vaccines used in routine immunisation programs, antenatal care medicines, multi-vitamins, syringes and gloves

On the anvil: 'Floating' solar farms on water bodies, first one at Bawana lake

GAYATHRI MANI

AFTER ROOFTOP panels, the Delhi government has come up with a new proposal to generate electricity through solar energy by installing 'floating solar farms' in lakes, water bodies and ponds across the city. While the project has been started in Telangana

and Visakhapatnam, it will be

the first in Delhi, said officials.

The power department has decided to start the project on a pilot basis at Outer Delhi's Bawana lake. "We are working on a proposal to install floating solar panels on water bodies such as on the Yamuna at Wazirabad and several ponds and lakes, wherever possible. These panels can be installed on natural water bodies and man-made lakes. But it will require running water with good flow, only then can it successfully generate electricity," said a senior Delhi government official.

"Bawana lake comes under the Delhi government and we already have our power plant, so installation process, including permission and required clearance

THE PROPOSED PLAN Electricity produced from the A wire rope between the floaters and solar floating solar panels will be panels will be stored in the transformer and connected to a the grid and will then be distributed transformer across the water body accordingly Water body Bawana has capacity Floaters will first be to generate

from departments such as DJB won't take time " said the official The official said the water

body at Bawana has a capacity to generate about 1 MW power: "The Bawana power plant has

1 MW

The benefits

Floating solar panels are cheaper and more efficient than rooftop ones and don't need land to be acquired to install photovoltaic panels. They reduce water evaporation, thereby saving more water for hydropower generation.

1,500-1,600 MW capacity, and big plants have ancillary power requirements. So, power produced during the pilot will be used to meet requirements of the plant."

The panels will be installed through IPGCL. Explaining the process, an official said: "Floaters will first be installed on the water and solar panels will be set up on them... A wire rope between the floaters and solar panels will be connected to a transformer across the water body... Electricity produced from panels will be stored in the transformer and grid and will be distributed accordingly."

According to officials, floating solar panels are cheaper and A solar expert said, "As there is scarcity of open land in Delhi, installing solar panels in lakes and reservoirs will be beneficial as the water flow here is also stationary. But it depends on which model the government picks. There are multiple models... floaters are costlier than other models.'

A study titled 'Floating solar PV to reduce water evaporation in water-stressed regions and powering water pumping: Case study Jordan', published in the Energy Conversion and Management journal in May, also looked at correlation between floating solar panels and evaporation from large waterbodies. It said the system installed on a reservoir in Jordan, which faces extreme water scarcity, led to reduction of over 40% in evaporation and produced 425 MWh of electricity annually.

Power department officials added, "Once the proposal is presented, it will be moved to the minister in-charge for approval. Tendering process will then begin; it will take about 6 months to be installed." The government has so far generated 230 MW through rooftop panels.

Gurgaon multi-cr heist: Cops recover Rs 4.12 cr from village in Jhajjar

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA GURGAON, DECEMBER 25

DAYS AFTER Vikas Lagarpuria, alleged gangster and mastermind of a multi-crore heist in Gurgaon, was arrested by Haryana Police Special Task Force (STF), police said Rs 4.12 crore in cash was recovered from a village in Jhajjar.

STF officials said the total recovery in the case now stands at 9.9 crore, including gold and foreign currency. A total of 19 accused have been arrested in relation to the case, so far.

An STF officer said, "During questioning, it was found that Lagarpuria's associates had hidden over Rs 4.12 crore in a private property near his village in Jhajjar at his behest. Based on the input, teams raided the place and recovered the cash. During questioning, he has admitted to his involvement in stealing over Rs 23 crore. Out of his share from the stolen money, he claims to have invested some in property and some on his expenses and court

Lagarpuria was detained from IGI Airport by central intelligence agencies on December 14 after he arrived from Dubai, following which a team of Haryana Police STF got his custody after coordinating with agencies. The STF had said he was arrested from the Delhi-Gurgaon border on December 15 morning.

Lagarpuria is alleged to be the mastermind and main conspirator in the heist case in which "over Rs 25-30 crore cash" is suspected to have been stolen from the office/flat of a society in Gurgaon in August 2021. Officials said he was taken on 10-day remand and will be produced in a district court Monday.



NEHRU MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND LIBRARY Teen Murti House, New Delhi-110011 Autonomous Body set up by the Govt. of India)

The Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML), an Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Culture, seeks qualified candidates for appointment to the post of Junior Curator, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalava.

Name of the post : Junior Curator No of post Category

: 1 (one)

: UR : Level-8 (47600-151100)

Pay Scale Eligibility: For details like qualifications and experience required, instructions etc., please visit NMML website: general www.nehrumemorial.nic.in.

Interested candidates may send their applications along with self-attested copies of educational qualifications and experience certificates, etc. to this office address i.e. The Director, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-110011 so as to reach

davp-09142/12/0047/2223

CBC-09101/13/0028/2223

latest by 27th January, 2023. 🕼 🗫 उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण क्षेत्रीय कार्यालयः सी–2, चतुर्थ तल, महालक्ष्मी मॉल, आर०डी०सी०, राजनगर, गाजियाबाद E-mail: rmghaziabad@upsidc.com, Website: onlineupsidc.com

सिग्नेचर सिटी, गाजियाबाद. E-mail: potronica@upsidc,com, Website: onlineupsidc.com संगन्धर भराने, गाजियाबार, E-mail: polifonica@upsidc.com, Websile: onlineupsidc.com जत्तर प्रदेश इण्डस्ट्रीयल एरिया डवलपमेन्ट एक्ट-1976 की धारा-7 में उत्तर प्रदेशीय सरकार द्वारा प्रकाशित विद्यायी परिशिष्ट भाग-2, खण्ड(क) संख्या 15/79-वि-1-22-2-क-3-2022, लखनऊ, र जनवरी, 2022 अधिस्वना के अन्तर्गत किये गये संशोधन के क्रम में प्राधिकरण द्वारा विकिसत औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों के समस्त ऐसे आवंटियों जिनको औद्योगिक इकाई और /अथवा किसी स्वना प्रौद्योगिक /स्वना प्रौद्योगिक /स्वना प्रौद्योगिक /स्वना प्रौद्योगिक /स्वना प्रौद्योगिक हाल प्रवेशिक (अर्थाव किसी स्वना प्रौद्योगिक /स्वना प्रौद्योगिक /स्वना प्रौद्योगिक सम्यक्त स्वार प्राधिकरण के मानकों (क्रियाशीलता/न्युनतम अधिभोग)के अनुसार सूखण्ड पर इकाई स्थापित कर संचालित नहीं की गयी है, को जारी नोटिसों /विज्ञपित के क्रम में अवगत कराना है कि उपरोक्त प्रावधानों के अन्तर्गत उनके पक्ष में किये गये भूखण्डों का आवंटन 31.12.2022 को स्वतः स्वद हुआ माना जाएगा तथा उक्त भूमि प्राधिकरण में निहित हो जाएगी। यदि आवंटी द्वारा प्राधिकरण के मानकों (क्रियाशीलता/न्यूनतम अधिभोग)के अनुसार इकाई स्थापित कर संचालित कर ली गयी है और आपके द्वारा प्राधिकरण को वतमान समय तक तत्सन्वय में सृवित नहीं किया है तो उक्त की सूचना दिनांक 31.12.2022 से पूर्व सम्बन्धित कार्यालयों में उपलब्ध करना सृनिश्चत करें।

रियोजना कार्यालयः प्रशासनिक भवन, सैक्टर-बी–3, दिल्ली–सहारनपुर रोड, ट्रान्स दिल्ली

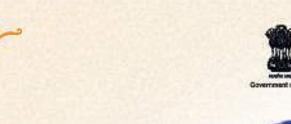
क्षेत्रीय प्रबन्धक / परियोजना अधिकारी, यूपीसीडा

उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग

पर्जाक = ३१४/३७/ ज.कु.प्रसा./पुलिस आरक्षी.पी०ए०सी०,आई०आर०बी०. अग्निशामक परीक्षा-2021/अतिगोपन-2/22-23 दिनांकः 23 दिसम्बर, 2022 विद्यप्ति

एतदहास सुचित किया जाता है दिनांक: 18 दिसम्बर, 2022 को आयोजित जत्तराखण्ड पुलिस विभाग के अन्तर्गत आरक्षी/पी०ए०सी०/आई०आर०भी०/ अभिनशामक परीक्षा-2021 के अन्तर्गत शामान्य हिन्दी, शामान्य ज्ञान/शामान्य अध्ययन एवं उत्तरसंखण्ड से संबंधित विविध ज्ञान की शिक्षित परीक्षा के प्रधनमञ की वारों सीरीज (A.B.C&D) की उत्तरकृती को उत्तरक्षण्ड लोक लेवा आयोग की वेबसाईट www.psc.uk.gov.in पर अन्यर्षियों के सूचनार्थ प्रसारित कर दिया गया है। यदि किसी अन्पर्धी को घारों सीरीज के किसी प्रश्न एवं उत्तर विकल्प पर कोई आपरित है तो वह आयोग की वेबसाईट पर Online Answer Key Objection हेत् दिये गर्व सिंक पर जाकर अपनी आगत्तियों को आयोग द्वारा जारी दिशा निर्देशों के अनुसार दिनांकः 26 दिशम्बर, 2022 से 01 जनवरी, 2023 (सगय राजि के 23.59.58 बजे तक) तक दर्ज करा सकते हैं।

आयोग की वेबसाईट पर उपलब्ध लिंक Online Answer Key Objection के अतिरिवत इं-मेल, डाक अथवा अन्य किसी माध्यम से प्रेमित आपतियाँ एप अन्तिम तिथि के उपरान्त प्रेषित आपरियों पर कोई विवार नहीं किया जाएगा। उत्तर कुंजी के सापेक्ष आपरित दर्ज किये जाने से पूर्व आयोग की वेबसाईट पर उपलब्ध दिशा-निर्देश सम्बन्धी विस्तृत विव्रप्ति संख्याः ३१३/३७/च.कू.प्रसाः/ पुलिस आरदी,पी०ए०सी०,आई०आर०बी०,अग्निशामक परीदाा-2021/ अतिमीयन-2/22-23 दिनांकः 23 दिसम्बर, 2022 का अध्यवन अवस्य कर ते। (गिरधारी सिंह रावत) सविव





installed on the water and solar panels will

be set up on them





Honoring the courage and supreme sacrifice of

Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji

on the occasion of

Yeer Baal Diwas

Historic Congregation

3000 children to hold a march past Shabad Keertan by children

26 December 2022 | 11:00 am

Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, Delhi

Nationwide activities to mark the day

Announcement of PM National Children Bravery Award winners

Address to the nation on the life & sacrifices made by Sahibzaade by various leaders & dignitaries

2000 child care centers to hold digital exhibitions and special meetings Schools and colleges all over the country to organize quizzes, essay writing competitions, short film exhibitions, and special assemblies

Digital exhibition at various public places like railway stations, airports, and petrol pumps on the supreme sacrifice made by Sahibzaade

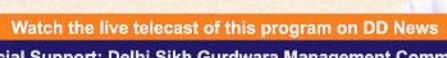
New Delhi

ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED!

Sahibzaada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzaade Fateh Singh Ji chose death instead of deviating from the noble principles of religion. 'Veer Baal Diwas' is a fitting tribute to the courage of the Sahibzaade and their quest for justice

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Special Support: Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee



51-100 Satisfactory 101-200 Moderate 201-300 Poor 301-400 Very Poor

According to IMD, the west-

ern disturbance is expected to

bring light rainfall and snowfall

over parts of the Western

Himalayan Region on Monday.

More rain and snow are expected

over isolated parts of the area on

likely in many parts of Punjab,

Haryana and north Rajasthan

during the next 24 hours and

gradual reduction in intensity

and spread thereafter is likely be-

cause of reduction in moisture in

lower tropospheric levels over

the region. However, dense fog in

isolated pockets is likely over the

"Dense to very dense fog is

December 29 and 30.

MIN: 4 3.9°C below normal

2 cops held for 'extorting' gold from 2 passengers at Delhi Airport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

TWO DELHI Police head constables have been suspended and arrested for allegedly threatening and extorting gold from two passengers at IGI Airport's Terminal 3. Both passengers had come back from Dubai when the accused allegedly threatened them and took their gold. Police said the items recovered cost around Rs 50.6 lakh.

The accused, Robin Singh and Gaurav Kumar, were posted as security personnel at T3. As per the FIR, the complainant, aged 24, left India in 2020 to work at a construction company in Qatar but returned after his employers refused to pay him. He then went to Muscat to find work but again decided to leave over the work conditions. In Muscat, he met a man who gave him gold weighing around 600 gm and asked him to deliver it in Delhi in exchange for money, the FIR claimed.

On December 20, when the complainant arrived at the airport, the two policemen allegedly stopped him near the forecourt area. "They stopped my taxi and forced me to sit in their police gypsy. I was taken to the police station where they asked me about the gold. They then took me to a forest area where they beat me up and threatened me. I was scared and gave them the gold...They broke my SIM and put my phone on reset mode. They gave me some cash and booked a cab for me. They threatened me not to tell anyone about the incident," the complainant alleged.

On the same day, the accused allegedly took 400 gm gold from another passenger, a businessman who had come from Dubai. "They stopped and searched me and took all my gold," he alleged.

Police clubbed the complaints and lodged an FIR of extortion and mischief. The complainants identified the accused and they were arrested Sunday after an enquiry. "As per our information, they targeted passengers who would sneak gold items into the airport. We have arrested and suspended them...," said an officer.

DAY TEMP DROPPED TO 16.2°C

Christmas Day coldest of the season so far, cold wave expected today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

DELHI SHIVERED on Sunday with the day temperature falling to 16.2 degrees Celsius, five degrees below the normal for this time of the year, making Christmas the coldest day of the season so far.

The morning (minimum) temperature was recorded at 5.3 degrees Celsius, a degree below the normal at Safdarjung, which is Delhi's official observatory.

At the Ridge observatory, however, the minimum temperature dipped to 3 degrees Celsius and to 3.5 degrees Celsius at Ayanagar. During the day, Jafarpur and Mungeshpur were the coldest with maximum temperatures of 13.7 and 13.4 degrees Celsius.

According to IMD officials, cold wave conditions are expected in Delhi on Monday morning, with the minimum temperature expected to drop to 4 degrees Celsius. Dense fog is ■ Min temp (°C) Wed

also expected in the morning. The maximum temperature is expected to be around 19 degrees Celsius

THIS WEEK'S

Max temp (°C)

FORECAST

Delhi saw its coldest December day since 1901 three years ago (2019) when the day temperature dipped to 9.4 degrees Celsius at a time when most of north India was reeling under a persistent cold wave.

This winter, however, was warmer than usual till the second week of December, with no

western disturbances to bring snow to the Himalayan regions and no rains to the plains. As a result, the days were sunny, bright and warm. However, two backto-back western disturbances are expected to keep the next week

MON: Dense fog

and cold wave in

the morning

TUE TO THR:

Moderate fog

FRI TO SAT: Fog

in a statement.

region during the subsequent 3-4 days... No significant change in minimum temperatures is likely over plains of Northwest India during the next 24 hours and the rise by about 2-3 degrees Celsius is expected thereafter." IMD said

The Delhi government has ordered the closure of schools for the winter break from January 1.

Crossed-out pics of kids, threat calls: Dance teacher tries to extort cash from client

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 24

A DANCE teacher, along with his associate, has been arrested for allegedly attempting to extort money from a family whose children he taught by threatening to kill the kids. The accused have been identified as Durga Dutt Singh (27) and Vishnu Mishra (28). Police said Mishra had been teaching the complainant's family members for the last decade.

According to Special Commissioner (Crime) Ravindra Singh Yadav, the complainant, who lives in Dayanand Vihar, received a message on December 20 with a crossed-out photo of his son and daughter. He was then called by a man claiming to be a gangster who was aware of his family details. The complainant then cut the call and blocked the number. Soon after, the same photos were sent to his wife. A message accompanying them claimed the sender was a gangster and threatened to kill the children. She blocked the

number and told her husband. Yaday said the complainant then called the number from another phone. The accused, however, called him back on his own phone and demanded Rs 30 lakh, saying he would kill the children before 11 am the next day if they failed to give the money. He said he would provide account num-

bers for the payment. Raids and enquiries were carried out in Gurgaon, Delhi, Noida and trans-Yamuna area, Police said Singh was arrested in New Ashok Nagar, while Mishra was

arrested from Dadri Police said Singh made the extortion calls, while Mishra was familiar with the family on account of the classes. He counted many families from wealthy areas in East Delhi as his clients. Police said he was in demand at weddings and other functions.

AAP exploring how to keep MCD ward and zone committees in line

MALLICA JOSHI NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

THE AAM Aadmi Party (AAP) is

exploring options to limit powers of zonal and ward committee heads in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, it is learnt.

AAP, which won 134 out of 250 wards in the MCD elections earlier this month, has already named Shelly Oberoi for the post of mayor and Aalev Mohammad Igbal, son of AAP MLA Shoaib Igbal, for the post of deputy mayor. While AAP may be able to elect the mayor and deputy mayor because they have a majority in the house, it is the zonal committees where it will face opposition from the BJP.

There are 12 zone committees in the civic body, which are governed by a ward committee. Their role is to make administrative decisions.

While AAP is expected to get its pick of the ward committee heads in 8-9 zones, at least four Keshavpuram, Shahdara South, Shahdara North and Najafgarh - will go in the favour of the BJP since the party has won more wards than AAP in these zones

"We are looking at making some financial and structural changes in the ward committees. Over the years, they have been granted some financial powers. After the election of the mayor and deputy mayor on January 6, we will look into curtailing financial powers of these committees to ensure work is not hampered in areas where we don't have AAP leaders heading them. We don't want one zone to suffer because the two parties are at odds with each other," said a senior party leader.

The ward committees also have another function, which is to elect members to the standing committee, which is the key decision-making body of the MCD. The mayor is the nominal head of the civic body and it is the standing committee that wields most power.

The ward committees comprise the councillors from the zone and nominated members, called aldermen, who are experts in different fields. The L-G can nominate 10 aldermen and they have voting powers in ward committees.

Sources in MCD, meanwhile, said that curtailing powers of the ward committees may not be easy. "Several functions of the zone committees, such as electing standing committee members as well as some administrative functions are written into the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act. In cases where there is some ambiguity, AAP may still face problems because the MCD comes under the Centre, via the L-G," said an official.

The AAP-led Delhi government has been at loggerheads with the L-G, with both accusing the other of exceeding their power and flouting rules. Most recently, the AAP government accused the L-G of interfering in its functioning as bureaucrats were not cooperating with ministers.

Kejriwal does not play Muslim card: Aaley Iqbal, AAP's deputy mayor pick

AISWARYARAJ NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

A DAY after he was selected by didate in the MCD, three-time councillor Aalev Muhammad Igbal told The Indian Express he might become the first Muslim to be nominated to the post in many years.

"The last person for the post from our community was in 1977. This sends out a message that AAP is a party Muslims can trust, and their rights will be protected. (CM) Arvind Kejriwal ji chose me because Lam a senior councillor: this is my hat trick (election win), and that is not a mean feat. I won with the highest margin (in MCD polls). Calling this appeasement or tokenism is not right, it forgoes my achievement, and Kejriwal ji does not play the 'Muslim card,"

he told The Indian Express. Aaley won from the Chandani Mahal ward with a margin of 17.134 votes, the highest in the

MCD polls. Attributing his victory to the trust of the people in his ward, he said: "I am a workaholic and I'm always available to lend a ear to people's grievances in the walled city. The population is mostly lower and middle class... Like my father, I have always been there for them." His father is AAP MLA



Shoaib Igbal, a six-time MLA from Matia Mahal who joined the party in 2020, along with his son.

A seasoned politician, Aaley has had a long career, vacillating between different parties - he contested as an independent in 2012, aged 22; in 2017, on a Congress ticket, and in 2022, af-

ter he was fielded by AAP. Aaley said his brief stint with Congress made him realise how powerless they were. "I knew if I had to do something, I would have to join those in power."

On the AAP's poor show in Northeast Delhi in the MCD polls the first election after the 2020 riots — he said there was so much to be done in those wards where the party put up a sub-par performance. "We have to go to the ground, talk to people and analyse what went wrong, Especially in Northeast Delhi However, AAP managed to pull wards in Chandni Chowk constituency under its sway."

Couple strangled: Cops claim juvenile hatched murder plot

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE DECEMBER 25, GHAZIABAD

TWO MEN were arrested and a 12-year-old juvenile was apprehended for allegedly killing a senior citizen couple in Ghaziabad's Loni last month. Police said the motive for the murder was money as the accused were aware the couple had a scrap business. Police claimed it was the juvenile who allegedly hatched the plot. A fourth accused is currently absconding in the case.

The incident was reported on November 22 when family members had found Ibrahim (65) and Hazra (55) strangled to death. The couple lived with Ibrahim's daughter from his first marriage and their children.

According to DCP (Rural) Iraj Raja, police had narrowed down the suspects using human intelligence and informants. They were caught after police found

out they had been in the area at

ART DISTRICT

A woman passes by street art at Lodhi Road in Delhi. Praveen Khanna

the time of the murder. DCP Raja said, "The juvenile

had planned the whole incident. He had come before to sell iron on a few occasions and knew the couple had a scrap business. The accused had gone there on the pretext of selling scrap around 4 am and planned to murder the couple and steal the money."

Police said the juvenile knocked on the door and the woman answered. When she came out, she was murdered first. Her husband, who was sleeping inside, was strangled next. The accused then fled after stealing Rs 50,000, a silver chain which belonged to the man, and a phone. The chain and phone have been recovered, along with Rs 12,000.

While no criminal history of the accused has been found so far, police are looking into their native place in Bihar for any prior crimes they might have commit-

Ghaziabad police bring Xmas cheer to runaway 12-year-old

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE DECEMBER 25, GHAZIABAD

ACROSS THE world, many countries have different names and costumes for Santa Claus — but for 12-year-old Shivam in Ghaziabad, Santa wore the khaki of the police uniform. After police found him trying to run away to his native place, they sent him home after cutting a cake with him.

According to Kaushambi Station House Officer Prabhat Kumar Dixit, police had found the child, who was in his school uniform, walking on the highway. When they brought him to the police station, the distraught child told them he had wanted to go to school in a Santa Claus costume. His mother, however, had scolded him, sending him to school in his uniform. He was also upset as his birthday had not been celebrated, while had seen other children celebrating their birthdays.

The SHO said, "The child's father paints houses, and his



Police officers gifted the child a Santa Claus costume

mother is a domestic worker. As his parents do not make much money, they could not buy a Santa Claus costume for him. Instead of going to school, the child intended to go on the highway to his native place in Bilaspur, where other relatives are staying. Before sending him back with his parents, we decided to help him celebrate Christmas.'

He further said, "As policemen, we also are human and we felt sorry for him. We saw that we could do something for him,

and we decided to do it." Police officers at the station then gifted him the Santa Claus costume that he had wanted all

The child's mother. Geetha. said, "There was a function in school to celebrate Christmas. I scolded him and told him to go in his uniform. He became upset and didn't go to school... he is happy with the gift from the police. I never imagined that police would give a gift and cut a cake with him.'

TALES OF A SCAM

The men who counted trains at New Delhi rly station — and lost Rs 2.6 cr

JIGNASA SINHA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

IT WAS a simple job — stand at the New Delhi Railway Station for six-eight hours every day and count each and every train that passes through. And that's exactly what a group of 10-odd men from Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district did every day, for around 30 days, before realising the "job" they were doing - and one they had paid anywhere between Rs 2 lakh and 20 lakh to land — was fake.

"Since the pandemic, we have been suffering and looking for job opportunities to support our family. Last year, around December, I requested my father and my sister's husband for money after our neighbour told us he had met a man named Vikas Rana, who works with the Northern Railways. We went to Delhi for training – all we had to do was count trains. We were sceptical of the activity, but the accused was a good friend of our neighbour. I feel ashamed now; I lost more than Rs 12 lakh," said Jagadeesh (25), a BA graduate from Madurai who was one of those duped. He, along with 24 others,

were cheated of a total of Rs 2.6 crore by scammers on the pretext of a job at the railway station. A case was lodged last month by Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing on the complaint of an exserviceman, M Subbusamy (78). He told police he wanted to help the unemployed youth in the area, but ended up losing everyone's money.

He said, "I met a man named Sivaraman in Coimbatore, who said he knew all MPs and ministers. I had only asked three men



in the area to apply for a TTE job, but others also came. We met Vikas Rana, who said he will look after training. They trusted me and sent the money. I would transfer the amount to Rana's accounts. As soon as I came to know about the scam, I informed the police.'

'Rana would say he would give jobs as TTE, clerks, managers etc. I escorted them to

The men were promised jobs at the railway station. Delhi and accompanied them. Rana and his associates would take us for fake medical examinations and registration. After the training, I called Rana but he didn't take my calls," said Subbusamy.

Senthil (25), another victim of the scam, said, "We were made to pay Rs 20 lakh. I was happy when I heard about the job this year. I asked my father to send me money and left Madurai. Some of us were told we would be employed as TTEs or traffic assistants, and needed to know everything about the station. Everyone

New Delhi

did the same training and counted trains for hours. I wondered why Rana wouldn't take us inside trains or offices, but didn't question him. We were never introduced to an officer. We stayed in small rooms nearby and paid for everything ourselves.'

Most of the men are BA and engineering graduates. Many, when contacted, refused to talk about Rana or what had transpired.

Another victim, aged 24, said he borrowed money from a distant relative for the job. "I could only manage to pay Rs 3 lakh. We

training was fake and all appointment letters are forged. We were devastated and came back.' Delhi Police said they have registered a case and are analysing call detail records, forged letters, transactions and CCTV footage to ascertain the

would sit on the platform for

hours. There was nobody to look

after us. Rana would come out-

side the station and take money.

After April, I suspected something

was wrong. We approached rail-

way officers, who said the job

identity of the gang members and arrest them.

GOVT & POLITICS





DISCORDANT NOTE

ON A day the BJP remembered the contributions of late former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birth anniversary, a Congress member's tweets set off a war of words. Gaurav Pandhi, an AICC coordinator with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's office, tweeted that Vajpayee had boycotted the Quit India Movement and worked as a British informant. His tweets came hours before the Congress announced that Rahul Gandhi would be visiting Vajpayee's memorial on Monday to pay tributes, leading BJP leaders to cry foul. BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla called for Pandhi's sacking if Rahul truly respects the former PM.

Chatham House Rules

INSTITUTE FOR Defence Studies and Analyses this week held the YB Chavan memorial lecture, but it came up with a twist: Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan's lecture was to be under Chatham House rules. The media was kept away, and so much so that IDSA members from the media fraternity were also disinvited. This created a bit of displeasure among the members of the Institute, which is funded by the Defence Ministry.

THE SCRAMBLE

BY PUBLICISING the status of landfill remediation plans prepared by states and Union Territories under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has set off a competition among them. The ministry's dumpsite dashboard went live about a month ago, with details of how many legacy landfills a state has and the progress of their remediation plans. Within days of the information being made public and media reports on it, states scrambled to update their data to show further progress. Prior to the dashboard, the number of landfills sites in the country and the amount of garbage piled up was not clearly known.

Replied to Gov's queries, now she must clear quota Bills, says Baghel

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU RAIPUR, DECEMBER 25

CHHATTISGARH CHIEF Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday told the media that his government has sent its reply to all the 10 questions raised by Governor Anusuiya Uikey, who has yet not given her assent to the reservation amendment Bills passed in the Assembly earlier this month.

"We have sent a reply to the Governor even though such an arrangement is not there in the Constitution. She should have taken replies from the departments concerned. But the reply has been sent. Now she should sign (on the Bill)," said the Chief An official in the Governor's

Sunday evening after which a comment can be expected The Chief Minister and the Governor got into a tug of war ear-

lier this month over the reserva-

house in Raipur told The Indian

Express that Uikey is on a visit

to Bilaspur and will return on

CM Bhupesh Baghel and

Governor Anusuiya Uikey

tion amendment Bills proposing to take the total quota in the state to 76 per cent. On December 2, the Legislative Assembly unanimously passed two Bills -Chhattisgarh Public Service (Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes Reservation) Amendment Bill and Chhattisgarh Educational Institutions (Reservation in admission) Amendment Bill – related to reservation in government jobs and admission to educational institutions in proportion to population of different categories. The Bills propose 32 per cent reservation for Scheduled Tribes, 27 per cent for Other Backward Classes and 13 per cent

citizens of Assam, was released

on August 31, 2019, with total

3,11,21,004 names included of

the 3,30,27,661 applicants,

the year ended in 2020 on the last

day of the winter session of the

Assam Assembly, Saturday, which

pointed out that 215 software util-

It was done "without follow-

The CAG submitted a report for

though it is yet to be notified.

The quota

THE BILLS cleared by the

Chhattishgarh Assembly aim to hike the total quota in the state to 76 per cent. Governor Anusuiya Uikey has cited the Chhattisgarh High Court order, refusing to increase reservation to 58%, to guestion the urgency and exceptional circumstances for passing the Bills. The delay in her assent has given rise to speculation of vet another CM-Governor confrontation in an Opposition-ruled State.

quota for Scheduled Castes, while 4 per cent has been provisioned for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in public employment and admissions in educational institutions. The Bills are pending with Governor Uikey who has sought to know the basis on which the state government is planning to the 50 per cent ceiling.

The 10 answers sought by Uikey include details of quantitative data on SC/ST communities, if collected by the government, before tabling the Bill; any study or extraordinary situation compelling the state government to hike reservation beyond the 50 per cent ceiling; data on how SC/ST are deprived of social, economic, and educational growth in the state; any committee report to support the Bills, among others.

Reacting to Baghel's statement, BJP MLA Brijmohan Agrawal said the state government should make public its reply to the Governor on the reservation bills.

The issue of reservation flared up after the Chhattisgarh High Court in September this year set aside the Raman Singh-headed state government's 2012 order to raise the quota to 58 per cent in government jobs and admissions in educational institutions, observing that reservation exceeding the 50 per cent ceiling "was unconstitutional".

President Droupadi Murmu pays tribute to former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birth anniversary at his memorial in New Delhi on Sunday. Amit Mehra

Vajpayee contribution to India indelible: PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Sunday paid tributes to late former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his 98th birth anniversary, recalling his "indelible contribution" to the country.

President Along with Droupadi Murmu, the PM, Home Minister Amit Shah, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and others visited Vajpayee's memorial, Sadaiv Atal, to pay floral tributes. The PM also paid homage to Vajpayee at an event in Parliament.

"Tributes to Atal Ji on his ayanti. His contribution to India is indelible. His leadership and vision motivate millions of people," the PM tweeted.

Home Minister Amit Shah recalled Vajpayee's "patriotism, dutifulness and dedication". He tweeted that Vajpayee's life was dedicated to "taking the country back to its ultimate glory". "...By laying the foundation of a new era of development and good governance under his leadership, Atal ji made the world aware of India's potential and instilled a sense of national pride in the public. Today, on his birth anniversary, I pay my respects to him," Shah said.

After coming to power in 2014,

MP ALLOTS LAND FOR MEMORIAL IN GWALIOR

Gwalior: Madhya Pradesh has allotted 4,050 hectares of land to build a memorial of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at his birthplace Gwalior, an official said Sunday. About 4,050 hectares of land was allotted for building a memorial of Vajpayee in Sirol, Gwalior Divisional Commissioner Deepak Singh said. PTI

the Modi government had announced that December 25 would be observed as Good Governance Day in honour of Vajpayee.

Congress general-secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh compared Vajpayee's time as an MP to the latest session of Parliament, where Opposition's demands for a discussion on the India-China situation were not met. "Today is the birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He was a first term MP when he co-signed a letter to Nehru requesting for Parliament to be convened earlier than scheduled to debate the Chinese invasion. Nehru agreed. Now, MPs can't even discuss the ongoing Chinese incursions,' Ramesh tweeted.

CAG flags risk of data tampering in Assam NRC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA GUWAHATI, DECEMBER 25

THE COMPTROLLER and Auditor General of India has flagged the "risk of data tampering" in the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam, due to "improper" software development related to data capture and correction during the updation process of the citizen-

A highly secure and reliable software was required to be developed for the NRC updation exercise, but during the audit, "lack of proper planning" came to the fore.

The updated final NRC,

which validates bonafide Indian

ities were added in a "haphazard manner" to the core software. ing the due process of either software development or selection of vendor through eligibil-

> ity assessment following a national tendering," the report said. "Haphazard development of software and utilities for NRC

data capture and correction posed the risk of data tampering, without leaving any audit trail, which could have ensured accountability for the veracity of NRC data," the CAG report said.

It maintained that the objective of preparing a valid errorfree NRC has not been met despite entailing huge expenditure to the state exchequer.

According to the report, there have been irregularities in the utilisation of funds, including excess and inadmissible payment to vendors. The CAG report on compliance audit of 'logistical arrangements for NRC updation project in Assam', recommended fixing responsibility on erring authorities

for the financial irregularities and penal action against M/s Wipro Limited, the system integrator, for violating Minimum Wages Act.

The NRC was updated in Assam under the supervision of a Supreme Court bench.

It noted that the initial project cost was estimated at Rs 288.18 crore when the NRC updation process had commenced in December 2014 and the deadline for completion was set for February 2015. The final draft of the document was, however, published in August 2019 and the project cost escalated to Rs 1,602.66 crore (expenditure of Rs 1,579.78 crore was reported), the CAG report said.

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New Delhi

President leaves on 5-day winter sojourn today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

PRESIDENT DROUPADI Murmu will visit Srisailam Temple in Andhra Pradesh on Monday and inaugurate projects related to the development of the shrine under PRASHAD scheme of the Ministry of Tourism. She will also visit Sri Shivaji Spoorthi Kendram at Srisailam, before reaching Rashtrapati Nilayam, for winter sojourn from December 26 to 30.

The President will address the students and faculty members of Keshav Memorial Educational Society in Hyderabad on Tuesday, and visit Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy to address the Officer Trainees of Indian Police Service.

She will also inaugurate the Wide Plate Mill of Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited in

On December 28, President Murmu will visit Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamyvari Devasthanam, Bhadrachalam, and lay the foundation stone for the development of tourism infrastructure at Bhadrachalam Temple under PRASHAD

'MANY MINISTRIES NOT SHARING RECORDS'

No documents on 1962, 1965, 1971 wars, says National Archives head

DIVYAA

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

(NAI) does not have records of the 1962, 1965, and 1971 wars as well as those related to the Green Revolution, its Director-General Chandan Sinha has said, adding that several Union ministries and departments have not shared their records with it. Sinha made the remarks on

Friday at a workshop on good governance organsised by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in Delhi. He also said that while there are 151 ministries and departments in all, the NAI has got records of only 64 agencies, including 36 ministries and depart-

On Sunday, Sinha told The Indian Express: "As per the Public Records Act, 1993, various central ministries and departments are supposed to transfer records more than 25 years old to the NAI, unless they pertain to classified in-

"It is up to the respective ministries and departments to ascertain what is classified information, and the NAI (which functions un-



The National Archives keeps and conserves records of the Government of India and its organisations. File

der the Ministry of Culture) is merely the record-keeper".

The NAI keeps and conserves records of the government of India and its organisations. It does not receive classified documents.

Underlining that record management in government is a key aspect of good governance, Sinha had told PTI at the workshop that there are several ministries that have not shared their records with the NAI since independence.

"We do not have any records in the NAI of the Green Revolution, which we hail all the time, or the 1962 war, the 1965 war, and the 1971 war, the great victory," he said. "There are several such issues

in certain such areas which Lam very sad to share with you that we do not have any records. We are not holding history in trust Indeed, the question that we must face is that are we losing a large part of our history since inde-

pendence. Sinha said that the Defence Ministry had sent 476 files after Independence till the beginning of 2022, adding that 20,000 files that go up to the year 1960 have been transferred this year.

Rather than waiting for a special campaign for recording and weeding out of files for records, it is supposed to be done every

Ballari mining baron Reddy launches new party; BJP says won't be threat in Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BELAGAVI, DECEMBER 25

MINING BARON and former Karnataka minister Gali Janardhan Reddy on Sunday announced a new political party and said he would contest the coming Assembly election from Gangavathi constituency in Koppal district. Minister for Tourism and Infrastructure Development in the BJP-led Karnataka government from 2008 to 2011, Reddy is being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for alleged illegal extraction and money laundering.

Reddy said at a press conference that the Kalyana Rajya Pragathi Paksha, his party, would



Gali Janardhan Reddy

follow the ideals of social reformer Basavanna and stand against "the divisive politics pursued in the name of religion and caste".

Speculation was rife that Reddy would launch a new political outfit after he met Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy earlier this month. Though BJP leaders maintained that he no more had any relationship with the party, Reddy said people across the state believed he was still with the BJP. "That has turned out to be false," he said, adding that leaving the BJP was a tough decision.

"Reddy has been upset with the way the BJP has been ignoring him for a few years now," a BJP functionary said, adding that the new outfit may cut into the ruling party's vote share in certain constituencies, especially in Ballari district. Reddy played an instrumental role in strengthening the BJP in the district and is said to still

But dismissing the apprehension that Reddy's party would post a threat to the BJP, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi

have considerable clout there.

said, "No regional party has been successful in Karnataka." Senior BIP leader and former Chief Minister Jagdish Shettar said, "Let's see what will be its impact. I will discuss it with our party leaders.' Though he has been away

from active politics for more than a decade since the CBI first arrested him in 2011 on allegations of illegal mining, Reddy campaigned for incumbent Transport Minister B Sriramulu in 2018 in the constituency of Molakalmuru in Chitradurga district. But ahead of the polls that year, then BJP national president Amit Shah distanced the party from the mining baron, saying, "The BJP has nothing to do with Janardhan Reddy."

WORDLY WISE

WELFARE'S PURPOSE SHOULD BE TO ELIMINATE, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, THE NEED FOR ITS OWN EXISTENCE

-RONALD REAGAN

The Indian EXPRESS

∞ FOUNDED By ∞ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

RIGHT RECIPE

Government has done well to rejig its free grain scheme. New measure is physically and fiscally sustainable

HE NARENDRA MODI government has done the right thing by not extending the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) beyond December. The scheme, which provides 5 kg of foodgrains per month to about 81.35 crore people free of cost over and above their National Food Security Act (NFSA) entitlement of 5 kg per person per month at Rs 2-3/kg, was neither physically nor fiscally sus $tainable. A monthly \ ration \ of \ 10 \ kg (5 \ kg \ each \ under \ NFSA \ and \ PMGKAY) for \ 81.35 \ crore \ person \ error \ person \ er$ sons translates into nearly 100 million tonnes (mt) or over a third of India's total cereal production. The current stocks of rice and wheat in the Central pool, at 55.46 mt on December 1, are a third lower than a year ago. There isn't that much grain in the Food Corporation of India's warehouses today to distribute as was possible during the post-Covid lockdown period. And with economic activity normalising, there's no necessity either.

While discontinuing PMGKAY, the Modi government has, at the same time, decided to make available the 5 kg/person/month grains under NFSA free of cost for one year from January 2023. The fiscal implications shouldn't be too high; there's not much difference really between issuing 50 mt of wheat/rice at Rs 2-3/kg and giving it out free. Politically, it is a shrewd move replete with symbolism — which the ruling BJP will milk in the coming state elections and the general election in 2024. The NFSA, enacted in 2013 by the previous Congress-led UPA regime, made access to subsidised grain a legal right for up to three-fourths of India's rural and half of its urban population. The Modi government has taken it one step further. NFSA beneficiaries will, henceforth, receive not just subsidised grain but free grain. So long as this is limited to 5 kg - roughly half of the average monthly per capita cereal consumption as per the last National Sample Survey data for 2011-12 it can be considered a reasonable entitlement.

If only 50 mt of grain is required under the NFSA, and another 10-15 mt for other welfare schemes plus a buffer stock, government agencies don't need to procure more than 60-65 mt annually. Actual procurement, however, has averaged 90-100 mt (55-60 mt rice and $35\text{--}40\,\text{mt}$ wheat) in recent times, the last wheat marketing season being an anomaly due to a poor crop. The gap between the two is what has led to overflowing public godowns becoming the rule rather than the exception. It's time to dispense with the existing openended procurement of paddy and wheat at minimum support prices. All farm price support and input subsidies should be replaced with per-hectare income transfers, which will complement the limited grain entitlement for poor and vulnerable consumers under the NFSA.

NECESSARY DEBATE

Karnataka government stance on marital rape takes forward the conversation on the sensitive subject

AST WEEK, THE Karnataka government came out in support of putting a married man on trial for allegedly sexually assaulting his wife. In an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, the state government has indicated that it does not disagree with the Karnataka High Court's decision in March this year, refusing to quash rape charges filed by a wife against her husband, defying the exception in law. The issue of criminalising marital rape is a crucial and necessary conversation that is taking shape in courts. The state government's stance is a welcome intervention in this debate at a time when the Centre is still to formulate its view.

Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code that defines rape carves out a crucial exception: "Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under eighteen years of age, is not rape." This immunity for married men in law prevents a wife from filing a case of rape against her husband. In this context, the Karnataka HC ruling draws a new line. Justice M Nagaprasanna's order while acknowledging the existing law defies it by calling out the "age-old...regressive" thought behind the provision. The ruling called on lawmakers to hear the "voices of silence" while holding that "rape is a rape" even if the accused is the husband. However, much of the reasoning in this case is couched in references to the grim facts of the case (the complaint alleges sexual assault of the man's child as well) narrated by the woman. The Supreme Court has stayed the Karnataka HC order but the case has revived the debate on marital rape. Before this ruling, in 2018, the Gujarat High Court also called for a relook at the marital rape immunity but quashed the charge of rape against the married man. In May this year, the Delhi High Court delivered a split verdict in a case where it examined the constitutionality of the marital rape immunity. A two-judge bench of Justices Hari Shankar and Rajiv Shakdar recorded dia $metrically\ opposite\ findings\ in\ the\ decision.\ Justice\ Shakdar's\ decision\ holding\ that\ the$ provision is unconstitutional because it impinges on the personal liberty and right to equality of a woman has set the ball rolling.

The issue is complex, especially since the dominant social consensus on the subject is shaped by a conservative understanding of marriage as an institution. But neither social mores nor the letter of law are set in stone. The ongoing conversation in the courts needs to resonate in legislative bodies considering the social sensitivities in the matter. Legislators tend to pass the buck to the judiciary on issues considered socially controversial – for instance, decriminalising homosexuality, adultery or reform in personal law. However, when the idea of change is filled with fears of misuse, legislation alone can carefully reflect on the issue and reach a nuanced conclusion.

FREEZE FRAME

E P Unny



Empire vs nation

The choice in Ukraine is stark — either the peace of sovereign states or the permanent war of empires



"WE HAVE NO fear. Nor should anyone in the world have it...Ukraine holds its lines and it will never surrender." These words were addressed by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to all Americans on this year's darkest day, the winter solstice on December 22. Zelenskyy spent the previous day in Bakhmut, a frontline town in the Donbas where Ukrainian soldiers have held their lines since May, refusing to sur-

One year ago, most of them were busy decorating Christmas trees, cooking meals and reading books to their children. Today, they are freezing in mud-filled trenches. Many readily abandoned their peaceful lives, comfortable homes and the people they love for a frozen hellhole. They did this not because they are bloodthirsty warmongers or because they were forced into fighting by their government or by Americans, or because they fell into a mad nationalist frenzy. On the contrary, every Ukrainian soldier I met is eminently sane, lucid and steady in their purpose. "We will fight with everything that we have," said Vitaly Ustimenko, a sergeant now stationed in Bakhmut: "The human civilisation is with us. We have everything to lose." Grim and exhausted, Vitaly was anything but grandstanding; he simply voiced what most Ukrainians now think and feel.

The war that Russia has unleashed against Ukraine is a struggle not only for Ukrainian lands and lives. It is a battle for all our collective futures, for the future of humankind. Just as the outcome of the Second World War shaped the world we now live in, this war - already a world war in all but its name - will determine our inexorably conjoined destinies. In the era of weapons that can wipe out half the world in a quarter of an hour, the significance of this outcome is as global as it is existential.

The Second World War was an apogee of European imperialism, when the empire came home to self-destruct. Hitler shared with the other European imperialists' the

right to subjugate the weak. Just like rulers of the French and British empires, Hitler believed that countries that have bigger armies and more advanced arms can legitimately conquer, enslave or kill anyone else. Just like them, he assumed that those with more means to conquer constitute a superior race. His war of imperial conquest followed this idea to its macabre logical end. The realisation that in the industrial age empire is a fatally misguided idea came to Europe at the cost of 20 million European lives, and twice as many worldwide. A new world map arose out of the devastation, as did a new global order that gave every state, whether a former coloniser or a colony, the right to govern itself within its borders. If most of human history has been a history of empires, the Second World War put an end to empire as a legitimate political principle.

conviction that the strong have a natural

But empires refuse to die. In the post-War world the Russian/Soviet and American empires displaced the European ones and brought an era of new imperial wars. Illegal and covert, proxy and justified through contortions, these wars have normalised the reasoning of empire - of might's right — and rolled back the order of sovereign states.

Putin has always appealed to this to justify his invasions — of Chechnya, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine – citing Russia's "sphere of influence" and "interest zone". In other words, colonies. A global chorus of "Putin-Verstehers" purveys this vision, insisting that Ukraine must concede its lands, people and properties to strike a peace deal because Russia is bigger and stronger, and Ukraine smaller and weaker, and that is how the world works. This chorus has singers on the political right and left, among Austrian neo-Nazis and Bengali Communists, among supporters of Trump and - most peculiarly - critics of imperialism across the Global South.

Ukrainians have defied all this. With

every Russian tank they stopped with their bare hands, with every town they liberated, with every surgery they conducted without light or heat they have shown that it does not have to be this way. By standing up to the most unceremoniously aggressive coloniser-state 18 times its size, Ukraine has shown that the tyranny of crude force can be stopped. Indeed, it must be stopped for all our futures.

This is why, in his speech, Zelenskyy said that aid to Ukraine "is not charity, it is your investment in global security" for "this war will define what world our children and grandchildren, and their children and grandchildren will live in." This is not a hyperbole. This war is not only a standoff between a ravenous tyranny and a democracy fighting for its life, but it is also a clash between the old order of empires and the new order of sovereign states. Its outcome will determine whether or not the world will descend into a new age of imperial conquests. And if the last large-scale attempt at imperial conquest took away 60 million human lives, any such attempt in the future may wipe out most of humanity.

The Ukrainian peace deal, which Zelenskyy urged on his audience, and which begins with Russia's total withdrawal from Ukrainian land, is neither unreasonable nor unrealistic. In fact, it is the only real peace for the modern world. Any other gives up on international law as a guarantor of collective security. As Immanuel Kant noted more than two hundred years ago in his essay on "Perpetual Peace," when we let go of universal law, we abandon peace. This is what Zelenskyy insists that we take seriously. And this is why Ukrainian soldiers have such steady resolve. This war comes at the end of a long history that has shown their choice to be simple and stark – either the peace of sovereign states or the permanent war of empires.

> The writer is Reader in Anthropology and Politics at King's College, London

A Partner's Duty

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India should give up its inward-looking approach in negotiating trade pact with EU

PRABHASH RANIAN

THE THIRD ROUND of negotiations of the India-European Union (EU) free trade agreement concluded recently. The two sides are also negotiating an investment protection agreement (IPA), which will contain investment protection standards and an independent mechanism to settle disputes between investors and states under international law.

Notwithstanding the laudable intent of the government to welcome them, foreign investors in India have often got into numerous regulatory troubles with the state. Several foreign corporations like Vodafone, Cairn Energy, Nissan, White Industries, Telenor, Nokia, Vedanta have sued India to enforce the rights guaranteed to them in bilateral investment treaties (BITs). This is the main motivation behind the EU seeking an IPA with India. Arguably, EU investors can rely on Indian law for protection. But Indian law can be unilaterally changed to the detriment of the investor. Moreover, the Indian judiciary is agonisingly slow in resolving disputes. Thus, the longing for protection under international law.

But the road to a successful India-EU IPA is going to be bumpy largely because of India's inward-looking approach to investment protection under international law as enunciated in India's 2016 Model BIT. The following differences between the two sides are daunting.

First, India wants to push taxation measures outside the scope of the treaty by making tax-related regulatory measures non-justiciable. The EU has difficulty accepting this proposition given the recent history of India's tax-related investment disputes with

INDIAN EXPRESS

India should review the 2016 Model BIT, as has also been recommended by the Parliament's standing committee on external affairs. Simultaneously, India should evolve a clear position on MIC, and, like the EU, maintain high transparency in negotiations by publicly articulating its position on critical issues.

Vodafone, Cairn Energy, and Nissan,

Second, the EU's investment proposal to India talks of creating a two-tier court-like system with an appellate mechanism and tenured judges to resolve treaty disputes between investors and the state. This proposal is connected to the EU's stand internationally for creating a multilateral investment court (MIC), negotiations for which are going on at the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). The MIC is aimed at overcoming the weaknesses of the current arbitration-based system of settling investor-state disputes. India's position on creating an investment-court-like system is unknown. India hasn't publicly contributed to the ongoing negotiations at UNCITRAL towards establishing a MIC.

Third, the EU's investment proposal contains a most favoured nation (MFN) provision to ensure that EU investors do not face discrimination vis-à-vis other foreign investors. On the other hand, India's position is not to include the MFN provision in its investment treaties because of the apprehension that foreign investors will use the MFN clause to indulge in disruptive treaty shopping. The solution to such disruptive treaty shopping is to negotiate for a qualified MFN provision and not exclude it altogether.

Fourth, the EU investment proposal contains what is known as a fair and equitable treatment (FET) provision, which is missing in the Indian 2016 Model BIT. The FET provision protects foreign investors, for example, by making the states liable if it goes back on the

specific assurances made to an investor to induce investments on which the investor relied while making the investment.

A popular yet flawed perception in India is that investment treaties like the India-EU IPA are not needed because foreign investors are anyway thronging Indian shores. Nothing can be further from the truth. According to Arvind Subramanian and Josh Felman, overall FDI to India has stagnated for the past decade at around 2 per cent of the GDP. In the case of the EU, while its share in foreign investment stock in India increased from €63.7 billion in 2017 to €87.3 billion in 2020, this is way below the EU foreign investment stocks in China (€201.2 billion) or Brazil (€263.4 billion). Furthermore, recent research by Simon Hartmann and Rok Spruk shows that India's decision to unilaterally terminate BITs has negatively impacted FDI inflows to India. Thus, India needs the IPA with the EU to attract FDI for achieving the aspirational milestone of becoming a \$10-trillion economy by 2030.

But first, India needs to put its own house in order. India should review the 2016 Model BIT, as has also been recommended by the Parliament's standing committee on external affairs. Simultaneously, India should evolve a clear position on MIC, and, like the EU, maintain high transparency in negotiations by publicly articulating its position on critical issues.

The writer is Professor and Vice Dean, Jindal Global Law School, O P Jindal Global University. Views are personal

DECEMBER 26, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

AKALI TALKS

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi will negotiate with Akali leaders on their demands after the elections in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tripura on January 5, Punjab Chief Minister Darbara Singh said. The CM $assured\,Akali\,leaders\,that\,they\,would\,not\,be$ arrested if they came to Delhi for discussions.

Workers' strike

A SERIES OF strikes involving about three million workers will affect the working of the public sector undertakings in the next one month, marking the beginning of a period of prolonged labour troubles ahead. Barring strikes in a few units with local demands, all

major all-India strikes are jointly sponsored by the Opposition-led trade unions in defence of their charter of demands, which includes scrapping of the Bureau of Public Enterprises' guidelines restricting wage raises.

Dissidents' party

FORMER CONGRESS (I) dissidents in Gujarat, who left the ruling party on December 1, have decided to form their own separate regional party which will be known as the Rashtriva Congress. The formal announcement of the new party will be made at the first state-level convention of the break-away group to be held in Navroji Hall in the Shahibaug area of Ahmedabad.

NTR's FIGHT

NOTWITHSTANDING THE VARIOUS handicaps that beset his party, the Telugu Desam president, NT Rama Rao, is fighting a relentless battle for power in the assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh. The regional party, which was founded by the glamour star of Telugu film industry nine months ago in a bid to topple the Congress-I from power and provide a "corruption-free" rule in the state, mainly lacks a well-drilled propaganda machinery and the galaxy of leaders that the ruling party can boast to gear electoral campaign. It is also no match to the infinite fund-raising capacity of the well-entrenched Congress-I.



THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2022

THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"To avoid a repeat of that dark day [January 6], an attack not only on the temple of democracy but democracy itself, Congress should erect more guardrails and voters should remain careful about whom they choose to lead."

- THE WASHINGTON POST

An engine for growth

India needs to increase its spending on research and development to become a global leader



BY ASHOK GULATI AND Purvi Thangaraj

WITH THE G20 presidency, India has an opportunity to set the global agenda and be in the limelight for at least a year. But, if it has to be a real leader, say a Vishwaguru, it has to do some heavy lifting for quite a number of years. The real Vishwaguru today is the US, which has retained its global leadership for almost a century since World War I. It is not just its military might but its technological superiority in various fields that has made the US the largest and most competitive open economy.

How did the US achieve all this? Thanks to the culture of innovation backed by a solid base of research and development (R&D). Innovation is rightly recognised as an engine for economic growth and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is right when he extended the old slogan of Lal Bahadur Shastri and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, jai jawan, jai kisan, jai vigyan, to include jai anusandhan (research and innovation). In 2016, the Modi government launched the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to create an ecosystem to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. All these are steps in the right direction, but the foundation of all this lies in how much India actually spends on R&D, both in absolute terms as well as a percentage of its GDP, in relation to other

Even the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030 aims to "build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation". In particular, SDG Target 9.5 calls upon nations to encourage innovation and substantially increase the numbers of researchers as well as public and private spending on R&D. Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) is the proposed aggregate to quantify a country's commitment to R&D.

According to UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) latest report, the G20 nations accounted for 90.6 per cent of global GERD (current, PPP\$) in 2018. Global R&D expenditure has reached a record high of about 2.2 trillion current PPP\$ (2018), while Research Intensity (R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP) has gradually increased from 1.43 per cent in 1998 to 1.72 per cent in 2018. Though looking at spending in PPP terms is a reasonable metric for welfare measurement in the economy, when it comes to technological prowess in high-end activities of R&D, it all boils down to measuring hard currency in US dollars.

The G20 countries, accounting for 86.2 per cent of the global GDP and over 60 per cent of the global population in 2021, are the leaders in every way. The US leads the G20 by spending \$581.6 billion on R&D followed by the European Union (\$323 billion), and China (\$297.3 billion) in 2018. India lags way behind with a paltry R&D expenditure of only \$17.6 billion in 2018. In terms of their relative shares

R&D INTENSITY OF G20 COUNTRIES, 2018 Research Intensity of GDP 2.83 0.65



Illustration: C R Sasikumai

in G20 R&D expenditure, the US is way ahead with 36 per cent, followed by the EU (20 per cent), and China (18 per cent). India's share is less than 1 per cent of G20 R&D expenditure

The lesson is very clear: To realise its dream of becoming a Vishwaguru, India has a long way to go. And the only way to achieve this seems to be by repurposing its massive expenditures on various subsidies ("revdi" culture) such as on food, fertilisers, PM Kisan, free power, and even the PLI scheme for manufacturing towards a multi-fold increase in expenditure on research and innovation.

While the absolute expenditure on R&D provides a sense of scale, their percentage to the respective GDP provides the research intensity(RI). It is interesting to note that in 2018 for which the latest information is available, South Korea has the highest RI at 4.43 per cent, followed by Japan (3.21 per cent), Germany (3.09 per cent), the US (2.83 per cent), France (2.19 per cent), China (2.14 per cent) and EU (2.02 per cent). India is ranked 17th in the G20, with a RI of 0.65 per cent (see infographics).

However, there are many non-G20 countries that have a higher RI than even the countries in the G20. But their absolute expenditure on R&D is relatively very small. One of these non-G20 countries is Israel, which, while having an R&D expenditure of just \$18.6 billion, a population of only 9.3 million and a per capita income of around \$51,430, has the highest RI of over 5 per cent. No wonder, Israel is known as a land of innovations, be it in defence or agriculture.

To realise its dream of becoming a Vishwaguru, India has a long way to go. And the only way to achieve this seems to be by repurposing its massive expenditures on various subsidies ('revdi; culture) such as on food, fertilisers, PM Kisan, free power, and even the PLI scheme for manufacturing towards a multi-fold increase in expenditure on research and

The innovation system in Israel is a fundamental driver of its economic growth and competitiveness. The government has played an important role in financing innovation, particularly in SMEs, and in providing well-functioning frameworks for innovation, such as venture capital (VC), incubators, strong science-industry links, and high-quality university education. Israel builds a strong case to show that despite being a smaller nation, sustainable growth can be achieved by prioritising investments in R&D. A lesson India can learn.

During India's G20 presidency, the engagement group, Science20, has the theme of "Disruptive Science for Innovative and Sustainable Development" focusing on universal holistic health; cure and prevention of disease; clean energy for a greener future; and connecting science to society and culture. It will be interesting to see how India can leverage this for the shared prosperity of the world.

But one thing is clear: India needs not only technological development and brilliance in various sectors ranging from defence to agriculture to manufacturing, but it desperately needs innovations that can safeguard its basic environment -- land, water, and air. India has shown its global leadership in the IT and digital world. If it can show similar breakthroughs in other sectors, it will turn its aspiration of Vishwaguru into reality and confidently enter the golden era of Amrit Kaal.

> Gulati is Distinguished Professor and Thangaraj a researcher at ICRIER

The last defender

Judiciary must stand up to attacks from a powerful executive, secure rule of law and protect the rights and liberties of citizens



DUSHYANT DAVE

THE CONTROVERSY OVER the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and high courts is not as straightforward as it appears. The executive wants to take complete control of the last bastion of democracy, the ju-

Under the Bharatiya Janata Party, the executive is all-pervasive. With constant attacks on opposition parties and their leaders. By coupling denigrating words with the skilful use of investigative agencies like the CBI, ED, etc., the executive seeks to place itself on a higher moral ground. Parliament is used to project the ruling party's ideology and actions. Real issues affecting the common man and the nation are debated in passing with selective information and statistics. The ruling dispensation is using Parliament to further its agenda.

The towering personality of the prime minister is eclipsing the cabinet and its role and every constitutional and critical appointment that is being made appears to suit the executive, be it the comptroller and auditor general of India, chief vigilance commissioner, election commissioners, cabinet secretary and other crucial secretaries or the heads of the ED, income tax department etc. What else can explain the extensions given to the ED head and the hurried appointment of the last election commissioner? Gujarat cadre officers belonging to IAS and IPS services, who have served the PM well in the past, seem to be chosen over deserving and independent officers from other state cadres.

What could the reason be for such subjectivity, except to consolidate power in the hands of a few? Skilful methods are adopted to depose duly-elected state governments run by opposition parties, thereby creating a constant challenge in governance. Attacks on critics, simply on account of tweets or articles, are designed to create an atmosphere of fear across the nation. Even films and actors are not spared, with Pathaan being the latest target. The prevention of two young actors from even offering prayers at the great temple of Mahakaleshwar in Ujjain is an example of the vigilantism that has gone unpunished by the state.

Minority communities are constant targets, in forms both subtle and unsubtle. In a Constitution Bench judgment of July 7, 2018, the Supreme Court said, "There can be no shadow of doubt that the authorities which are conferred with the responsibility to maintain law and order in the States have the principal obligation to see that vigilantism, be it cow vigilantism or any other vigilantism of any perception, does not take

The courts are being systematically approached by fringe elements in furtherance of such objectives and sadly, they are unable to see and stop such attempts, causing grave misgivings to millions of Indians.

After a virtual free run under a series of Chief Justices of India with the powers to constitute seemingly convenient benches and allocate cases to them, the judiciary under recent chief justices has shown remarkable resilience and is pushing back. Questions are being asked by judges on sensitive matters to sub-serve public purpose. Judgments and orders have been passed to protect the civil liberties and fundamental rights of citizens. All these may have upset those in power.

Thus, the not-so-veiled attacks by the law minister, followed by the vice president, himself a respected lawyer, are calculated to send a chilling message to the judiciary: Fall in line or we will take away your powers to appoint and transfer judges. They need to be reminded of Articles 141 and 144 of the Constitution, which make Supreme Court judgments the law of the land.

I have been an open critic of the collegium system installed by the Supreme Court, arrogating to itself powers that the Constitution does not. I even argued in support of the NJAC in a changed form. But that was in 2015. Having seen the government in action, I am now convinced that if the executive were to start appointing judges to the higher judiciary, they will end up making disastrous and subjective appointments as is being done for other constitutional offices. And that will be the death knell of democracy in India. Citizens will be deprived of their fundamental rights and civil liberties will be jeopardised.

The executive has crippled the judiciary by not providing much-needed funds for large-scale infrastructure and sufficient manpower. To top it all, the high pendency of cases in courts is also on somewhat on account of mis-governance and unlawful and arbitrary actions on part of the executive at every level, from the district to the

Rule of law and an independent judiciary are basic features of our Constitution. The two are deeply connected. Constitutional framers were quite clear in their resolve that "No Executive should be able to have any influence upon Judges." But as Ambedkar had feared, "... I feel, however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot". Our nation cannot afford its failure because millions of Indians sacrificed their lives, liberties, properties and peace for a free India and its Constitution. At a time when India has assumed the G20 presidency with year-long programmes in the country, it would be important for the country to showcase a functioning and vibrant democracy.

As the US president Andrew Jackson once said, "All the rights secured to the citizens under the Constitution are worth nothing, and a mere bubble, except guaranteed to them by an independent and virtuous Judiciary." There is a heavy burden on the collegium to build such a judiciary. Its functioning so far has been a mixed bag. It needs to be much more vigilant and objective in the future. Let us hope the executive does not prove Ambedkar right. If it does, let us pray that the judiciary will step in to defend the Constitution in letter and spirit.

> The writer is a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India and former President of the Supreme Court Bar



Tell our stories

For global success, Indian filmmakers must move beyond political binaries

innovation.

Vamsee Juluri

THE COMMERCIAL SUCCESS of some movies in India (and among the Indian diaspora) does not mean that these movies will be seen or felt the same way by foreign audiences whose impressions of India are already profoundly skewed in certain directions by a relentless,

hostile global propaganda campaign. Indian cinema has made ripples, although of different kinds, beyond our borders in the last few days. On the happier side, the Telugu blockbuster RRR won nominations for two Golden Globes. On a less pleasant note, the movie The Kashmir Files, despite its deeply emotional reception by survivors of the 1990s ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Hindu Pandits, was rather harshly described as "vulgar propaganda" by an Israeli movie

Since that time, there has been much controversy, reaching even diplomatic levels. While many people expressed dismay at Nadav Lapid's indifference to the victims of violence, some filmmaker friends of mine also found his stand to be noble.

There was also a debate of sorts between the concerned two directors. Lapid professed his inability to tell if the events in the movie really took place and worried about how survivors would react to it, but did not reconsider his criticism. Propaganda could be artistic too, like Sergei Eisenstein and Leni Reifenstahl, he wrote, and no one calls that propaganda now. But The Kashmir Files was

still, he insisted, just that. Vivek Agnihotri, in turn, pointed out that "propaganda" is often what anyone calls an opposing point of view. He reminded us that there is no dispute about the veracity of the horrible events depicted in his movie, and that

he had interviewed 700 victims for his story.

The debate appears to have paused there. with both camps perhaps settling down to feeling unheard by the other side, worrying exclusively about either Islamophobia, or Hinduphobia, respectively, even as public attention shifts again to RRR and tantalising claims about Indian soft power abroad (and of course, more polarising disputes about new Bollywood releases).

It is in this context that I would like to share some lessons from having screened and talked about Indian cinema with hundreds of non-Indian students over many years (my most recent talk, coincidentally enough, was a guest lecture in a Judaic Studies professor's class on nationalism where we discussed RRR).

The basic reality that Indian movie-makers, critics, and "soft power" buffs should confront is that often what works for an Indian viewer doesn't make sense to others at all. What we loved in a theatre in India, say, a Hum Aapke Hain Koun or Mr India, is rarely as engaging for students or viewers abroad, except if already deeply invested in the genre. There was indeed a bit of a speciality fascination around the world since the 1990s with "Bollywood," a loose signifier for everything from Shah Rukh Khan to diasporic movie makers like Mira Nair and Gurinder Chadha, but this never meant that Indian movies were actually advancing a narrative

With this reality check in mind, we might turn to some basic questions about taste, content and form.

Why is it that a movie like RRR (and before that Baahubali to an extent), managed to win the attention of both Indian and non-Indian viewers?

And why is it that a movie like The Kashmir Files, while evoking the heartbreaking sight of the survivors of the ethnic cleansing of the 1990s weeping in theatres after the screening, failed to win the sympathy of every artist who watched it?

Is the issue only one of rigid identity politics, with Hindus simply not counting as being worthy of having human rights in the eyes of the global human rights establishment? Or is there also a need to recognise limitations in our ability to tell stories that break across boundaries, in the best of times, let alone in these, our exceptionally polarised times?

I think there is a big risk that if we fail to consider these issues, we will find ourselves. despite RRR, with simply one more bungled renaissance.

Writers and movie-makers of a certain inclination have found commercial success in India in recent times partly because of their passion, but also partly because of the sheer representational starvation that Hindus, quite specifically, have felt in relation to cinema, publishing, and other cultural

If it's seen as pro-Hindu (or even pro-nationalist across the religious spectrum) or at least not gratuitously mean and mendacious towards Hindus in the name of some nobler political ideal, (aka "wokeness"), it will sell. Here. But only here.

As the Lapid unpleasantness shows us. if Indian storytellers (and their soft-power, foreign-policy, think-tank-type friends) don't get the global landscape of tastes, sensibilities, and desires today, even the most seem-

ingly important truths to Indian audiences will be callously dismissed by others. The dichotomy that has plagued us between those who seemingly "sell out" to crassly racist neo-orientalist cravings about India, and those who "settle in" complacently to the dull, insular, polarisation-dependent tastes of our own, has to be overcome.

Indian storytellers must urgently learn to neither sell-out nor settle in, but actually,

In conclusion, since accusations of propaganda and counter-propaganda only take us so far in learning to communicate better, perhaps India's soft power heads could take a simple lesson from someone they might recognise better.

Carl Von Clausewitz wrote that in a war, propaganda had to be considered in relation to all three audiences: Supporters, enemies, and those who were neutral. The India story that we have witnessed for the past few years, unfortunately, has focused almost exclusively on the first category. If Indian cinema is to go global, and if the India story is to be really accepted by the world, we will have to learn to speak to all three audiences in the future, rather than merely label anyone who disagrees slightly as enemies or anti-nationals.

The real sign of narratives being changed will be when those who are neutral find themselves sympathetic to an experience or point of view.

Until then, it will just be "our propaganda, their propaganda," and not a bridge

> The writer is professor of media studies at the University of San Francisco

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wrong response

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Targeting the song' (IE, December 24). One can argue that the cited poem by Muhammad Igbal should not be a part of a secular curriculum. It is not "free of faith-based language and undertones". But, it cannot be argued as a case of "hurting religious sentiments", given that it was included in a course for an Urdu primary school. The invoking of Indian Penal Code sections 298 (deliberate intention to wound religious sentiments) and 153 (provocation with intent to cause riot) against the staff by the Uttar Pradesh government is an avoidable and exaggerated response.

Y G Chouksey, Pune

Prepare for China

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Tackling Beijing' (IE, December 24). As China continues with its tactics at the border, the Indian troops have to be prepared to hold their own against the PLA at various points all along the LAC. There will be more flare ups like Tawang. Diplomatic parleys and ramping up military infrastructure are the need of the hour.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

COVID AGAIN

New Delhi

THIS REFERS TO the article, The Covid spectre again' (IE, December 24). With the festive season currently going on, it is imperative that basic Covid protocols

reis sincerely observed in view of spread of Covid-19 BF. 7. This variant, wreaking havoc in China, can lead to major spikes in various countries, including India. We must adopt a proactive approach to ward off the menace and stay safe. Medical staff must remain ready in all respects to counter the problem with the help of local administra-

tion and society.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

ATAL'S LEGACY

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Vajpayee played positive role in changing anti-BIP views: Kovind' (IE, December 25). Atal Bihari Vajpayee was elected to the Lok Sabha 10 times and twice to the Rajya Sabha. He was a parliamentarian par excellence, who had the trust and affection of the people he governed. He made important contributions which paved the way for a stronger economy through bold reforms and rapid development of infrastructure. Vajpayee was a great statesman who served three terms as the prime minister of the country. Under his government, the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was introduced, which revolutionised bank lending to farmers. In the same year, nuclear tests made India a full-fledged nuclear power. He also took major initiatives to bring peace between India and Pakistan. The country also remembers him for the first national telecom policy and several grand infrastructure projects.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

12 EXPRESS NETWORK

GUJARAT

Korean man dies in paragliding accident

Gandhinagar: A 51-yearold South Korean man died after falling from around 50 feet while paragliding in Kadi of Mehsana district Saturday evening. According to police, Korean national Shin Byeong Moon was in Gujarat on an invitation from one of his friends in Vadodara. A case of accidental death has been registered and investigations are on to ascertain the reason behind the accident. Patel added that a team from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) is investigating the reasons behind the accident. "A case of accidental death has been registered and process is on to send his body home, Patel said.

UTTARAKHAND Tiger kills man

in Corbett

Rishikesh: A 32-year-old man was killed by a tiger in Ramnagar forest division of Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR), officials said on Sunday. The half-eaten body of Nafees was recovered on Sunday morning, 150 metres away from a bridge over Panod canal, CTR Director Dhiraj Pandey said. Nafees was dragged away from near the canal by the tiger late Saturday evening when he was drinking liquor along with some friends, he said Nafees was a resident of Khatari village near Ramnagar, Pandey said.

PUNJAB

2 arrested with 10 kg heroin

Amritsar: Punjab Police has busted a drug smuggling cartel with the arrest of its two kingpins after recovering 10 kg heroin and one sophisticated drone from their possession, said DGP Gaurav Yadav here on Sunday. The arrested smugglers, identified as Dalbir and Gharinda in Amritsar, had been allegedly engaged in drug trafficking for the last three years and have no criminal case registered against them. An FIR was registered under sections 21 and 23 of the NDPS Act. Police teams have been conducting raids at 12 locations in Harvana and

Cops: 2 days after friend's death, Russian tourist dies by suicide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA RAYAGADA, DECEMBER 25

A RUSSIAN tourist died after falling from the third floor of a hotel in Odisha's Rayagada district, two days after his fellow traveller was found dead there, police said on Sunday.

Pavel Anthom, 65, was found lying in a pool of blood outside the hotel on Saturday, they said. Vladimir Bidenov, Pavel's co-

traveller, was found dead at the same hotel on December 22. He was found lying unconscious in his room on the first floor of the hotel with a few empty wine bottles around him. When taken to the district hospital, doctors declared him dead

Vladimir and Pavel were part of a four-member group of Russian tourists who along with their guide Jitendra Singh had checked into the hotel in Rayagada town on Wednesday.

On Pavel's death, a senior police officer said it appeared to be a case of suicide. "Pavel was in depression due to the death of his friend," he said.

The police said they are investigating Pavel's death from all angles. Two other members of the group were asked to stay back and coordinate with the investigation, the officer said.

MP man held, his house demolished after video of him assaulting woman goes viral

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA REWA, DECEMBER 25

A VIRAL video of a 24-year-old man beating up a woman known to him in Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh prompted the authorities to arrest the accused, demolish his house and suspend the in-charge of the area police station for "dereliction of duty".

The accused, a driver, was arrested from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday night, Superintendent of Police (SP) Navneet Bhasin said. The 19-yearold victim was admitted to a hospital in a critical condition and she is undergoing treatment, he said.

Taking to Twitter, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the ac-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 25

A HUGE cache of arms and am-

munition and "war-like stores",

including AK-74 rifles, Pakistan-

origin hand grenades and bal-

loons with "I Love Pakistan"

markings, were recovered along

the Line of Control (LoC) in Uri

Sector of Jammu and Kashmir's

Baramulla district, an Army offi-

a time when there is desperation

on the Pakistan side to either in-

filtrate terrorists or smuggle war-

like stores into Kashmir as the

number of ultras and arms and

ammunition was at an all-time

Commanding(GOC) of Army's 19

Infantry Division Major General

Ajay Chandpuria said, based on

intelligence inputs received from

multiple intelligence agencies

over two weeks about infiltration

attempts and dumping of war-

like stores by terrorists in the

Hathlanga area of Rampur Sector

in Uri, multiple ambushes and

search operations were con-

On Friday, a search operation

was launched in the general area

of Hathlanga Nala that lasted for

eight hours and concluded with

the recovery of arms, ammuni-

ducted along the LoC.

Giving details, General Officer

low in the Valley, he said.

The recoveries were made at

cer said on Friday.



A video grab of demolition of the house of the accused

cancelled. "In the incident of a brutal attack on a young woman in Maugani area of Rewa district, the criminal, Pankaj Tripathi, has been arrested and bulldozer has been run over his house... Anyone who commits atrocities on women in Madhya Pradesh will not be spared," Chouhan

tweeted in Hindi. Police registered a case against

Huge cache of arms, ammunition

seized in J&K's Uri sector: Army

the accused under sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 366 (abduction) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code after the video of the attack, which took place earlier this week, surfaced on social media.

In the video, the woman is seen asking the accused to marry her. The man initially gets kick and slap her repeatedly in the face and keeps attacking her even after she faints.

The victim went to the police station to inform about the incident but refused to lodge a complaint. The accused was detained under Section 151 (disturbing public peace) of the IPC and later released, an official said.

After the video went viral, the in-charge of Mauganj police station, Shweta Maurya, was suspended for dereliction of duty, and the district authorities demolished the house of the accused in Dhera village, the official said.

The victim, meanwhile, has lodged a police complaint against the person who shot and circulated the video and a case has been registered under Information Technology Act, the

Agra man who

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A 40-YEAR-OLD man, who returned from China two days ago, has tested positive for Covid-19 following which he has been isolated at his home here, Chief Medical Officer Arun Srivastava said on Sunday. His samples will be sent to Lucknow for genome

"The man has been isolated asked to conduct tests of his fam-Srivastava said.

The man returned to Agra from China via Delhi on December 23 following which he was tested at a private lab. The report came out positive for Covid, he added.

case in the district detected after November 25, officials said. Amid a surge in Covid cases

The Centre had said RT-PCR test would be made mandatory for passengers from China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore

returned from China tests positive for Covid

sequencing, he said.

at his home and teams of the health department have been ily members and those who came in contact with him,"

This the first Covid positive

in some countries, including China, the Centre has ramped up its anti-coronavirus measures.

and Thailand.

AGRA. DECEMBER 25

Assam CM distances himself from 'police letter' seeking info on churches, conversions

Arms, ammunition recovered from Uri sector in J&K. PTI

DEBRAJ DEB

AGARTALA, DECEMBER 25

ASSAM CHIEF Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday "completely disassociated" himself from a controversial letter, purportedly issued by the Special Branch of Assam police seeking information on pattern of religious conversions and the number of churches in the state, and asked the DGP to take immediate corrective measures.

The purported letter, which was issued on December 16 by an SP-rank officer of the Special Branch, referred to discussions held



Biswa Sarma

during an SPs' conference at Staff

Himanta

tion and war-like stores, he said.

AK-74 rifles, 24 AK-74 rifle maga-

zines, 560 7.62 mm AK-74 live am-

munition, 12.30mm Chinese pis-

tols, 24 Chinese pistol magazines,

244.30mm pistol live ammuni-

tion, nine Chinese hand grenades,

five Pakistan-origin hand

grenades, 81 balloons with "I Love

Pakistan" marking on them and

The recoveries include eight

College on November 2 this year. The purported letter sought top officials of the state police, including all district police su-

perintendents, to furnish details of new churches established in the last one year and other data such as details of allotted land. instances of conversion in last six years, other patterns associated with religious conversion, iden-

tity of persons playing a "pivotal role" in conversion activities and status of police cases lodged against such persons, prime factors responsible for religious conversions, among other issues. Distancing himself from the

five synthetic gunny bags with

Pakistan marking, the officer said.

eight operations along the LoC

or close to it, 14 AK rifles, 20 pis-

tols, one M16 rifle, 76 hand

grenades, 1226 AK rounds, 484

9mm rounds, 15kg drugs and 10

more suspicious narcotics pack-

ets have been recovered, the of-

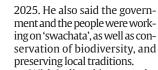
In this sector, this year, six to

letter, Sarma said, "I feel we should not asking for such information, like how many churches (are there) in Assam. This might hurt the sentiments of a particular religious community.... I would like to clarify the position of the government of Assam. We don't want to have any survey on any church or, for that matter, on any other religious institution..." "In short, I completely dissoci-

never discussed at any government forum. As an Assamese, we want to live in harmony with all communities. I think the DGP will take corrective measures," he said.

On the issue of religious conversions, the CM said a distinction exists between forceful conversions and otherwise. He also clarified that Assam doesn't have any law as yet to regulate religious conversions. His assurance comes in the midst of concerns voiced by Christian forums, which said, "We are pained for the simple fact that the Christian community has rendered yeoman service in the fields of education and health.'

MORE THAN 300 JEE, NEET ASPIRANTS VISIT TEMPLE DAILY



With India taking over the presidency of the G20 and preparing to host the summit of the intergovernmental forum. Modi also said, "In the year 2023, we have to take the enthusiasm of G20 to new heights - make

this event a mass movement." Recounting the various successes of 2022, the Prime Minister spoke of India achieving the status of the world's fifth largest economy, crossing the "magical" exports figure of \$400 billion, administering more than 220 crore Covid-19 vaccines shots, and welcoming the country's first indige-

nous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. Modi also spoke of the various events organised to celebrate "unity and togetherness", such as the Madhavpur Mela in Gujarat, the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam, and the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign to celebrate India's 75 years of Independence.

Modi also wished everyone for Christmas and also pointed out that it was the birthday of former prime minister Atal

'DEGENERATION AND WRONG TENDENCIES' IN CPI(M)

LAST MANN KI BAAT OF 2022

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi

on Sunday, while extending

Christmas and New Year wishes

to the people, advised them to be

"a little cautious" as they enjoy

the festivals amid reports of in-

creasing Covid-19 cases in other

countries. He was delivering his

96th 'Mann Ki Baat' address -

"You are also seeing that co-

rona is increasing in many coun-

tries of the world, so we have to

take more care of precautions like

masks and hand-washing. If we

are careful, then we will also be

safe and there will be no hin-

drance in our enjoyment," he said.

view meeting on the Covid-19

situation and preparedness in

the country earlier this week

amid reports of a surge in cases

in China. Throughout the week,

there were meetings involving

the Union Health Minister and

state health officials, and a num-

ber of guidelines were issued re-

garding increasing Covid-19

tests, random testing of interna-

tional travellers, and increasing

genome sequencing, among

The Prime Minister held a re-

the last one for 2022.

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

Enjoy festivals but be

PM Modi's remarks came

cases in other countries

amid rising number of Covid

other measures. Several states

also announced that they were

getting their health infrastruc-

ture ready for a possible increase

see a decline in the number of

cases, there has been an upward

trend in cases globally for the last

six weeks, with an average of 5.9

In Sunday's 'Mann Ki Baat'

address, Modi spoke of the work

being done to prove the efficacy

of traditional practices like yoga

and Ayurveda, and said the

country was on the brink of

eliminating kala azar (visceral

leishmaniasis) and that it was

working towards the goal of

eliminating tuberculosis by

lakh cases reported a day.

Although India continues to

in Covid numbers.

a little cautious: PM

P Jayarajan ups ante, keeps debate on EP Jayarajan alive in Kerala

SHAJU PHILIP

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 25

DAYS AFTER the Kerala CPI(M) resolved to fight against "degeneration and wrong tendencies" among party cadres, senior party leader from Kannur P Javaraian on Sunday upped the ante saving those who won't mend their ways would not remain in the party.

Addressing a party function in Kasaragod, P Jayarajan said, There is degeneration in society. When that affects a party worker, CPI(M) would debate it. A party cadre has to surrender his personal interest before that of the party as well as society. If party's ideology, it will seek rectification. Those who do not correct their ways would not have any slot in the organisation. If there is a debate, the party would not collapse, instead it would emerge as refined gold."

P Jayarajan's resolve came a day after media reports claimed that he had sought a probe into the financial dealings of party's central committee member and Left Democratic Front convener EP Jayarajan. Both Jayarajans hail

from Kannur district of Kerala. It is learnt that P Javaraian was referring to E P Jayarajan's alleged link to an ayurvedic resort, constructed in Kannur in 2014, in which his family members have direct stakes. The resort has come up in Morazha village, the native place of CPI(M) state secretary and Taliparamba legislator M V Govindan.

P Jayarajan had reportedly

Kota students scribble on 'wall of beliefs' to crack exams

the temple daily, they said. A

record two lakh students have

enrolled in various coaching in-

New Delhi

stitutes here this year.



P Jayarajan and E P Jayarajan

raised the issue in the meeting of the party state committee held on Wednesday and Thursday.

Govindan told the media after the meeting that there were "wrong tendencies in the party, which would not be tolerated". "If there are unacceptable tendencies, the party would interis a continuing process," he said.

P Jayarajan on Saturday had

denied media reports on his allegations against the LDF convener. "E P Jayarajan is a prominent leader. That he is running a resort has not come to my notice. There would be intra-party struggle in CPI(M) against wrong tendencies... The committee has not met to raise any personal allegations. We cannot share any details of the discussion in the committee with the media," he said

CPI(M) leaders, including party media, have remained tightlipped about the allegations. E P Jayarajan, too, has not responded to the media reports on the allegations. His social media posts on Sunday were mostly confined to customary Christmas greetings.

Both Jayarajans are powerful leaders in the CPI(M) and both got side-lined in the party over different reasons.

by the temple authorities, the

"wall of beliefs" was named af-

ter the temple became popular

E P Jayarajan had been the second-in command in the previous LDF government led by Pinarayi Vijayan. In 2021, he was denied ticket from Mattannur Assembly seat by the party, which decided not to field any legislator who had completed two consecutive terms. Stung by the decision, E P Jayarajan announced that he was quitting electoral politics. The announcement left the party leadership red-faced as it was against the Communist style of functioning.

After MV Govindan, another central committee member became party state secretary after the death of Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, E P Jayarajan has been keeping away from active sons. Govindan is junior to E P Jayarajan in the party.

On the other hand, P Jayarajan, arguably one of the most popular CPI(M) leaders in Kannur, found himself on the wrong side of the party bosses after Vijayan assumed office in 2016.

He had often faced the allegation of being the darling of lumpen elements in the party who indulged in violence. After Vijayan became the Chief Minister in 2016, he was not keen on promoting "P Jayarajan brand of politics".

P Jayarajan, who was earlier CPI(M)'s Kannur district secretary, had been fielded as a party candidate in the Lok Sabha elections in 2019. He lost the polls and was not reinstated as party district secretary. Jayarajan is a state committee member. Recently, he was made the vicechairman of Khadi Board.

and students got cemented, we

decided to make dedicated areas

in the temple and called it 'wall

of beliefs," Kishan Bihari, one of

two months because the walls of-

ten get filled with wishes and there

we also give them blessings and

prashad and encourage them that

"Whenever students come.

is no space for others to write.

Another priest Trilok Sharma said the temple is repainted every

the temple priests, told PTI.

Sacked from job, 2 workers kill factory owner, 2 of his relatives in Surat; nabbed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE SURAT, DECEMBER 25

TWO LABOURERS who were removed from job allegedly stabbed to death the owner of an embroidery unit in Surat, his father and uncle on Sunday, police said, adding that the accused duo. including a minor, was nabbed.

According to police, Kalpesh Dholakiya (36), a resident of Katgargam, who runs embroidery unit Vedant Taxo at Anjani industrial estate in Amroli, was taking rest in the factory with his father Dhanji Dholakiya (61) and maternal uncle Ghanshyam Rojodiya 56) when the two labourers stabbed them before escaping.

Hearing the commotion, other labourers rushed to the spot and took the injured to a hospital in Katargam, where the three died. Amroli police registered a case employed the two accused rebuked them and removed them from the job. However, afcame back and attacked Kalpesh, Dhanji and Ghanshyam."

The deceased belong to Patidar community and community leaders led by Mathur Sawani, CP Vanani and Dinesh Navadiya met state Home Minister and

of murder against the two workers — Ashok Raut, 21, and the 17year-old accused — both residents of Surat Municipal Corporation Awas at Kosad and natives of Ganjam district in Odisha. Police said an SIT led by DCP Zone 5 Harshad Mehta has been formed.

Amroli police inspector PP Brahmbhatt said, "Kalpesh had around 10 days ago. Sunday morning, Kalpesh along with his father came to the factory and found both of them sleeping. He ter some time, the labourers

made representations.

KOTA, DECEMBER 25 "PLEASE LET me get selected in NEET 2023", "Dear God, please give my concentration back", "AIIMS Delhi please", "IIT Delhi for me and Google for my

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

any diary but wishes scribbled on "wall of beliefs" at a temple here by scores of coaching centre students. Lakhs of students come to Rajasthan's coaching hub Kota every year with dreams of getting into some of the country's most prestigious engineering and medical colleges, but many soon

According to the priests at the Radha Krishna temple in Talwandi area, the faith of stu-

the burden of expectations.

find themselves bogged down by

hectic routines, peer pressure and



Radha Krishna temple in Kota's Talwandi area has to be repainted every two months. PTI

dents has been so strongly cemented over the years that the temple has to be repainted every More than 300 students visit

Initially seen as defacement

in early 2000 when a few students who had scribbled their prayers cleared the engineering entrance exam IIT JEE and medical entrance tests. "Long back, when a few students came to pray here, they scribbled their wishes asking for their selection in IIT JEE or medical entrance tests. A few months later, parents of two students vis-

claiming the wishes of their children scribbled on the wall have been fulfilled and from there it became a trend. "Initially, people used to write their wishes anywhere on the temple walls and we tried discouraging them citing deface-

ment and also warned of action.

But later when the faith of locals

ited the temple and offered to

make a donation for the temple

God only helps when you do your best. Hardwork is the key. We keep talking to students and parents. At times we find students have even written the choice of their colleges or their ranks. We

but it also has to be supplemented with efforts," he said. Battling with stress amid the

cut-throat competition, the temple is also the place for students to meditate and feel better.

explain that it is good to manifest

9 6 @ieExplained #ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

New In The New Year

Nine state stops on road to Lok Sabha 2024

2023 is packed with state elections that could shape the political script of 2024. The popularity of Modi and BJP will be tested as he nears the end of his second term. Rahul will hope to walk further on the road to Congress revival. Kejriwal will try to go from being a successful disruptor to a claimant for bigger prizes.



Manoj CG

WITH A mix of fear and hope, India came out of the long shadow of Covid in 2022 and life and politics — the latter more turbulent and fractious than at any time in recent history started to return to normal. 2022 saw ideological divisions worsen, social and communal cleavages deepen, and the political chasm between the BJP and the opposition widen.

The BJP maintained its electoral dominance, winning five of the seven state elections including Uttar Pradesh, but the defeat in Himachal Pradesh at the end of the year came as a reality check. Prime Minister Narendra Modi continued to occupy the political centrestage, and his popularity, at least electorally, remained more or less intact.

The Congress finally addressed its leadership question by choosing Mallikarjun Kharge. Former president Rahul Gandhi's ambitious march from Kanyakumari to Kashmir got him significant mileage but his party's electoral woes continued. The Himachal victory brought hope, but it was decimated in Punjab and Gujarat.

Fleet-footed parties like the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Trinamool Congress (TMC) are posing a challenge to the grand old party in newer territories. The AAP emphatically declared its arrival in 2022, knocking down the Congress in Punjab and registering its presence in Goa and Gujarat

The bitterness in politics, both in Parliament and outside, worsened. Conversations in social media and elsewhere took on clearer communal overtones. In litigation around the Gyanvapi mosque-Kashi Vishwanath Temple dispute, in the gruesome beheading in Udaipur and the grisly murder of Shraddha Walkar, and in the nonsensical controversy over a Shah Rukh Khan-Deepika Padukone song, the communal cauldron was kept simmering

The government sought to hardsell India's G20 presidency even as the economic recovery remained tentative with the Russia-Ukraine war pushing up food and energy prices. To address the jobs crisis, it rolled out the Agnipath scheme despite massive street protests, it clashed with the higher judiciary, and it tried to turn the Chinese aggression at the LAC into a political attack on the opposition.

The political calendar of 2023 is packed with high-stakes state elections. Political events of 2023 are important because they have the potential to shape the debate and narrative for the Lok Sabha battle of 2024.

The semi-final clash

2023, in all likelihood, will shape the political script of 2024.

The BJP and Congress will be in election mode throughout the year. From Tripura, Meghalaya, and Nagaland in February-March, Karnataka in May, and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, and Telangana in November-December, they will clash in state elections around the country – the outcomes of which will give a sense of the way the political wind is blowing.

The ruling party won Gujarat, UP, Uttarakhand, Goa, and Manipur in 2022, but it will not rest on its laurels. The nine states that will



FEBRUARY-MARCH: Assembly elections in Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland

MAY: Assembly elections in Karnataka

JULY-AUGUST: Rajya Sabha elections for 10 seats, the bulk of them in West Bengal

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER: Assembly elections in Madhya

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram

go to polls next year account for 116 Lok Sabha seats. Some of them have voted differently in the previous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. In 2018, the BJP lost in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, but decimated the Congress in Lok Sabha elections a year later.

The ruling party is not in great shape in Karnataka; the situation of the Congress is no different in Rajasthan. Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh could spring surprises. In Telangana, the BJP will use its full might and organisational firepower to try to dislodge K Chandrashekar Rao's Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) — now rechristened Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) - and take a second South Indian state.

It will also be a crucial year for the TMC, which is keen to extend its political presence outside West Bengal. The AAP's massive success in Puniab and its small but significant openings in Goa (2 seats) and Gujarat (5 seats) would have made the TMC both anxious and hopeful. Mamata Banerjee's party is working hard to make inroads in Tripura and Meghalaya.



The BJP will try to present the

India's growing global stature

under Modi's leadership. The

government's ongoing tussle

intensify further next year.

with the Supreme Court could

G20 summit as evidence of

intact. While caste, community, and regional equations play a key role in state elections and campaigns are often centered around local issues, the ruling party has always banked on Modi's carefully crafted charisma and appeal. This strategy will be put to test again in 2023. Every decision and policy announcement

of the Modi government next year will be viewed and analysed from the point of view of the Lok Sabha election. The first glimpse of the government's political strategy could come in the Union Budget, the last full budget before the 2024 elections. The recovery has been slow, inflation has soared, and the global economic situation remains uncertain.

Will the government resort to a slew of bigbang populist promises and measures? How will it strike a balance among fiscal prudence, economic growth, and electoral imperatives?

Another key question: Will the Modi cabinet don a new look next year? The timing and scale of the reshuffle — if it happens will be interesting. Much of the government's attention will

be on the G20 summit in September. It has managed to create a hype around India's presidency, and the build-up to the summit is key to its plan to position the event as an occasion for national rejoicing, and to use it to proclaim India's growing stature under Modi.

Will Assembly elections be held in Jammu and Kashmir in the summer? The government will be keen to hold transparent elections in J&K ahead of the summit to send out a message to the world.

The second half of the year will see the build-up to the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The trust overseeing the construction has signalled that celebrations for opening the mandir will start in December, in time for the Lok Sabha election.

Congress: Revive or perish

This year saw the Congress unveil two experiments that broke from its recent history. The Gandhis made way for a person outside the first family to become party president, and Rahul Gandhi embarked on his arduous Yatra with the hope of turning around both his party's fortunes and his own image.

After a four-year electoral drought, the Congress tasted success in a state election (Himachal) but it was humiliated in Punjab and Gujarat. The impact of the Yatra, if any, and the effect of the separation of powers will be visible next year. Rahul's walkathon has helped dilute the perception that he is a non-serious leader. But it is too early to rush

to predictions that have been made - and proven wrong – earlier.

Kharge has shown signs of emerging as a potent speaker who could take on the BJP. It is to be seen whether he can bring at least some opposition parties together in a credible coalition.

Of the election-bound states next year, two are ruled by the Congress. The party will have to win some and retain some if it is to pose a credible challenge to the Modi juggernaut in 2024. It fancies its chances in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, and believes it is on a stronger wicket in Chhattisgarh. However, it also has a recent history of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

While the G23, which functioned as a pressure group within the party, has lost its relevance, the big organisational question is whether Kharge and the leadership would agree to hold elections to the Working Committee at the AICC plenary in Raipur in February. The biggest challenge for the Congress — and the opposition as a whole will be to navigate the politics of polarisation which will likely get worse in the election year.

AAP, regional forces, Opp unity

2022 was a defining year for AAP — it became the third party to be in power in more than one state, and it'll become the ninth national party. The big question is whether Arvind Kejriwal will try his brand of ideology-agnostic politics in states going to polls next year.

Kejriwal has to maintain the tempo if he has to emerge as a challenger to the BJP in 2024. And he has competition. The TMC and BRS have national ambitions, and Nitish Kumar has declared that the 2025 Bihar elections will be fought under Tejashwi Yadav's leadership, suggesting that he senses an opportunity for himself in national politics. It is significant that almost all non-Congress, non-BJP Prime Ministers have come from the Janata family.

What is Kejriwal's next big idea? Many in the opposition believe his brand of politics more or less mirrors that of the BJP. And that makes him persona non grata for many parties. As the AAP, TMC, and BRS eye national roles, the casualty will be opposition unity.

Is a pan Indian anti-BJP electoral coalition possible? Many parties prefer state-level alliances, though some are pushing for a non-BJP, non-Congress coalition — a sort of third front. Posturing and discussions in that direction will continue in the opposition space.

Government-judiciary conflict

The last months of this year saw the government and the Supreme Court enter into confrontation mode once again. After remaining silent for seven years, the government has started to express unhappiness over the scuttling of the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act by the apex court in 2015.

The Supreme Court has pushed back against the government's criticism of the collegium system. There is a tussle over names being recommended by the Supreme Court collegium for appointment as judges, with the government delaying appointments.

The opposition feels the government is keeping the threat of bringing back the NJAC alive to get the judiciary to fall in line. The tussle could worsen next year, as the court hears petitions and delivers judgments on matters with major political implications. Among them: appointment of members of the Election Commission, challenges to demonetisation and constitutional changes in J&K, electoral bonds, the Citizenship Amendment Act.

NEXT: ECONOMY

EXPLAINED ECONOMICS

In inversion of US treasury yields, a recession is foretold

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

AS THE new year approaches, there are fears of recession in many of the world's top economies, including the United States, the biggest and most consequential of all. The US does look headed for a recession — a key pointer is the inversion of US treasury yields.

What is a recession, to begin with?

A recession typically involves the overall output in an economy contracting for at least two consecutive quarters, along with job losses and reduction in overall demand. The US National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) decides whether the economy is in a recession based on its assessment of the depth, diffusion, and duration of the impact on the economy.

Sometimes, the duration may not be long but the decline could be very severe — as it happened in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Or, the depth and diffusion may be relatively less but the downturn may last long – as is expected in the United Kingdom in the wake of the economic crisis triggered by the Liz Truss-Kwasi Kwarteng mini-Budget of September 2022.

What are US treasuries?

In any economy, the safest loans are those

that are given to governments - entities that will always be there, and which typically do not default on their debt. Governments need to borrow money because their tax revenues more often than not aren't enough to finance all their spending.

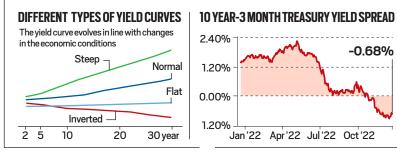
The instrument by which the government borrows from the market is called a government bond. In India they are called Gsecs, in the UK they are called gilts, and in the US, they are called treasuries.

And what is the yield of a treasury?

Unlike a bank loan, on which the interest rate varies with time, a government bond comes with pre-determined "coupon" payment. So, the US government may "float" a 10-year bond with a face value of \$100 and coupon payment of \$5. This means, if you lend \$100 to the US government by buying this bond, you would get \$5 each year for the next 10 years plus the whole sum of \$100 at the end of 10 years. This would imply a yield

But if for some reason one sold this bond to another investor, the yield will change depending on the price at which the bond is sold. If the price increases — say, the bond is sold for \$110 – the yield will fall because the annual return (\$5) remains the same. And if the price falls, the yield will rise.

What is the yield curve?



Governments borrow for durations ranging from 1 month to 30 years. Typically, yields are higher for longer tenures because one is lending money for longer. If the yields for different tenures of bonds are mapped, it will give an upward-sloping curve ("Normal"

PROGRAMME

Jan'22 Apr'22 Jul'22 Oct'22 in the chart above).

The curves can be flat or steep depending on the money available in the market and the expected overall economic activity. When investors feel buoyant about the economy, they pull money out of long-term

Illustration: Mithun Chakraborty

-0.68%



sets such as stock markets. As prices of longterm bonds fall, their yields rise — and the yield curve steepens.

bonds and put it into short-term riskier as-

What is yield inversion?

Yield inversion happens when yields for shorter duration bonds are higher than the yields on longer duration bonds. If investors suspect that the economy is heading for trouble, they will pull out money from shortterm risky assets (such as stock markets) and put it in long-term bonds. This causes the prices of the long-term bonds to rise and neir yields to fall.

This process first leads to flattening and eventually the inversion of the yield curve. Yield inversion has long been a reliable

predictor of recession in the US — and US reasuries have been witnessing yield inversion for a while now. The spread between the yields of 10-year and 3-month treasuries has turned negative (See chart).

Is all of this unexpected?

Not entirely. In its bid to contain historically high inflation levels, the US Federal Reserve has been raising short-term interest rates to curb overall demand and economic activity. Historically, every time the Fed has tried to bring down inflation by more than two percentage points, the US has witnessed a recession.

The Fed appears determined to bring down inflation to the 2% level, but despite rapid interest rate hikes — around 425 basis points - inflation has only moderated from

around 9% in July to 7% in November. Moreover, the economy grew by over 3% in the July-September quarter and continued to create hundreds of thousands of jobs, pushing up wages and keeping unemployment at

The more the Fed tightens its monetary stance, the more likely it is for the US economy to fall into a recession. That is what the yield inversion is showing.

historic lows. As such, even though the Fed has

now started raising rates at a slower pace, it is

expected that it will keep raising rates and stay

Why does this matter to India? It matters in several ways.

at those higher levels for longer.

Rising interest rates are likely to make the US dollar even more strong against the rupee. Indian imports will become costlier as a result, and could fuel domestic inflation.

Higher returns in the US may also lead to some rebalancing of the investments com-

Indian exports may benefit due to a weaker rupee but a recession will dampen the demand for Indian exports.

A slowdown or recession may, however, come with the silver lining of lower crude oil prices for India.

4 IDEA EXCHANGE NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

INQUOTES

From South African Dr Angelique Coetzee, who first alerted the world about the Omicron variant, to German Ambassador Walter J Lindner who spoke about the complexities of the war in Ukraine — The Indian Express newsroom held insightful conversations with newsmakers every week of the year. Here's a glimpse



"Don't look at your positivity rate or your daily Covid cases. Look at how many people are admitted in the ICU"

DR ANGELIQUE COETZEE CHAIRPERSON, SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION JANUARY 17



"Civil service, judiciary, media are performing at below optimum levels...framers of Constitution would've been horrified"

RAMACHANDRA GUHA HISTORIAN JANUARY 24



"Those who troll aren't real fans, nor are they real Indians. I know what I represent, fight for my country"

MOHAMMAD SHAMI FAST BOWLER, TEAM INDIA FEBRUARY 28



"Russia has made us open our eyes, that to keep peace, there might be a price"

WALTER J LINDNER GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO INDIA MARCH 7



"I'm opposed to minority commissions, rather strengthen the human rights panel that can take care of everybody"

ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN GOVERNOR OF KERALA MARCH 14



"The digital world is breaking old monopolies and driving competition because consumers have choices"

SANJIV BAJAJ CMD, BAJAJ FINSERV MARCH 21



"Even if I get 70%... I can take CUET and get admission... this entire focus on high scores will go away"

M JAGADESH KUMAR MARCH 28



"What we need is an open climate within our institutions to allow artists to practise their art"

GULAMMOHAMMED SHEIKH

APRIL 4



"Everybody can be instigated to beat up small, poor people in the name of any big cause, the lid has been lifted"

ARUN SHOURIE APRIL 11

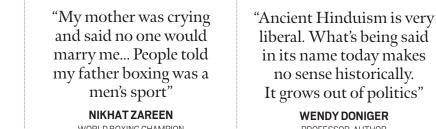


"The only way out is to fight for the cause of the people; a leader then emerges automatically"

BHUPENDER SINGH HOODA CONGRESS LEADER MAY16



It grows out of politics" **WENDY DONIGER** PROFESSOR, AUTHOR





"We are no longer chess players from mythology; someone bespectacled, slightly old. Now chess is seen as a young sport"

VISWANATHAN ANAND INDIA'S FIRST GRANDMASTER JUNE 27



"Targetted therapies ...and using customised diet as a drug is the fifth pillar in anti-cancer therapy"

DR SIDDHARTHA MUKHERJEE

ONCOLOGIST; PULITZER-PRIZE WINNING AUTHOR JULY 18



"A lot of tech firms escaped regulation by pushing the innovation image"

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

JULY 25



"Despite corruption charges, AAP is not willing to answer questions. They're drunk on power"

ANURAG THAKUR UNION MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AUGUST 29



MAY 23

"Every university has a lunatic fringe. They can be left, right, centre, anything. But they cannot define the identity of the University"

SANTISHREE DHULIPUDI PANDIT VC, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY AUGUST 22



JUNE 20

"The Reserve Bank of India should intervene only to curb volatility, let the rupee depreciate"

DSUBBARAO FORMER RBI GOVERNOR SEPTEMBER 12



"Gone are the days when the CBI was a caged parrot. This government has set it loose, thrown away the cage"

JITENDRA SINGH MOS, SCIENCE & TECH AND EARTH SCIENCES OCTOBER 17



"History is a child saying my truth is the truth. Myth is an adult saying who can be sure of the truth?"

AMISH AUTHOR OCTOBER 24



"Reservation is only a tool for representation. If we can find a better tool, we will throw it into the Arabian Sea"

PROF G MOHAN GOPAL CONSTITUTIONAL LAW EXPERT NOVEMBER 14



"It's a new virus, it's still evolving, still adapting. We still need to be cautious"

DR SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN CHIEF SCIENTIST, WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION NOVEMBER 28



"India is leader in energy transition and nobody has done as much as we have"

RK SINGH MINISTER FOR POWER, NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DECEMBER 5



"Data is not oil, it's actually the opposite... you burn and it's gone. Data is more like air, you can't lock up air"

NICK CLEGG PRESIDENT, GLOBAL AFFAIRS, META DECEMBER 12

Portrait illustrations: Suvajit Dey

Market Watch

MCAP ERODES BY RS 1.68 TRN

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of the top 10 valued firms eroded by Rs 1,68,552.42 crore last week, with Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit in an overall weak broader market. Last week, the Sensex tumbled 1,492.52 points or 2.43 per cent. PTI

DEMAND FOR SUVS, NEW-AGE FEATURES GONE UP

Just like new: Demand for pre-owned cars matches first-hand auto sales

Companies say that the growing preference for personal mobility has gained traction post Covid

MIHIR MISHRA

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

INDIA'S YOUTH are driving record sales for the automobile industry, not just in the new car segment but also in the preowned car segment. The demand for new-age features, even in pre-owned cars, is a phenomenon that has become more stark post-Covid pan-

Maruti Suzuki, India's largest carmaker, and Hyundai, country's second largest, are seeing more-than-expected demand for pre-owned cars and most of it is coming from firsttime young buyers, who prefer sport utility vehicles (SUVs) over others.

This trend is not just limited to pre-owned car sales but also in new cars, where a quarter of sales come from youngsters under the age of 30 - about 5 percentage points increase over the

past about three years. Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai Motors and Tata Motors, which cumulatively constitute about 70 per cent of the total PV sales in the country, are all seeing a healthy response from buyers below the age of 30. For Maruti and Hyundai, youngsters' contribution to the overall sales is about 23 per cent each - lower than the industry's average -while for Tata Motors, nearly 30 per cent of sales come from people under 30 years of age.

Companies say that the growing preference for per-



Many new companies are also entering the pre-owned car segment. Express photo

sonal mobility has gained traction post Covid. "Post pandemic and with the growing preference of personal mobility, we have witnessed a 33 per cent growth YoY as far as True Value brand name for Maruti's preowned car stores) is concerned. Nearly 50 per cent of our preowned car buyers fall in the 18-35 years age bracket, followed by nearly 45 per cent of the POC buyers falling in the age group of 36-60 years and the rest ageing 65+ years," Shashank Srivastava, Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, MSIL, was quoted in an email response.

"About 67 per cent of our POC buyers were first time buy-

Preowned car category

SALES OF pre-owned cars too is primarily driven by voungsters, which is an indicator that urban consumers in India are driving this demand. While the demand is high, one cannot predict as to how long will this demand last.

ers while the rest of the buyers bought POC as an additional vehicle or replaced their existing

vehicle," the response read. Hyundai says they have reported a 21 per cent increase in car sales across their stores during the January-November this year as compared to last year.

"H-Promise (brand name for Hyundai's pre-owned cars sales outlet) counts Gen Z, millennials and boomers amongst our esteemed customers. However, customers in the 31-40 years age-bracket account for the biggest slice of the pie when it comes to pre-owned car sales across our outlets," the company said in an email response.

Such is the allure of the preowned car segment that new companies are also entering the segment. Kia India, which is just tered the pre-owned car sale space. "With exclusive Kia Certified Pre-Owned outlets, the company intends to provide a new age experience to customers, in line with new car buying experience, that will allow them to sell, buy or exchange pre-owned cars, backed by hassle-free ownership transfers and customised finance options," Kia had said in a press statement. Currently, Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai Motors and Mahindra are in the pre-owned car sales space. Mahindra did not respond to a query by *The Indian Express.* The companies have also witnessed a demand for SUVs and new-age features, including automatic gearbox.

three years old in India, has en-

"Just like new cars, we are witnessing a rise in demand for SUVs and MPVs in the preowned car space too. SUV and MPV segments are also seeing faster replacement cycles, so owners are selling off their SUVs much sooner than some other segments," Srivastava

"The most sought after features our pre-owned customers look for include company fitted AVN (Audio, Video Navigations) systems, automatic climate control, airbags, braking systems like ABS with EBD, automatic gearbox, etc," Hyundai

In the pre-owned category space, sales of cars running on petrol account for a substantial part of sales for both Maruti and Hyundai.

MOST-DELAYED PROJECT

■ Muneerabad-Mahaboobnagar

■ Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla

rail project: 276 months

rail project: 247 months

■ Belapur-Seawood-Urban

INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT, FICCI

'India to face pressure ahead...should focus on manufacturing reforms'

EVEN THOUGH global economic conditions pose the risk of shortterm turbulence through second degree effects, India is well positioned and the best way to prepare for it is to focus on manufacturing, Ficci President Subhrakant Panda said. In an interview with AANCHAL MAGAZINE, Panda said the government must consider to extend the concessional tax regime for new manufacturing units beyond 2024 to help businesses to board the manufacturing bus. Edited excerpts:

With the global economic outlook pointing towards recessionary conditions, what impact do you see for the Indian industry and economy?

To just peek at why we are where we are today, which is about as well placed as India can be from its own domestic situation, that's very clearly to do with the fact that going right back to the pandemic, where both the timing and the quantum of stimulus measures was spot on. Because what we're seeing globally is that wherever there was an excess of stimulus measures, their inflation has been elevated for far longer, and has been much more stubborn than what we're seeing. Not only that, during the pandemic, the government focused quite a bit on reforms. As a result, we are benefiting from that today. So whether it is enhancing ease of doing business, whether it is reducing the cost of doing business, or if you look at it from the point of view, I'm a very big votary of the PLI schemes, which are a very focused manner of targeting sectors where India is import dependent or there is an unnecessary outflow

of foreign exchange. So as a result of that we are looking at a growth rate of 7 per cent, which is the fastest in the world...but what is very, very clear is that we are not an island, we are not decoupled. From that point of view, the IMF forecast for global growth is a matter of concern, it stood at 6 per cent for 2022 and it has almost halved to 3.2 per cent for 2023...so, unquestionably there are going to be second degree effects when global slowdown or global growth slows down so sharply. While India in itself is very well positioned, and even next year, we are going to once again be the fastest growing large economy, but there will be second degree effects for which we need to prepare. The inflationary impact of Europe or US, the consequent effects on growth, we are seeing that trickled through to us, from the point of view of ex-

riod of growth, and breached the \$400 billion mark. For the first time this year, it has definitely taken a bit of a knock and we'll be under pressure going ahead. So that is where we have to prepare ourselves. And the best way to do that is to continue to focus on reforms, to continue to focus on manufacturing compet-

ports, which had a sustained pe-

The steps India has taken to improve ease of doing business, and to reduce the cost of doing business, especially with logistics cost being targeted, will have an impact. What is clear at one level is that the next year is going to be turbulent...we have to be prepared for a certain degree of of turbulence, but I am a great believer in the India growth story, and what I believe is that while we have to

While India in itself is well positioned, and we are going to once again be the fastest growing You spoke of the concessional large economy, but there will be second degree effects for which we need to prepare...the

Subhrakant Panda

have one eye on the short term, and see in real time what corrective measures need to be taken to navigate, deftly, but some little course corrections may be required to navigate but equally one has to be in the medium to long term, because I think the potential that we have over the medium to long term is just absolutely stupendous. We shouldn't be alarmed by short term turbu-

best way is to focus on

manufacturing

competitiveness

I think a few steps one can take is broadening the scope of the PLI schemes to include certain high export potential sectors. And the second thing, what the government is already doing, which is looking at port proximate clusters, which can give a boost to manufacturing exports. The importance of the manufacturing sector is very, very clear, because you can't have a situation where 16-17 per cent of the country's GDP comes from agriculture, but 45 per cent jobs are agri jobs, and we have a robust services sector, which will take up a lot of the slack, but manufacturing simply cannot afford to be in that 16-18 per cent range, it needs to go up.

I believe there is a lot of scope for a China plus one strategy. And when we had that earlier unfortunately, you know, we couldn't quite capitalize on it. But today when you talk about China plus one, that one need not necessarily be India, a lot of it will come to India. but we have to work at it. And to that extent, taking some steps like for example, in our budget recommendations, we have talked about extending the concessional tax regime for newer manufacturing new manufacturing entities, which is currently slated to expire in 2024...when you look at competing geographies, like Vietnam, Cambodia. Singapore etc where they have taxes of 17-18 per cent. So we need to be competitive in that regard..we need to provide a clear

window in our opinion for five years to say look, this is your opportunity to move supply chains to India. That will be a bold step which would attract investment.

via DSF

tax regime. The government cut the corporate tax rate, but the benefits of it were not really visible on ground. I think we are conflating two

issues. As far as corporate tax rates are concerned, for existing units, you have the option of either continuing with your old tax regime, or switching to the new one, which is 25 per cent plus surcharges Now, as far as the concessional tax regime of 115 BAB is concerned, that was first set to expire in 2023, which was extended to 2024. Now, if you look at it from what investment has it been able to attract? I agree, not much. But you have to see it from the context that you had two years of COVID. with lockdowns, etc, which disrupted a lot of activities. It was at a time where people were hesitant to commit new investments...the government did at the behest of chambers extend it from '23 to '24. Maybe you will see some data of units coming in. But I mean, on that basis alone, does it justify extending 115 BAB? Perhaps not, Let me be clear about that. But what we are saying is that when the Prime Minister says that we are willing to do everything to climb the manufacturing bus this time,

Given the concerns over Covid cases and related shutdowns in China, there may be risks affecting the linkages. How do vou see that?

we feel this is an important aspect.

I would like to contrast it first of all with how well India has handled the pandemic, starting with lockdowns, when you didn't know what it was about...then when vaccines came about we have conducted the world's largest vaccinations in a very efficient manner...contrast that with China where unfortunately at the first instance, they've had a lot of lockdowns, and continued longer than perhaps when necessary, leading to unrest. Now they've opened up in a manner where there are reports of a surge in cases...but I think it's a little too early. And, given the state of affairs, whether there is underreporting of cases, or is this a lot of exaggeration...in a few days, it will be clear, but I really commend the government for being proactive.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

and duties on inputs/raw mate-

rials accounting for 18-20 per

cent of aluminium production

In a bid to improve the cost

structure of the Indian alu-

costs," it said.

FPIs invest ₹11,557 cr in equities in Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NFW DELHI. DECEMBER 25

FOREIGN INVESTORS have infused a net Rs 11,557 crore in Indian equities in December so far despite a market correction and increasing concerns over reemergence of Covid-19 in China and some other parts of the

from the US and Covid-19 news will drive FPI flows and the markets in the near term, said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

Going ahead, macro data

According to data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) invested a net sum of Rs 11,557 crore in equi-

This comes following a net investment of over Rs 36,200 crore in November primarily due to weakening of the US dollar index and positivity about overall macroeconomic trends.

Prior to this, foreign investors pulled out Rs 8 crore in October and Rs 7,624 crore in September, data with the depositories

"Despite correction in the markets, increasing concerns over re-emergence of Covid-19 in some parts of the world and recession worries in the US, FPIs remained net buyers in the Indian equity markets (in December)," said Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director -Manager Research, Morningstar

'Road sector has the maximum number of delayed projects'

As many as 756 projects are delayed with respect to their original schedules and 304 projects have reported additional delays, as per a government report

SECTOR-WISE DELAYED PROJECTS



Electrified Double Line: 228 ₹2,77,208.24 crore: The

expenditure incurred on road projects till November 2022 was 60.2% of the anticipated cost

expenditure incurred on railways projects was 57.6%

₹1,48,897.69 crore: The expenditure incurred on petroleum projects was 37%

Source: Govt

The Infrastructure and Project Monitoring Division is mandated to monitor central sector infrastructure projects costing Rs 150 crore and above based on the information provided on the Online Computerised Monitoring System

data/PTI

BRIEFLY –

Maruti, auto

New Delhi: With increasing congestion across cities in India, Maruti Suzuki India expects sales of its vehicles with auto gear shift to pick up further next year, according to company Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales Shashank Srivastava.

NCLAT, DLF

New Delhi: The NCLAT has set aside an order passed by fair trade regulator CCI with respect to DLF and directed it to examine the matter. The case pertains to CCI rejecting a complaint against DLF and its subsidiary for alleged abuse of the dominant position on the basis of a second/supplementary report

MapMyIndia

New Delhi: Google's anticompetitive activities are harming Indian consumers and the economy by stifling "swadeshi" (indigenous) competitors, a top official of home-grown navigation firm MapMyIndia said. The CCI in October slapped a steep penalty of Rs 1,337.76 crore on internet giant Google for abusing its dominant position in multiple markets. PTI

New age firms' market cap in red since listing

TUSHAR GOENKA

BENGALURU, DECEMBER 25

ACLUTCH of new age technology companies has lost nearly Rs 2.5 trillion or roughly \$20 billion in market capitalization since they listed on the exchanges. Shareholders have been disappointed by either poor performance or unwieldy acquisitions. In some instances, the sale of stakes by investors post the expiry of the lock-in period, has dragged down

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR

THE INDIAN electric vehicle

(EV) industry could be bracing

for yet supply chain disruption

as China experiences its worst

wave of Covid-19 infections,

causing disruption in battery

cell producing factories and

other critical components that

India, who depend on suppliers

in China, believe that by the

time the authorities are able to

bring the pandemic under con-

trol, the country will shut down

for the Chinese New Year in the

Battery pack makers in

MUMBAI, DECEMBER 25

Although PayTm reported smaller losses, sequentially in the September quarter of Rs 571 crore and revenues grew 14 per cent to Rs 1,914, the arrival of new competition has also prompted analysts to become more cautious. For example, analysts at Macquarie believe that Jio Financial Services "can pose a significant growth and market-share risk" for players such as Pavtm and Baiai Finance.

PayTm has launched a buyback of shares at Rs 810 apiece, about 60 per cent lower than its IPO price, but that has not en-

Supply scare: China's Covid wave

has Indian EV industry nervous

second half of January.

None of the Indian EV pro-

ducers have clarity on supplies

beyond January because cell or-

ders for deliveries expected in

February are yet to be awarded.

in January, the orders for which

were placed weeks ago, are ei-

ther in transit or are lying at

warehouses within China, say

and CEO of Trontek, said, "I have

several contacts with suppliers

in China and almost everybody

there. Factories are working at

50 per cent staff." Trontek is one

The situation is quite bad

Samrath Kochar, Founder

Indian importers.

is infected.

The deliveries to be received

thused shareholders. The stock is trading at Rs

476.40, less than a fourth of its IPO price of Rs 2,150. In mid-October a cautionary

outlook from Delhivery sent the stock crashing. The company had said that while the festive season sale surge in shipment volumes will spill over to the third quarter as well, it anticipated moderate growth in shipment volumes through the rest of the financial

Delivery's losses narrowed sequentially to Rs 254 crore in

amongst several Indian compa-

nies that assemble batteries

made of cells produced in

China. Trontek supplies to two-

wheeler and three-wheeler

Due to a total absence of cell

producers here, China has a

near monopolistic control over

battery supplies in the Indian

market. Last financial year, 73

per cent of lithium-ion products

consumed by India were from

such as TVS Motor Company,

have achieved a high degree of

localisation with only the cells

coming from outside of the

Some Indian vehicle makers,

makers.

country. FE

Q2Fy23 but revenues grew a marginal 3% to Rs 1,796 crore. Analysts at ICICI Securities have trimmed their revenue growth estimates "meaningfully" by 16 per centfor the current year and by 23 per cent for FY24.

Nykaa's performance in Q2Fy23 was a shade below expectations since the net profits came in at just Rs 5.5 crore, the fallout of inflationary pressures. Analysts at lefferies pointed out that despite the fashion business being at an early stage, a low single digit q-oq growth is a disappointment. FE

'Reduce custom on critical raw materials'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

INDUSTRY BODY Assocham has sought reduction in basic customs duty and correction of inverted duty structure on critical raw materials for the aluminium industry as high import duties is a huge disadvantage for the sector heavily dependent on imported raw materials.

In its pre-Budget memorandum 2023-34, Assocham said high import duty on raw materials results in Indian finished goods getting costlier and uncompetitive in international



tion within the country.

TO IMPROVE COST STRUCTURE OF INDIAN ALUMINIUM

markets, rendering negative pro-"The average production cost tection against cheaper imports of Indian aluminium producers of finished products, and disis amongst highest in the world, majorly due to high incidence of courages domestic value addiunrebated Central & State taxes

■ High import duty on raw

materials results in Indian

costlier and uncompetitive

protection against cheaper

in international markets,

finished goods getting

rendering negative

imports of finished

products

minium industry and enhance competitiveness, the basic customs duty on critical raw materials should be reduced. The industry body has sought reduction of basic customs duty on calcined petroleum coke, caustic soda lye and green anode/pre-baked carbon anode from 7.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent and on raw petroleum coke from 10 per cent to 2.5 per cent, among others.

BOLAND RETAINS SPOT FOR 2ND TEST

Scott Boland will retain his spot in Australia's team for their Boxing Day Test against South Africa in Melbourne after an "underdone" Josh Hazlewood failed to fully recover from a side strain, skipper Pat Cummins said. Boland slotted in for the injured Hazlewood in the second and final Test against West Indies as well as the Proteas seriesopener in Brisbane, which Australia won by six wickets.

Defiance saves the day

After being reduced to 74/7, Shreyas and Ashwin's unbroken 71-run stand for eighth wicket gives India series victory

ABHISHEK PUROHIT DECEMBER 25

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN and Shreyas Iyer saved India from what would have been a hugely embarrassing defeat, lifting them from the depths of 74 for 7 and dragging them to the target of 145 before lunch on the fourth morning of the second Test against

Bangladesh in Dhaka for a 2-0 series win. When Mehidy Hasan Miraz uprooted Axar Patel's leg stump for his fifth wicket of the innings, India were just past the halfway stage of what was increasingly looking like a target beyond them. Resuming on 45 for 4, India had lost Jaydev Unadkat plumb leg-before to Shakib Al Hasan, and had also burned a review in trying to save the nightwatch-

Bangladesh had said after the third day's play that Rishabh Pant would be the key batsman, and the wicketkeeper showed why, reverse-sweeping and sweeping Shakib from around the same spot to make a mess of the hosts' fields. But the relentless Mehidy soon had his man; bowling a tight line from round the wicket, with one turning and another going straight, Mehidy trapped Pant in front with one that did not turn. It was so plumb that Pant did not even review.

Axar had arrived ahead of Virat Kohli on the third evening at No 4 and while the specialists had imploded, he'd played a mighty useful innings, defending resolutely and punching the spinners off the back foot for boundaries. But in his next over. Mehidy slipped in another straighter one that crashed into Axar's leg stump off his pad. And within half an hour into the day, India were down to their last recognised batting pair.

Mehidy continued to cause problems, but Mominul Haque – he'd taken two excellent catches of Cheteshwar Pujara and Virat Kohli at forward short leg – put down what was arguably a much more straightforward chance off Ashwin, who was on

Someone had to bell the cat eventually, and it was Shreyas Iyer who wrested back the initiative. He cracked Mehidy through the covers for a couple of fours, and with the risk of throwing away probably India's last chance if he got it wrong, danced down the track to loft Shakib over mid-off. That brought the shorter ball immediately and Iyer rocked back to pull it over midwicket for another four. The Bangladesh counter-attack from 113 for 6 in their second innings had begun around this stage as well, as the older ball had become softer and ceased to do as much off the pitch.

Ashwin, named the Player of the Match for his six wickets and unbeaten 42 in the chase, said: "We didn't have much batting left. It was one of those games where we let the game drift whenever we could have shut it off. Shreyas batted beautifully. Sometimes in these situations you feel like you have to get ahead of things, they bowled good lines and I felt that we didn't trust our defences enough. Loved the way Shreyas batted. I thought the ball got soft really quickly. Credit to Bangladesh, they put us under real pressure at certain moments.

BRIEF SCORES: Bangladesh 227 & 231 all out in 70.2 overs (Litton Das 73, Zakir Hasan 51: Axar Patel 3/68) lost to **India** 314 and 145 for 7 in 47 overs (Ravichandran Ashwin 42 not out, Shreyas Iyer 29 not out; Mehidy Hasan 5/63) by 3 wkts.



Shreyas Iyer (29) combined with R Ashwin (42) on Day 4 of the Test match against Bangladesh to lead India to victory.

Why isn't Ashwin the vice-captain in Tests?

VENKATAKRISHNAB DECEMBER 25

WHY ISN'T R Ashwin the allrounder raved as much as he should be? Why isn't he the vicecaptain of the Indian Test team? The first question's failure is on us, the watchers. The second reflects the conservative vision of the current Indian think tank where they hedge on the known - and fail.

You never appreciate what you have until it is gone.... That thought might have played in the minds of numerous Indian fans as Ashwin scored the winning runs in the Mirpur Test on Sunday. Down at 74 for 7, Ashwin cradled India to another Test series win, walking away with the Man of the Match Trophy.

There are only two cricketers who have scored over 3,000 runs and taken 400-plus wickets in Test matches for India. One is Kapil Dev, the greatest allrounder Indian cricket has ever seen, and the other is Ashwin. At 36, he is the senior most in the team, and in a team that includes Ravindra Jadeja, Ashwin still stands out as a serial match-winner as an all-rounder. He has more centuries than Jadeja and has more wickets. And over the last three years where Jadeia has evolved more into a batsman. Ashwin has still ended up playing three innings that are bound to hold a special place in his

There was that epic at the SCG, there was that century at Chepauk, which silenced England's batsmen who were complaining about the pitch. The latest in the list is the unbeaten 42 against Bangladesh, which has kept India's hopes of World Test Championship final qualification, alive.

In a team that has Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Jadeja, Ashwin remains their MVP in Tests, irrespective of the conditions. Of course, India have chosen to even leave him out overseas even when they play five bowlers, but that has more to do with playing four pacers so that none of them is overbowled.

Yet, as India are entering a transition phase, with no regular, dependable Test captain in sight, it is curious that the selectors never really looked at Ashwin even as a vice-captain material. After Kohli decided to step down as captain, India went with Rohit as all-format captain, well aware of his fitness struggles. And for the vice-captaincy, they went with Bumrah, a player who is struggling with injuries and whose workload has to be managed carefully. So that left India to look at Rahul, a player who has not even cemented his place in the XI, let alone be seen as a long-term option. Beyond Rahul, India were looking at Pant, but only to name Cheteshwar Pujara as the deputy for the two Tests against Bangladesh.

Be it calling himself a cricket scientist or coming across as a cricket obsessed player, Ashwin always comes across as a player who is futuristic in terms of where the game is heading. Yet, even the vice-captaincy has continued to elude him.

In the past, the selectors and the team management have had apprehensions with regards to Ashwin as a captain for Tests. It was said privately that Ashwin tends to be over-think and ends up overdoing too much stuff from outside the box (presumably Indian cricket isn't up for innovations yet), and which is why they were hesitant to hand him captaincy. Even here, with a good strong coach, that trait to



R Ashwin was named the Player of the Match for his six wickets and unbeaten 42 in the chase. AP

overthink could be handled but that moment perhaps has passed us by. But there are no such issues with vice-captaincy; he is one with a stomach for a fight, and mentoring upcoming players comes naturally to him.

Instead, Ashwin has had to battle insecurities in the not-so-distant past when his position in the team wasn't handled as well as it could have been. At his age, he might not be the captaincy material and he might not command the kind of unqualified respect and stature within the team as Anil Kumble might have done - and Kumble used all that once to handle a mighty controversial tour of Australia.

From the time Kohli stepped down – end of South Africa series in 2021 - India's assignments were against Sri Lanka, Bangladesh (away) and Australia. In each of these conditions, Ashwin was bound to be starter and for Be it calling himself a cricket scientist or coming across as a cricket obsessed player, Ashwin always comes across as a player who is futuristic in terms of where the game is heading. Yet, even the vice-captaincy has continued to elude him.

all you know with Rahul continuing to struggle in Tests, India could have tried Abhimanyu Easwaran at the top alongside Shubman Gill to groom him for the long run. Instead, with Rohit missing, by virtue of being the vice-captain, Rahul ended up playing both the Tests and ended-up well short of expectations.

When he isn't playing for India, Ashwin doesn't even hesitate to even turn up in First Division matches in Chennai, Last season, with his team Mylapore Recreation Club 'A' looking for a spin-bowling all-rounder, he reached out to Harsh Dubey, a 20-year-old from Vidarbha. Dubey ended up scoring a century in the final and giving MRC their first title. Or unearthing fast bowlers with talent camps. These are qualities that one often finds in natural leaders.

The new selection committee can look at Ashwin as an option for vice-captaincy as he is bound to play all the matches (fitness permitting) as India enter a period of transition. That way, even if Rohit isn't available, in Ashwin, India will have a captain who isn't new to the role and allow someone like Pant to groom as well.

– Briefly —

Pele's family gathers at hospital

Sao Paulo: Family members of Brazilian soccer great Pelé are gathering at the Albert Einstein hospital in Sao Paulo where the 82-year-old icon has been since the end of November. Doctors said earlier this week that Pelé's cancer had advanced, adding the three-time World Cup winner is under "elevated care" related to "kidney and cardiac dysfunctions." No other hospital statements have been published since. Edson Cholbi Nascimento, one of Pelé's sons and known as Edinho, arrived Saturday, one day after he gave a news conference to deny he would visit his father in hospital. Edinho, who works for a soccer club in Brazil, had said then that only doctors could help his father.

Conte not happy with quick PL restart

London: Tottenham Hotspur manager Antonio Conte is "not really happy" that the Premier League will resume just eight days after the World Cup and hinted he might rest players for the Boxing Day match at Brentford. Out of the 12 Tottenham players who featured in Qatar, Conte has ruled France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris and Argentina's Cristian Romero, who played in the final last Sunday, out of Monday's game. "It is a strange situation and honestly to play so quickly, only one week after the World Cup, I am not really happy," Conte said in comments published in British media on Sunday.

Basketball stand collapses, injuring 27

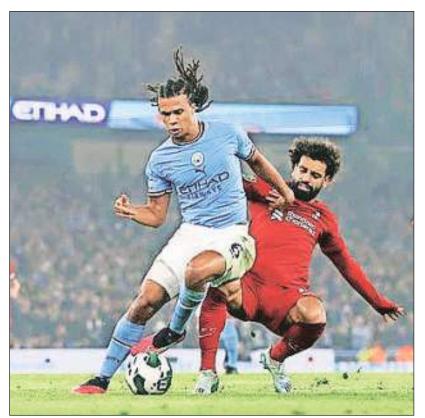
Cairo: At least 27 people were injured when stands partly collapsed during a basketball game in the Egyptian capital of Cairo, health authorities said. Officials said part of the seats fell on spectators at the Super Cup match between Cairo's Al-Ahly and Ittihad of Alexandria following a stampede in the stands. The game at the Hassan Moustafa Sports Hall in Cairo's 6th of October district was called off. Spokesman Hossam Abdel-Ghaffar said in a statement that most of the injured suffered broken bones. He said they were taken to hospitals and their injuries were not life threatening. PTI

Indian Archers on target at Asia Cup

Sharjah: The Indian junior archers reigned supreme in the Asia Cup Stage III by returning with nine medals, including five gold on Sunday. The biggest medal haul came from the compound section where Indian archers bagged seven of the eight medals up from grabs, including a clean sweep in the individual women section. Priyansh and Ojas Deotale bagged gold and silver in the compound individual. The Indian compound archers also topped the team events in both men's and women's, defeating Korea en route to gold medals.

QATAR HANGOVER

After euphoria of World Cup, big teams have big tasks at hand in PL return



Players like Mohammad Salah will be rejuvenated after the World Cup came with a crucial break for him, along with other Liverpool players. AP

NAMIT KUMAR DECEMBER 25

EIGHT DAYS on from the dramatic finale of the football World Cup, the return of English league football may come as a surprise to some, and to the resentment of some football-overloaded others.

Here's everything one needs to know about the league's major contenders, as the narrative of one of the world's most popular sporting competitions resumes.

Arsenal in title race

Arsenal have been good this season. No, they really are looking good.

Mikel Arteta has effectively integrated a host of new signings into their system this season. They have looked fluid in midfield and attack, and won big London derbies against Chelsea and Tottenham, as well as convincingly trumped Liverpool.

The team has instilled belief in the everpassionate global fan base of the North London team.

A fan base that will be quick to remind everyone that Arsenal are five points clear at the top of the league table at Christmas, a superstition in English football undoubtedly sullied by the layoff.

Arteta's side has, for the most part, answered the questions critics have posed at them in the first half. But after losing crucial striker Gabriel Jesus to injury, and seeing an already light squad go through an

The magic of a World Cup is in watching the planet's best players fighting for the sport's foremost prize, but fans were robbed of the opportunity of seeing Manchester City's latest goal-scoring sensation Erling Haaland.

intense World Cup, keeping up with their star-studded rivals will be a big ask.

Haaland is back

The magic of a World Cup is in watching the planet's best players fighting for the sport's foremost prize, but fans were robbed of the opportunity of seeing Manchester City's latest goal-scoring sensation Erling Haaland.

It took the Norwegian less than 10 minutes to get on the scoresheet in City's 3-2 thriller against Liverpool in the League Cup on Thursday. Haaland has scored 18 of the team's table-topping 40 this season, and looks hungry to prove himself after a sixweek break.

Add to that Pep Guardiola's winning machine that has won four of the last five league titles, and a hungry Kevin De Bruyne, one of the best midfielders of his generation determined to do well after dis-

EPL STANDINGS									
	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts			
Arsenal	14	12	1	1	22	37			
Man City	14	10	2	2	26	32			
N Utd	15	8	6	1	18	30			
Spurs	15	9	2	4	10	29			
Man Utd	14	8	2	4	0	26			
Liverpool	14	6	4	4	11	22			

appointment with Belgium in Qatar, and Arsenal have a lot to worry about at the top.

Rejuvenated Liverpool

Liverpool have spent three of the last four years contending for the title, and won it once, but in a transitional phase this season, it seems that a more realistic goal is making it into the top four.

While their performance against City was not exactly inspired, and off-field distractions are aplenty after their owners put the club on sale in October, they are well rested for the post-World Cup rush of fixtures that are coming their way.

Fabinho was mostly unused by Brazil, Thiago – bafflingly to some – was not called up by Spain, both Luis Diaz and Diogo Jota are on their way to recovering from injury, and other squad mainstays like Andy Robertson, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Joel Matip have got a crucial break. After

also has the chance to recover his form.

Race for Top 4

Several fumbling clubs, who have been disappointing for the last few seasons, make up the rest of the contenders looking to ensure European football for next sea-

Erik Ten Hag's Manchester United have been streaky, looking good in parts. And without the distraction of the Cristiano Ronaldo fiasco, they will look to go on a run

However, the start may be tetchy, as first-choice defensive partnership Lisandro Martinez and Raphael Varane played the World Cup final only eight days prior to the

Tottenham have one of Europe's more glamorous coaches – in fame but not playing style - in Antonio Conte, but have looked far from settled. Under new ownership and the surprise managerial change in replacing Thomas Tuchel with Graham Potter, Chelsea's woeful form – two points in the last five games - has them languishing in eighth place.

Amid these teams, Newcastle United, bolstered by the influx of Saudi Arabian cash and a buoyant and energetic team under Eddie Howe looking to wake up an English football giant, find themselves in third place having won five games on the trot. They will be a major player in the top-