



EXPORTS DECLINE 12.2%
IN DEC; TRADE DEFICIT
WIDENS TO \$23.76BN

EDIT

GOVERNATORIAL
OVERREACH

PEOPLE KEPT TELLING ME THAT
I SHOULD PLAY UNIFORM
ROLES: REGINA CASSANDRA



WEATHER

26°C. 21°C.

Sunrise : 07:15 am
Sunset : 06:23 pm

THE FP
BULLETIN

Manjha claims biker's life

A motorcyclist died in Bhiwandi on Sunday following an accident caused by a kite string. Sanjay Hajare, 47, was travelling from Bhiwandi to Ulhasnagar when his throat got caught and he lost balance and crashed into a flyover wall. **MUMBAI**

Swiggy agent dies fleeing from dog

A Swiggy agent died in hospital four days after falling from the first floor of a building while escaping an alleged dog attack, police said on Monday. Banjara Hills police have registered a case against the dog owner. **NATION**

Nepal flight's black box found

Searchers have found both the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder from the Yeti Airlines flight that crashed in Nepal, in the country's deadliest plane crash in 30 years. **WORLD**

WPI inflation cools to 4.95%

After having declined to a 21-month low of 5.85% in November 2022, the country's Wholesale Price Index-based inflation fell to 4.95% in December 2022. **MONEY**

Railway worker dies in Matunga

A railway worker died after a crane broke down at the Matunga workshop of Central Railway on Sunday. Following the incident, employees demanded action against officers who failed to provide safety gear to the man. **MUMBAI**

Jallikattu claims 2 lives in TN

Jallikattu claimed the lives of two people on Monday when bulls gored a tamer and a spectator in separate events in Madurai and Tiruchi. At Palamedu, 24-year-old tamer Aravindraj was killed. At Periyar Suriyur a man named Aravind died. **NATION**

JOSHIMATH SINKING

State lazy, say locals, urge Centre to help

AGENCIES / Joshimath

The Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti (JBSS) on Monday urged the Centre to take over relief and rehabilitation in the town, accusing the Uttarakhand Government of a "lackadaisical" approach even as the number of buildings developing cracks in the subsidence-hit town rose to 849, of which 165 are in the danger zone.

The group also raised the pitch to scrap the National Thermal Power Corporation's Tapovan-Vishnugad hydro-electric project, holding the building of its tunnel responsible for the crisis. It said renowned engineering firm Larsen & Toubro was initially building the tunnel but quit as it was not satisfied with NTPC's working.

The development came on a day the Supreme Court refused to entertain a plea seeking its intervention to declare the crisis in Joshimath a national disaster, saying that with the Uttarakhand High Court seized of a "broad range of issues", it should hear the case as a matter of principle (see report, p13).

CONTD. ON NATION

S.C. upbraids BJP petitioner

The Supreme Court on Monday held critically the conduct of Delhi BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay in filing and withdrawing different petitions before the different benches of the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court on the same subject of religious conversions. **NATION**

Rijiju's letter revives row on collegium

Oppn says what Govt seeks is subservience, not transparency

FPJ BUREAU & AGENCIES / New Delhi

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju has sought the inclusion of government nominees on collegiums that decide on justices for the Supreme Court and the various High Courts in the country.

In a letter to Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, Mr Rijiju defended his move as a "precise follow-up action" required by the Supreme Court while striking down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act.

The letter is certain to be the latest flashpoint between the Centre and the judiciary which are at loggerheads over the mechanism to appoint Supreme Court and High Court justices.

Last year, Mr Rijiju had called the collegium system "alien" to the Constitution, saying the apex court in its wisdom, through a court ruling, had created a collegium, but before 1991 all judges were appointed by the government of the day.

Rijiju's letter, sent earlier this month, and his remarks on Monday come amid the continued tug-of-war between the Government and the judiciary.



KEY POINTS

- Law minister wants Government nominees on the collegium "for infusion of transparency and public accountability"
- The letter is a follow-up to letters written earlier to the Chief Justice
- Mr Rijiju said the letter is "exactly in conformity" with the observations and directions of the Supreme Court Constitution bench that struck down the NJAC Act in 2015

Besides several Union ministers, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar has also slammed the 2015 scrapping of the NJAC by the apex court, claiming that the judiciary was encroaching on the domain of the legislature. **CONTD. ON NATION**

COVID CENTRE PROBE

No way to check docus: BMC chief

ABHISHEK SHARAN / Mumbai

Municipal Commissioner **IS Chahal** appeared before the Enforcement Directorate on Monday to record his statement in connection with a probe into alleged irregularities in the award of contracts for trained manpower to run a jumbo Covid-19 centre.

Mr Chahal, who was questioned for four hours at the E.D.'s zonal headquarters at Ballard Estate, furnished information and issued clarifications about the award of a contract to a firm that is said to have been unregistered and lacked the experience of providing manpower for medical facilities. The documents it submitted are said to be bogus.

Mr Chahal later told reporters he had told the E.D. the BMC had no mechanism at the time to verify documents submitted by agencies bidding for any contracts. **CONTD. ON NATION**



BJP's target: Win all 9 state Assembly elections this year

FPJ BUREAU & AGENCIES / New Delhi

BJP President JP Nadda on Monday emphasised the political importance of the nine state Assembly polls scheduled to be held this year in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha election and asked senior party members from across the country to ensure victory in all of them.

Briefing reporters on Mr Nadda's address to the BJP National Executive, whose two-day meeting began here on Monday with a 200m road show by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the party chief asserted that Mr Modi's Government had ensured all-round progress and expressed confidence in the party's prospects in the polls, including for the Lok Sabha.

The Prime Minister's hour-long road show on Parliament Street went from Patel Chowk to the NDMC Convention Centre. Folk singers and traditional dancers from more than a dozen states followed the Prime Minister's motorcade.

Mr Nadda exhorted party leaders to make an effort to ensure that the party does not lose in any of the nine state polls, Mr Prasad said.

Nearly 350 leaders from across the country are in the executive, ranging from Mr Modi to Union ministers, chief ministers and other senior members from various states. The Prime Minister was present through the entire proceedings. **CONTD. ON NATION**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to supporters during a road show in New Delhi on Monday

Cops see pranksters behind weed msg

SOMENDRA SHARMA / Mumbai

The Tardeo police suspect that tech-savvy youngsters were the ones who hacked a digital information board in the city and made it display inappropriate messages last month.

Initial investigations show that someone gained unauthorised access to the computer system of the LED board at the Haji Ali junction, according to the police.

The board, which was meant to relay traffic information and messages such as 'Don't Drink & Drive' and 'No Smoking', started relaying messages such as 'Smoke Weed Every Day'. This came to the notice of Assistant Police Sub-Inspector Manish Sawant, posted at the Tardeo traffic division, on Dec 20.

ASI Sawant, who is the complainant in the case, got in touch with the supervisor of the private company that had installed the LED board and asked him to shut it down, police said.

The supervisor told the ASI that someone had made technical changes in the electronic LED board system and changed the messages. The officer then brought the matter to the notice of his superiors, and got a criminal offence lodged in the matter. **CONTD. ON NATION**



4 EEH exits for Freeway extension

ATEEQ SHAIKH / Mumbai

The Eastern Freeway extension from Ghatkopar to Thane will have four entry-exit ramps. After this 14km elevated road is built, one will be able to travel without encountering a signal from Thane to Yellow Gate in South Mumbai.

The 14km extension having two lanes in either direction will have a total of four entry and exit ramps at Chheda Nagar, Kanjurmarg, Airoli Bridge and Mulund octroi naka. The estimated cost of the project is Rs3,140 crore.

"The locations for the four ramps have been decided as per the traffic volumes that originate from these junctions and converge on the Eastern Express Highway," a source from the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) said.

Currently, construction is underway for the Chheda Nagar Junction flyover, which will eventually become part of the Eastern Freeway extension project. **CONTD. ON NATION**

75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

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UNAUDITED (REVIEWED) FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	Particulars	Quarter Ended 31/12/2022 (Reviewed)	Quarter Ended 31/12/2021 (Reviewed)	Year Ended 31/03/2022 (Audited)
NIM 3.60%	Total Income from Operations (Net)	4769.78	3893.23	15671.70
ROA 1.30%	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	998.39	326.34	1955.60
ROE 24.41%	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	998.39	326.34	1955.60
CRAR 17.53%	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	775.03	324.63	1151.54
Gross NPA 2.94%	Paid up Equity Share Capital	6730.50	6730.50	6730.50
Net NPA 0.47%	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) - as on date	7416.28	5487.11	5577.41
PCR 97.18%	Securities (Share) Premium Account	328.31	328.31	328.31
	Net Worth	12698.80	9627.09	10175.85
	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt%	26.43	22.34	50.29
	Debt Equity Ratio	0.47	0.32	0.43
	Earnings Per Share (of ₹ 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) - not Annualized	1.15	0.48	1.72
	Capital Redemption Reserve	----	----	----

Total Debts & Outstanding Debt represents total borrowings of the Bank.

Debt represents borrowings with residual maturity of more than one year.

Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites (BSE: www.bseindia.com and NSE: www.nseindia.com) and Bank's website (www.bankofmaharashtra.in)

Place: Pune Date : 16/01/2023

Asheesh Pandey Executive Director

A. B. Vijayakumar Executive Director

A. S. Rajeev Managing Director & CEO

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LIC / AR - 20-21 / 09 Eng



Mumbai teen gets hands from brain-dead Indore woman

MUMBAI: The hands of a brain dead 52-year-old woman, Vinita Khajanchi from Indore were donated for transplantation into a Mumbai-based teen girl, which a health official on Monday said was the first case of its kind in the state and was a "revolution in the field of organ donation". The woman's kin

gave consent for donation of her skin, eyes, lungs, liver and kidneys as well, he said. "This is the first time in the history of the state both hands of a brain dead person have been donated. This is like a revolution in the field of organ donation," Dr Sanjay Dixit, secretary of the Indore Society for Organ Donation said.

CBI seeks AIIMS opinion on health of accused

BHAVNA UCHIL / Mumbai

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has approached a special court and sought the constitution of a medical board with experts from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AI-IMS), New Delhi to opine on the need for further hospitalisation of Pune-based builder Avinash Bhosale. The builder, who is in custody in a money laundering case concerning the Yes Bank, has been in the St George's Hospital since October 2022.

Builder Bhosale's illness is general in nature and reasons cited for further hospitalisation are unjustified, says agency

The jailor had referred him to the hospital and then informed the court, which had then passed an order on his hospitalisation. On Wednesday, upon the agency's plea, the court said that the CBI could itself find out if the accused requires hospitalisation. In case, it's not satisfied then its plea for constitution of medical board will be heard, the court added.

The CBI subsequently filed a plea and said that its officers have already visited the hospital and collected the case reports. It stated that the St George's opined that Bhosale's hospitalisation in October was necessary and further hospital care is required, too.

The agency said that from a bare perusal of the medical reports of Bhosale, it appears that the illness is "general" in nature. It contended that he has neither been on a ventilator nor in coma. Also, there is no indication that he underwent a major surgery or faced any serious health complications during the period of hospitalisation or even prior to that. Hence, the reasons cited by the St. George's Dean for Bhosale's further hospitalisation are "totally unjustified and questionable". The report is also silent on whether the treatment which he is getting at the hospital is not available in jail, the CBI argued.

The court then said that it can't straightaway give such direction to AIIMS, New Delhi. It also suggested that the CBI should approach the hospital dean and point out the aforementioned queries.

Underlining that unless it's concluded that there is substance in the CBI's allegation, the court said that the agency should put its doubt on record through an affidavit, after which the next legal step could be taken.

High Command asks MPCC to take action against Satyajit Tambe

SANJAY JOG / Mumbai

A day after his father and a three-term party legislator from the Nashik Graduates' Constituency Sudhir Tambe was suspended for not filing his nomination despite the announcement of his candidature, the Congress high command on Monday instructed the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) to suspend former state youth Congress chief Satyajit Tambe who staged a rebellion and filed as an independent candidate from the same constituency.

The MPCC sources told the Free Press Journal, "The Committee will soon release its decision."

The BJP is expected to extend its support to Mr Satyajit Tambe as the party has not fielded its own nominee in the biennial legislative council election slated for January 30.

"As Satyajit Tambe is not a legislator or an MP, the Congress party's Central Disciplinary Committee cannot take action against him as it has to be initiated at the state level," said Vinayak Deshmukh who is a member of the Central Disciplinary Committee and the state party General Secretary.

The All India Congress

Is Chahal in a fix over notice to CAG?

ED quizzes civic chief in connection with the alleged irregularities in contracts for COVID-19 care centres

KALPESH MHAMUNKAR
Mumbai

Is BMC Commissioner Iqbal Chahal being punished for the legal notice that he had sent to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) regarding the audit of expenditure made by the civic body during the Covid-19 pandemic? This is the question doing the rounds in civic circles.

After one month of the notice, the civic chief, who is now the administrator in the absence of an elected body, was summoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for the inquiry. On Monday, Mr Chahal visited the ED office and was questioned for four hours.

In the last week of October, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had ordered the CAG to probe the Rs12,000 crore spending during Covid-19 by the BMC, wherein Rs3,500 crore was on health expenditures



BMC Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal arrives at the ED office to record his statement

PIC: SALMAN ANSARI

alone. According to the CM's communication, the CAG is expected to look into controversial decisions by BMC related to setting up of field hospitals during the pandemic.

Mr Chahal's handling of the Covid crisis had come in for praise from several quarters. However, certain politicians raised questions about the expenditure. The

CAG had started the audit immediately. Later in the month of December, the legal department of BMC had sent a notice to the CAG saying that it cannot audit or probe the expenditure made during Covid 19 under the Epidemic Act 1897 and Disaster Management Act 2005.

Despite that, the State Government had directed CAG to continue with the

There is no lawful government existing in the state. An unconstitutional State Government is taking unconstitutional actions. Even if they don't have rights under any law, they still put pressure on officers. This is the new task the BJP has undertaken.



Arvind Sawant, Shiv Sena MP

audit. The State Government had also forwarded the BMC's notice to the state Law and Judiciary (L&J) Department. Sources said that even though the L&J department's prima facie view is that an audit can be done by the CAG, no action can be initiated against any errant officers. But a detailed report is yet to be received by the State

Government.

Arvind Sawant, Shiv Sena MP from South Mumbai while speaking to FPJ said, "There is no lawful government existing in the state. An unconstitutional State Government is taking unconstitutional actions. Even if they don't have rights under any law, they still put pressure on officers. This is the new task the BJP has undertaken. The BJP has no courage to go for BMC election but is pressurising officers."

"There are other municipal corporations in the Maharashtra state and country which were working during Covid-19, but the inquiry is ordered with regard to the expenditure incurred by the BMC. It is nothing but an effort to malign the image of the Shiv Sena and the Thackeray family. BJP is in power at Pune, Pimpri Chinchwad and Nagpur; why inquiry is not initiated there?" asked Mr Sawant.

Worse than Delhi; Mumbai AQI falls to very poor category

The minimum temperature of the city also rose around 2 degrees C

SHERINE RAJ / Mumbai

Two days in a row, Mumbai records worse air quality than Delhi as the city fell into the 'very poor' category on Monday. The minimum temperature of the city also rose around 2 degrees Celsius on Monday, with the possibility of increasing more during the week.

Delhi's air quality is considered the worst in the country, at present, Mumbai's air quality is even worse than the nation's capital's. On Monday,

On Monday, the city recorded an overall Air Quality Index of 306

the city recorded an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) of 306 which falls in the 'very poor' category, compared to Delhi which recorded a 'poor' AQI of 212, as per the System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research (SAFAR). On Sunday too, the air quality of Delhi was better compared to Mumbai with an AQI of 160 being in the 'moderate' category while Mumbai was in the 'poor' category with an AQI of 290.

On Monday, the air quality in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) stood at 367, the worst, followed by Chembur (347),

Andheri (326) and Mazgaon (322). Colaba (290) and Bhandup (207) came under the 'poor' category, whereas there were three locations in the 'moderate' category – Malad (180), Worli (125) and Borivali (111).

Experts attribute this air quality condition to the low temperature and weak winds along with the dust pollution due to construction activities and slow-moving traffic in the city.

According to health experts, prolonged exposure to poor air can lead to a range of respiratory and cardiovascular problems. Therefore, it is advised to wear masks while heading outdoors, especially people with respiratory conditions.

Meanwhile, after recording the lowest temperature of this year's winter season at 13.8 °C on Sunday, the city's minimum temperature has risen around 2 degrees Celsius on Monday.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), on Sunday, the minimum temperature recorded by the Santacruz observatory was 15.4 °C and Colaba was 18.2 °C, along with a maximum temperature of 27.6°C and 26.4°C respectively.

The IMD has forecasted an average minimum temperature of 15 °C to 17 °C for the next two days in Mumbai.

India likely to be hit with recession after June: Rane

SANJAY JOG / Mumbai

Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Mr Narayan Rane Monday said India is likely to be hit with recession after June adding that the Centre was working to handle it effectively in order to minimise its impact on the country.

"There is a global recession and it is in many countries. This is what I have gathered from the discussion in the meetings of the Union Government. The recession is expected to hit India after June," Mr Rane said after delivering an inaugural speech at the



The guidelines from the G20 IWG meet will be helpful for all developed and developing countries in planning cities of tomorrow

—Narayan Rane
Union Minister

HEART FOR THE HOMELESS

Activist seeks justice for pavement dwellers

PRANAY MANIAR / Mumbai

Noted Right to Information (RTI) activist Mr Anil Galgali has accused the Mumbai police of violating the Supreme Court's order not to inhumanely dislocate homeless persons sleeping on pavements in winter. He has also alleged that despite the apex court's order to build 125 night shelters in Mumbai for the homeless, the Maharashtra government has not built any.

Mr Galgali has written to Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is in charge of the Home portfolio, and Police Commissioner Mr Vivek Phansalkar to take ac-

tion against the senior police officials responsible for the failure to implement the SC's directives.

Spokesperson for the city police and Deputy Commissioner Prashant Kadam declined to comment. Mr Galgali said the SC had, in response to a PIL filed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties, ordered chief secretaries of all state governments to implement measures to help the homeless urban poor.

The Maharashtra government vide its GR dated December 24, 2021 had directed all district administrations to take appropriate steps in this regard. But these directives



IMAGE FOR REPRESENTATION

are being violated with impunity in Mumbai, he alleged.

Mr Galgali alleged that in

two-day G20 Infrastructure Working Group (IWG) meeting in Pune.

Mr Rane's statement came days after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva pointed out the slowing down of major economies in the world. She said, "The new year is going to be tougher than the year we are behind. Why? Because the three big economies – the US, EU and China – are all slowing down simultaneously."

Ms Georgieva further added, "We expect the third economy to be in recession. Even countries that are not in recession,

it would feel like a recession for hundreds of millions of people."

Earlier, Mr Rane in his speech said, "The G20 IWG will provide direction to everyone on how to develop future cities. The use of technology while keeping in mind the impact on the environment for infrastructure development would be discussed in the two-day IWG."

"This idea of infrastructure is closely related to development because it is a strong stimulator for long-term sustainable economic growth with many positive externalities. The guidelines

Road scam: Aaditya poses 10 questions to civic chief

FPJ POLITICAL BUREAU
Mumbai

Shiv Sena Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray (UBT) leader and former minister Aaditya Thackeray has targeted the Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led government on the proposed concretisation of 400km of roads in Mumbai and reiterated a major scam in it.

Mr Thackeray in a letter to the BMC Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal has posed 10 questions on the alleged road scam. "The BMC had earlier issued a clarification that went all over but did not address the 'scale, scam and setting' for road contracts in the mega tender. The tender must be scrapped," he demanded.

"Who has proposed these 400km of concrete road works and who has sanctioned Rs6080 crore for these road works? Is it the Municipal Commissioner/Administrator or the Chief Minister/Urban Development Minister? It is fair in a democracy for an opaque administration to issue tenders worth Rs6080 crore for non-emergency works in absence of elected representatives, when there is no civic emergency now or lockdown? Multiple road-works are ongoing in the city and we are in the second half of fair season for road works. These tenders were due for around September last year," said Mr Thackeray.

Where would Rs6000 crore be drawn from or diverted from? Would this affect any other schemes? Does the budget not require the sanction of the Standing Committee and the General Body of the BMC? he asked. What is the timeline of all the works proposed in the mega tender? Have permissions and NOCs from all relevant agencies been sought? Why has BMC not negotiated the average 8% hike sought by the bid winners, over and



The BMC had earlier issued a clarification that went all over but did not address the 'scale, scam and setting' for road contracts in the mega tender.

—Aaditya Thackeray

above the revised Schedule of Rate (SOR)? The SOR was made on demand from contractors, as mentioned in BMC's clarification.

Mr Thackeray said it is mentioned in the BMC clarification that the SOR was revised as no big contractor came for the August 2022 bids. "Does the market define the SOR or the demands from contractors? Will the BMC keep changing its SOR for contractors of its preference?" he asked.

Since the stress has been on the 'national experience' for contractors, where all have these contractors worked in cities similar to Mumbai? Since working on greenfield highways is different from working in cities like Mumbai, how many kms of city roads have they made and at what rates in other cities? he asked.

"The clarification also states that institutes like VJTI and IIT will be ensuring quality tests. Sadly reports from both these reputed institutions were disregarded for one Gokhale Bridge. How will BMC regard its reports for 400 km? asked Mr Thackeray.

Most importantly, how does BMC explain the apparent cartelization of 5 packets for 5 contractors? he asked.

Raut to CM: Go to Guj instead of Davos to bring back projects

FPJ POLITICAL BUREAU / Mumbai

Shiv Sena Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray MP Mr Sanjay Raut took a dig at Chief Minister Eknath Shinde saying that instead of getting investments from Davos he should bring back the projects that have gone to Gujarat.

Mr Raut was referring to the loss of \$20 billion Vedanta Foxconn semiconductor project and Rs22,000 crore Tata Airbus defence manufacturing plane project to Gujarat. Further, the state also lost medical devices to Tamil Nadu, UP, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, the bulk drug project and the dedicated industrial cluster for renewable energy to other states. "It would be a good thing if the CM could bring Rs5 lakh crore worth of investments from Davos from his two-day visit. But projects of Rs2.5 lakh crore have already gone out of Maharashtra and have gone to Gujarat," said Mr Raut.

"We know how deals are made there, how MoUs are signed and who has made how many deals there so far. No one can prove how many investments and projects, in reality, came to the country. But we can see in front of our eyes that someone took away the project that came to Maharashtra," Mr Raut said.

weather.

The homeless sleep on pavements, below flyovers, foot over bridges etc because they have no place to take shelter. Especially in south Mumbai a large number of people can be seen sleeping in the open, they have been subjected to severe treatment by the Mumbai Police.

The homeless in Mumbai are usually found on streets, sidewalks, train stations, under the flyovers, and outdoor spaces in areas like Charni Road, SK Patil Udyan, Opera House, Azad Maidan, Lokmanya Tilak Marg, VP Road, Dawa Bazar etc, Mr Galgali observed.

He said, "The police arrive

at night in their vans, wake up the sleeping homeless and ask them to vacate the pavements. Those who resist are beaten with sticks and their belongings like clothes, grains, and school books are seized. The police also crush the temporary shelters the pavement dwellers build with cardboard or plastic to keep the cold away.

Mr Galgali said, "I met the police commissioner and requested him to stop taking action against the homeless; but my pleas have fallen on deaf ears. He said pavement dwellers pose a nuisance to pedestrians. They also dirty the surroundings since they cook and eat in the open."

Eight-month-old girl dies of suspected measles

Mumbai: An eight-month-old girl from Saki Naka died of suspected measles on Jan 14. The cause of the fatality will be ascertained by the death review committee. "Suffering from fever, the infant had developed a cough and cold following which she was

hospitalised. Later, she even had a maculopapular rash over her body. The infant's condition continued to deteriorate and despite resuscitative measures she could not be revived. Moreover, the patient was not eligible for the measles vaccine," said the health official.



High BP on rise in young adults

Worrying trend comes to fore after BMC compiles data from its ongoing door-to-door screening; number of those with hypertension is likely to increase as survey progresses

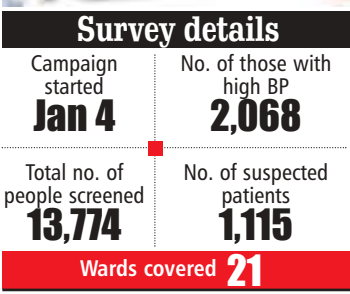
SWAPNIL MISHRA / MUMBAI

The BMC's door-to-door screening – which started from Jan 4 – has found that around 15% of surveyed citizens aged above 30 years and working suffer from hypertension. So far, 13,774 have been screened across 21 wards under the campaign against non-communicable diseases (NCD). Of them, 1,115 were suspected to suffer from hypertension, while 2,068 have been diagnosed with high blood pressure.

Hypertension is one of the leading causes of death across the world, and data emerging from the NCD corners set up in civic hospitals in the last four months shows that 11% of those tested have blood pressure issues.

BMC Additional Commissioner Dr Sanjeev Kumar said it has been more than two weeks since the campaign started and it has received a good response from the citizens. The civic body is mainly focusing on non-communicable diseases as cases are increasing day-by-day.

"We need to wait and watch as still more citizens are likely to undergo screening in the coming days for which community health volunteers or medical health officers are doing the door-to-door campaigns. For now, 8% are suspected hypertension patients which means there



The prevalence of hypertension in young individuals is on the rise. One of the main reasons is that they are less likely to seek medical attention as they feel that they are fit and fine. It can thus remain undetected for a long time.

Doctor

might be more cases which are left undiagnosed. The main aim is to focus on non-communicable diseases which are neglected most of the time and it becomes the biggest threat in future," he said.

According to the doctors, patients who suffer from an existing condition of hypertension apart from checking their blood pressure, need to follow the intake of prescribed medication regularly.

"Hypertension is a major contributing risk factor for heart disease. The prevalence of hypertension in young individuals is on the rise. One of the main reasons is that they are less likely to seek

medical attention as they feel that they are fit and fine. It can thus remain undetected for a long time," said a senior doctor who is part of the campaign.

Explaining the condition further, the medico said that a person is known to be hypertensive when the individual's blood pressure remains more than 140 mm Hg systolic and 90 mm Hg diastolic. "If you have never been diagnosed with hypertension and you have no other serious medical problems, the American Heart Association recommends that you have your blood pressure checked at least once every two years," the doctor added.

No. of HIV treatment dropouts on decline

SWAPNIL MISHRA / MUMBAI

Owing to sustained efforts on part of the government and NGOs, the number of HIV patients opting out of treatment has declined by 83% in the last five years across Maharashtra. The data was provided by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) in response to the Right To Information (RTI) query filed by healthcare activist and Advocate Tushar Bhosale.

According to health officials proper follow-up, counselling and availability of drugs are reasons behind the decrease in dropout figures. From Apr till Oct 2022, Maharashtra reported just 137 PLHIV opting out of treatment; 34 of them were from Mumbai. According to the RTI reply, in 2017-18, the number of dropouts was 1,012 and it declined to 171 in 2021-2022.

The highest dropout figure was registered in Telangana, with 148 PLHIVs dropping out of treatment. Uttar Pradesh occupied third place with the count of 133. The whole India figure stood at 1,528, with Maharashtra's share of 9%.

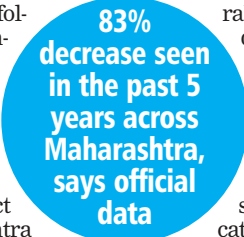
Speaking on the issue, Mr

Bhosale commented that it's a good sign that after a rigorous follow-up there is a decrease in such cases. Also, the confidence of people in treatment at government hospitals for HIV is increasing day-by-day.

A senior official from the Maharashtra State Aids Control Society (MSACS) said ten years ago there were more than 15% patients with lost follow-up, but now it has come down to 2%. Moreover, patients registered themselves at the anti-retroviral therapy clinics

due to which there were many duplications hence the actual dropout numbers were difficult to know. However, they started the de-duplication process to scrutinise the actual number of dropouts.

"We also started to take a follow-up drive every week. We started to get the exact number of people who left treatment midway and with the help of NGOs, we started to track them. Most of them had given fake addresses while registering at the centre. There were no phone numbers either. But with the help of social organisations, we could trace some of them in the past few months," he said.



Woman doc loses ₹95k in cyber fraud

STAFF REPORTER / MUMBAI

A 55-year-old doctor on Monday lodged a complaint with the Vakola police, stating that she was surfing the net for information on a Pune-based hospital to make inquiries about the DEXA scan (bone density test) for a patient and came across a contact number.

Her call was answered by the fraudster who impersonated the hospital staff and asked her to visit a phishing link on the pretext of completing the booking process. In this manner, the con si-phoned off Rs95,000 from her bank account.

She unknowingly dialled the fraudster while making inquiries for a patient

According to the police, the complainant is a resident of Santa Cruz. The fraud occurred on Jan 12 when the woman was at her home and unknowingly rang the fraudster, and inquired about the charges of the scan and appointment schedule.

The fraudster then gave a booking number to the woman and told her to pay Rs5 on a link that he would be sharing with her. She realised she was duped when she got a message from bank that Rs95,000 has been debited from her account. A case has been filed under sections 419 (cheating by personation), 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property) of the Indian Penal Code as well 66C (identity theft), 66D (cheating by personation by using computer resource) of the Information Technology Act.

Tech glitch delays harbour line services

Between 2020 and 2022, CR has reported 12 such incidents

STAFF REPORTER / MUMBAI

Local train services on the harbour line were disrupted on Monday for at least half an hour after a piece of cable was found hanging on the overhead wire near the Reay Road railway station.

According to the senior CR official, the incident was reported at 3.40pm by the control room and the section was cleared at 4.10pm after the foreign object was removed. "Once alerted, officials immediately rushed to the site and removed the wire after establishing an emergency traffic block in the affected section. During this time, local train services on the harbour line were halted between CSMT and Wadala," he said.

Passengers said that a few trains were delayed by half an hour owing to the problem. "I boarded the 3.32pm Panvel-bound local from the



Few trains ran half an hour behind schedule after a cable was found hanging on overhead wire

CSMT. Announcement was made that due to a technical problem between the Dockyard Road and Reay Road railway stations, the harbour line trains will be late and the passengers can travel through the mail line on the same ticket. The 3.32pm train later departed at 4:16 pm. I reached Nerul half an hour late," said a frequent commuter.

This is not the first time foreign objects hanging on the overhead wires have caused disruption in local traffic. Between June 2020 to Dec 2022, around a dozen such incidents have been reported in the suburban section of the CR, resulting in delay of up to 20 minutes for nearly hundred trains.

Crossovers to facilitate smooth diversion of WR local trains

A crossover is a pair of switches that connects parallel tracks

STAFF REPORTER / MUMBAI

The Mumbai Central Division, Western Railways on Monday said that the work of inserting crossovers at the Andheri Yard was successfully completed. It will help the diversion of slow trains on the fast line between Santa Cruz and Goregaon in future.

A crossover is a pair of switches that connects two parallel rail tracks, allowing a train on one track to cross over to the other.

"The work was carried out as per sanctioned Traffic Work Order of 34 days during

The new crossovers will provide an additional diversion facility between Santa Cruz (north) and Goregaon (south). They will also be significant in reducing operational repercussions during jumbo blocks.

Rly official

which two new crossovers have been inserted. This will facilitate diversion of down slow line trains to down fast lines. The trial of 30kmph for

both crossovers was done on Jan 11 and 12," said the official.

The new crossovers will provide an additional diversion facility between Santa Cruz (north) and Goregaon (south). They will also be significant in reducing operational repercussions during jumbo blocks.

Both of the crossovers with the speed of 30kmph allow quicker reception and dispatch of local trains. With the completion of this work, operational efficiency of local train services has improved, the official said.

Man held for printing fake currency

SHERINE RAJ / MUMBAI

A 33-year-old man was arrested in Malad for allegedly printing and circulating fake Indian currency notes. Also, a printing machine and other paraphernalia used for the offence was seized from Palghar, while an accomplice of the suspect is still on the run, said the cops from the Malwani police station.

Acting on a tip-off, a trap was laid on Jan 5 and subsequently Haneef Shaikh, a resident of Naigaon in Palghar, was arrested. His frisking led to the discovery of 300 fake currency notes of Rs200 denomination having the total face value of Rs60,000. The scanning of his mobile phone gave the location of the printing machine in Naigaon, said the police, adding that he has also revealed the identity of his partner-in-crime.

Shaikh has been under the Indian Penal Code section 489A (counterfeiting any currency-note).

Other possessions including blank papers, cutters, printing ink, hair dryer, etc were also impounded.

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HAWKERS' PLAZA AWAITS OCCUPANTS

FPJ CAMPAIGN

Constructed in the 2000s, the BMC had built the hawkers' plaza near the Plaza cinema, Dadar to decongest the railway station. The plan was to shift the hawkers into the building. However, that did not materialise. The idea's failure has resulted in a colossal waste of public money.

PIC: SALMAN ANSARI

3 BF.7 cases in Mumbai; 1st in state

The trio foreign returnees are in stable condition, vaccinated and don't need hospitalisation, says senior health official

SWAPNIL MISHRA MUMBAI

Three people from Mumbai, all foreign returnees, have been found positive for BF.7 variant. These are the first such cases of the new variant – which is said to be the reason behind China's Covid surge – in Maharashtra.

Two of them have come from China and one has come from Canada following which their samples were sent for whole genome sequencing. All three of them

are stable and don't require any hospitalisation. There is no need to worry as all these patients had mild symptoms and were vaccinated, said the senior health officer.

So far, samples of 23 travellers – who were found positive during the RT-PCR test at Mumbai airport – have been sent for whole genome sequencing. Of them, five are from Mumbai followed by Gujarat (4), Pune (3), Kerala (2) and one each from Navi Mumbai, Amravati, Sangli, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Ut-

tar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha and Telangana.

A senior official from the state health department said that the Centre has directed every state to send all positive RT-PCR samples for genome sequencing considering the case surge in China. "Earlier, we used to pick samples of serious or admitted patients or those who had re-infection after vaccination and patients from particular clusters for genome sequencing," he added.

GRAND COMPETITION AND CASH PRIZES UNDER SWACHH SURVEKSHAN 2023!

As per the directives from Central Government of India, BMC invites application for cleanliness competition.

Competition is being organized for below mentioned categories under Swachh Survekshan & Swachh Technology 2023

Hotel (Restaurants), Resident Welfare Association, Private Hospital, Municipal Hospital, Private School, Municipal School, Market Associations, Government/Semi Government Building, Open category: Jingle, movie, poster/drawing, murals and street play

Swachh Technology Challenge: Individuals, NGOs, Companies, Startups, Academic Institutions

Last date to apply 29 January 2023

BMC will issue certificates and awards to the winners in each category and cash prizes under Swachha Survekshan and Swachh Technology Challenge 2023

To apply click/san on: https://www.unitedwaymumbai.org/bmcswachhsurvekshan23

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Arrested poacher assaults forest officers, tries to flee

Nagpur: A poacher arrested along with three others in a tiger poaching case allegedly tried to escape from custody after assaulting forest department officials. The four were held after a tiger was found dead in the Paoni buffer area of Pench Reserve on January 12, an official said on Monday. "The four were

remanded in the Forest Department's custody till January 17 by a Ramek court. One of the suspects tried to escape after assaulting staffers on Sunday. Range Forest Officer Jayesh Tayde lodged a complaint against him in Deolapar police station," as per a release from the Reserve Deputy Director Prabhunath Shukla said.



Court seeks state reply in Yunus custody death

STAFF REPORTER / MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has sought the response of the State Government among others in a plea filed by Asiya Begum in connection with the custodial death case of her son Khwaja Yunus. The plea is against an order of the trial court of September last year rejecting her application to add four policemen as accused.

Ms Begum had contended in her plea before the HC that while the apex court had directed the trial court to decide the plea by the prosecution seeking to add the four as accused, the court had, instead, permitted the prosecution to withdraw the plea.

The plea to add the four policemen as accused had been made by the earlier special public prosecutor Dhiraj Mirajkar in the case based on

Yunus's mother has filed a plea to indict 4 more cops

the evidence of a prime witness who had testified regarding their involvement. Mr Mirajkar was later removed from the case. The new prosecutor appointed in the case had made the plea to withdraw the previous plea. This plea the trial court had permitted. Alongside, it had also rejected a plea of Ms Begum to add the four as accused.

Ms Begum said in her plea before the HC that the sessions court judge had committed an error and injustice in passing the September 7 order last year. She said the court had failed to appreciate the prosecution had filed the earlier plea based on witness evidence. The next hearing is on Jan 25. Yunus, a 27-year-old software engineer, was arrested in connection with the 2002 Ghatkopar blast. He was last seen alive on Jan 6, 2003. The police team led by Sachin Vaze, claimed he escaped and met with an accident.

A probe later that was initiated on a petition by Ms Begum found that the police claim was false and charged policemen including Vaze with his murder.

NO MORE INVESTIGATION: COURT

Court junks plea to summon Mukesh Ambani in Nusli Wadia murder conspiracy case

STAFF REPORTER / MUMBAI

A special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court has rejected an application of an accused in a 1989 case of conspiracy to murder industrialist Mr Nusli Wadia. It has also rejected another plea by him that sought a further investigation in the case.

In the plea seeking further probe, accused Mr Ivan Sequeira had sought that industrialist Mr Mukesh Ambani be made an accused in the case and alleged that he was being shielded by the agency. Mr Ambani, he alleged, was the "mastermind and co-conspirator" in the offence. A de-

tailed order is yet to be made available.

The prime accused in the case is Mr Kirti Ambani, now deceased. He was a senior executive at Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and reported to Mr Mukesh Ambani directly. The court had charged him, Mr Arjun Babaria, Mr Sequeira and Mr Ramesh Jagothia with criminal conspiracy in 1988-89 to murder Mr Wadia, who was the chairman of Bombay Dyeing then. Only Mr Sequeira and another accused face trial - the others have died.

Mr Mukesh Ambani had given a statement to the CBI in 1990 in which he had said



that he had learnt about Mr Kirti Ambani's involvement in the case only after he was arrested. In June 2016, Mr Wadia had testified before the

court and said that he did not know Mr Kirti Ambani, but was informed he worked for RIL. On being asked further, he had said he did not know any reason why Mr Kirti Ambani would conspire other than the fact that he worked for Reliance which was managed by Mr Dhirubhai Ambani and his sons.

Mr Sequeira's plea had said that if Mr Wadia's testimony of 2016 is linked with Mr Ambani's statement to the CBI in 1990, it can be concluded that his co-accused Mr Kirti Ambani had acted on the industrialist's directions to attempt to murder Mr Wadia. The CBI had opposed his

pleas and said in its response that an accused has no right to call a prosecution witness for cross-examination. It had further said that he has no right to seek reinvestigation at this stage.

As per the CBI's case, the plan was to intercept the car of Mr Wadia when he returns from his office to his residence at Prabhadevi and murder him. Mr Sequeira was allegedly shown the photograph of Mr Wadia and was paid a huge sum of money for the commission of the offence. However, the plan never materialised and two of the accused were arrested by the CID in 1989.

Manjha costs biker his life in Bhiwandi

The Ulhasnagar resident was returning home when the string slit his throat

ABHITASH SINGH / THANE

In a bizarre accident a 47-year-old man lost his life in Bhiwandi on Sunday, January 15 in the evening when he was returning home on his bike from Bhiwandi to Ulhasnagar. His throat was slit by a banned nylon kite string killing him on the spot. The Bhiwandi city police have registered a case against unidentified persons for negligence causing death related charges.

The deceased has been identified as Mr Sanjay Hajare, 47, a resident of Ulhasnagar.

Senior Police Inspector of Bhiwandi city police station Chetan Kakade said, "Sanjay Hazare's throat was slit by a nylon kite string which was banned while he was travelling on his bike towards Ulhasnagar from Bhiwandi in Thane district on Sunday at late Balasaheb Thackeray flyover. He lost his balance and hit the retention wall of the flyover. We have registered an offence under IPC sections 304(A) causing death due to negligence against an unidentified person and further probing the case."



Digital Balwadi inaugurated for the underprivileged

STAFF REPORTER / MUMBAI

A Digital Balwadi was inaugurated on Monday at Kavde Math Municipal School, Walkeshwar. An initiative of Bhavyata Foundation, the Balwadi aims to close the digital learning gap for disadvantaged kids.

The Balwadi was inaugurated by Minister for Women and Child Welfare, Mangal Prabhat Lodha, in the presence of Kulin Maniar, founder Bhavyata Foundation, Roma Singhania, Neela Parikh, Gorakshnath Gambhire, Reena Jogani, Jyotsna Mehta, and members from Lions Club, Churchgate, FICCI, Inner Wheel Club of Bombay Pier Tiara, Tardeo Giants.

A non-profit institution, Bhavyata Foundation takes on projects involving social development, livelihoods, and holistic education from initiation to conclusion. Kulin Maniar, Founder of Bhavyata Foundation, said, "Since the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, millions of disadvantaged kids have been lagging behind in academics owing to lack of computer and internet access. To close this digital learning gap, we envisaged a robust and accessible online education system for instructors, parents, and students."

"AARAMBH - Learning



Management System with Digital courses, interactive learning tools, assessment-based activities, and outcome-based learning shall be enabled with the support of technology. The unique feature of the LMS is that it can be easily accessed and communicated with a teacher and student-friendly interface," he said.

"Considering the need for strengthening the anganwadis 'with peoples' participation', State's Woman and Child Development Department have come up with the 'Adoption of Anganwadi' policy under which corporate entities can invest through corporate social responsibility fund, non-Government voluntary organisations, trusts, etc, and individuals / families / groups can invest in ramping up the infrastructure of anganwadis," Mr Lodha said in

his address.

"With the partnership support of corporates and notable social organisations, we aim to bring this content and structure to 100 more Anganwadis in tribal districts of Maharashtra in the first phase of its expansion plan. Special teacher training programs to support learning capacities for children have been conceptualised to refine the impact of teaching and achieving desired learning outcomes in students," Mr Maniar added.

Roma Singhania, who is passionate about the field of education, said, "Digital Anganwadis is a step ahead in the right direction to bridge the digital divide to bring education opportunities at par with city-based play schools and AARAMBH LMS is definitely one of the ways forward."

One held for cheating woman, three aides absconding

Suspects pose as movers-packers, rob Bhoiwada resident of television, cash

AISHWARYA IYER / MUMBAI

A 26-year-old was arrested on Sunday for allegedly duping a woman to the tune of Rs2,500, and stealing a television after claiming to be a staff from a movers and packers company.

The incident happened in December when the victim was moving her house from Bhoiwada to the Worli area in South Mumbai.

A group of four people had come to her residence claiming to be movers and packers and initiated the packing process.

"The victim did not get suspicious of them as they were doing a good job of packing all the items at her house. However, after some time they took her television set and one of the four left her residence and did not return. Slowly, the remaining excused themselves and left too, which is when she realized she was duped," said a police officer.

The victim called up the

company she had contacted to ask if they had sent anyone for the job. The company informed her they had not sent anybody yet.

The victim later realised a total of Rs2,500 cash was missing from her table. She approached the police and lodged a case against unknown persons.

The police subsequently initiated an investigation during which they got a tip that one of the four suspects was in the Dombivli area of Thane district, confirmed Senior Police Inspector Jitendra Pawar.

While one suspect has been arrested, three are still absconding, said the police, adding that a manhunt to nab them is underway. The arrested suspect is identified as Santosh Krishnakumar Mishra, 26, a resident of Dombivli.

A case has been registered under sections 420 (cheating), 406 (breach of trust) and 32 (common intent) of the Indian Penal Code.

State Home Guards are entitled to insurance for on-duty mishaps

IANS / MUMBAI

For the first time, Maharashtra Home Guards are entitled to an insurance cover in case of accident or death in the line of duty, a top official said here on Monday. Director General of Home Guards, Dr B. K. Upadhyay handed over a cheque of Rs 25 lakh to a home guard, Mr Laxman Vithal Akhade who lost one leg in a serious accident while on duty on September 5, 2022.

"Similar to Maharashtra Police, the Home Guards have tied up with the private sector's HDFC Bank for the salary accounts of its staff and also entitlements to all insurance benefits," Dr

Upadhyay said.

Present on the occasion were the beneficiary Mr Akhade, Additional DGP Brijesh Singh, Additional SP of Raigad Atul Zende, HDFC officers, and other top officials.

With 45,000 personnel including women and technicians, Maharashtra Home Guards is among the biggest in the country and serves as an auxiliary to the police force for maintaining internal security.

It also serves as an emergency force for specialised tasks and has set up special-arms like the border wings, marine units, etc, that work for the defence of the country.

PUBLIC NOTICE
FUTURE MONEY FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED
CIN:-U65999MH2017PLC294606
REGISTERED OFFICE:-KNOWLEDGE HOUSE, SHYAM NAGAR, JOGESHWARI VIKHROLI LINK ROAD, JOGESHWARI EAST, MUMBAI-400060
IN THE MATTER OF CHANGE OF NAME FROM EXPANDUS CAPITAL LIMITED TO FUTURE MONEY FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED
It is hereby informed that **EXPANDUS CAPITAL LIMITED**, originally incorporated on 2nd May 2017 under the Companies Act, 2013 has changed its name to **FUTURE MONEY FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED**. approval of the Board of Directors and members were obtained by passing necessary resolutions in terms of section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 and the same were filed with the Registrar of Companies on 11th April 2020 the Approval of the Government of India has been obtained dated 13th Day of April 2020.
It is further informed that pursuant to Rule 29 of the Companies (Incorporation), Rules, 2014 the Company has been issued a new Certificate of Incorporation pursuant to Name Change dated 13th Day of April 2020 in Form No. INC-25 by ROC evidencing the name change of the Company.
All the stakeholders are requested to take note of above information.
By Order of the Board of Directors
FOR FUTURE MONEY FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED
SD/-
Vivek Biyani
Director
DIN - 01977838

MAHARASHTRA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(A Government of Maharashtra Undertaking)
CORRIGENDUM NOTICE
Selecting and on boarding Banks for providing Unified Banking Services
Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), as a part of its effective e-governance practices published RFP for selecting and on boarding Nationalized Bank/Government of Maharashtra Approved Private Bank for providing unified banking services for collections and disbursements for various services offered by MIDC. Date of submission of RFP is now extended up to 31/01/2023 up to 12.00 pm. Accordingly, RFP is available at MIDC's website www.midcindia.org. Interested nationalized banks/Government approved Private Banks may download the Request for proposal from MIDC's website and submit the same up to 31/01/2023 up to 12.00 pm

WESTERN RAILWAY
NOTIFICATION
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
For CVTS Department as Team in Jagjivanram Hospital, Western Railway Mumbai Central, Mumbai 400 008.
Applications are invited for empanelment as Consultant on case to case basis (Specialist/Super specialist' Team) in CVTS department of Jagjivanram Hospital. Western Railway, Mumbai Central, Mumbai 400 008
Eligibility, Qualification & Experience
Super Specialist:- Minimum qualification will be Post-Doctoral Qualification DM / MCH or equivalent with five years of experience in the field.
The application should contain the following information:
1. Detailed CV of Cardiac Surgeon (Team Leader)
2. Name of Cardiac Anaesthesiologist.
3. Name of Assistant Surgeon/Physician assistant.
4. Name of Cardiac Perfusionist.
5. Name of assisting Nurse/Technician.
6. Distribution of amount to each member of the team.
Interested team leaders to apply **ON LINE** Site: <http://203.153.40.19> (e.karmik) within the stipulated time and date **VISIT > MEMO / NOTIFICATION** on the Home Screen>click display MEMORANDUM > select type>NOTIFICATION >click SEARCH
Opening date for on line application: 18.01.2023
Last date of applications: 25.01.2023.
Each individual of the team should be ready to comply with the terms and conditions of contract.
For detailed Terms and conditions **visit railway Website** www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in under News and Recruitment Section.
Terms:
1. The team will consist of Chief Cardiac Surgeon, Cardiac Anaesthetist, Assistant Surgeon/Physician Assistant, Perfusionist and Assistant Nurse/Technician.
2. The application to be made by Cardiac Surgeon who will be the team leader and has his own team.
3. Applicants and the other team members should have requisite academic qualification and experience on the date of on line application.
4. Individual applications will not be entertained.
5. Selected/shortlisted applicants will be called with the requisite original documents along with once attested copy of the same for verification.
6. Academic and Technical Qualification must be from Recognized Institution/Board otherwise candidature will be rejected.
7. Application received through other modes will not be entertained.

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E- AUCTION SALE
WHEREAS, The undersigned is the Authorized Officer of Standard Chartered Bank, having one of its places of business at 23/25 M.G. Road Fort Mumbai – 400001 [Hereinafter called "the Bank"].
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Standard Chartered Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (the Rules) issued demand notices dated 09th January 2020 calling upon the borrower's 1) ANUBHAV BHATTER 2) MEGHNA BHATTER 3) BMA WEALTH CREATORS LIMITED resident of 14/1 PAUL MANSION 6, BISHOP LEFROY ROAD, KOLKATA- 700020 calling upon them to repay the outstanding amount being 14,69,92,485.59/- (Rupees Fourteen Crores Sixty-Nine Lakhs Ninety-Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Five and Paise Fifty-Nine only) along with further interest @ 9.55 % p. a. w. e. f. 03.01.2020 till actual date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The Borrower/s having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property mortgaged with the bank, described hereinbelow, to recover the said outstanding amount, in exercise of powers conferred on me under Section 13(4) of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Rules on **24th Aug 2020**.
Now, the public in general is hereby informed that the said property would be sold by Public e-auction on **07th-day-of-Feb-2023** through e-auction platform provided at web-portal www.matexauctions.com and bidding shall take place through online electronic bidding on the said website, as per the procedure and the terms and conditions stated below:
The Reserve Price of the said Property is Rs. 269,478,495/- (Rupees Twenty Six Crore Ninety Four Lacs Seventy Eight Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Five Only)
The earnest money deposit would be Rs. 26947849.50/- (Rupees Two Crore Sixty Nine Lacs Forty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Forty Nine and Paise Fifty Only)
PROCEDURE AND TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC AUCTION BY INVITING BIDS:
1. The property can be inspected on 25th Jan 2023 between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
2. The Tender / bid form with the terms and conditions can be obtained online from the website <http://www.matexauctions.com>. The tender form and the terms and conditions would be available in the website from 18th Jan 2023 to 06th Feb 2023 up to 5:00 PM. The bid/ tender form complying with all necessary terms shall be submitted along with the proof of EMD amount of **Rs. 26947849.50/-** towards the Earnest Money Deposit favouring Standard Chartered Bank **Deposit through EFT/NEFT/RTGS transfer in favour of West Foreclosure Suspense Account No. 42705095742; IFSC: SCBL0036078**. The earnest money deposit shall not carry any interest. BID form shall be downloaded and duly filled and uploaded to www.matexauctions.com.
3. Last date to submit the bid along with Earnest Money Deposit is on or before 5:00 p.m. on 06th Feb 2023
4. Along with the bid form the proposed bidder shall also attach his/her identity proof and the proof of residence such as copy of the passport, election commission card, ration card driving license etc. and a copy of the PAN card issued by the Income Tax Department of India.
5. Bidders shall hold a valid Digital Signature Certificate issued by competent authority and valid email ID {e-mail ID is necessary for the intending bidder as all the relevant information and allotment of ID & password by M/s Matex Net Pvt Ltd may be conveyed through e- mail}.
6. On the auction date all the bids so received would be opened and the bid of the highest bidder, provided it is above the reserve price, may be accepted by the bank. In no eventuality would the property be sold below the reserve price. However, the bidders personally present for the auction shall have the right to further enhance their bid price by a minimum sum of Rs 1,00,000/- and in the event of higher bid price being offered, the Bank shall have the right to accept the same. After each bid, the window for the next bid shall be open for 5 mins within which the next bid can be placed. The Auction time shall be 120 Minutes from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. with unlimited extensions of 5 minutes each. In case bid is placed in the last 5 minutes of the closing time of the e-Auction, the closing time will automatically get extended for 5 minutes.
7. Thereafter, when the Bank confirms the sale, the purchaser will be required to pay deposit of 25% (twenty-five percent) of the sale price, after adjusting the earnest money deposit, immediately with the undersigned. The balance amount of the purchase price shall be paid by the purchaser to the undersigned on or before the fifteenth day of confirmation of the sale of the said property or such extended period as may be agreed upon in writing by the parties. In default of payment & within the time as mentioned above, the bank shall be at liberty to forfeit the earnest money deposit and proceed with re-auction of the property. The defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may be subsequently sold.
8. All the payments shall be made by the purchaser by **Deposit through EFT/NEFT/RTGS transfer in favour of West Foreclosure Suspense Account No. 42705095742; IFSC: SCBL0036078**
9. On receipt of the sale price in full, the bank shall be issuing a sale certificate in favor of the purchaser and would hand over the possession of the property to the purchaser.
10. The said immovable property described in the schedule herein below shall remain and be at the sole risk of the purchaser in all respects including loss or damage by fire or theft or other accidents, and other risk from the date of the confirmation of the sale by the undersigned Authorised Officer. The Purchaser shall not be entitled to annul the sale on any grounds whatsoever.
11. EMD of the unsuccessful bidders will be returned through DD/PO/EFT/NEFT/RTGS to the Bidder/ bank account details provided by them in the bid form and intimated via their email id.
12. For all purposes, sale of the said property is strictly on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS". To the best of the knowledge and information of the Authorised Officer of the bank, no other encumbrances exist on the property.
13. All expenses relating to stamp duty, registration charges, transfer charges and any other charges in respect of the above referred property shall be borne by the purchaser.
14. The Authorised officer is not bound to accept the highest offer or any or all offers, and the bank reserves its right to reject any or all bid(s) without assigning any reasons thereof.
15. The particulars about the properties specified in the tender document have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer and the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, mis-statement or omission in this proclamation. Save and except above, the Bank is not aware of any other encumbrance of the secured asset.
16. The prospective bidders can inspect the property on the date and time mentioned as above.
This notice is also notice to the above said borrower's 1) ANUBHAV BHATTER 2) MEGHNA BHATTER 3) BMA WEALTH CREATORS LIMITED under Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of the residential flat being Unit No.903 admeasuring 4610.53 square feet carpet area on the 9th (Ninth) floor in Wing A of building known as "Signature Island" together with right to use and enjoy 5 (Five) car parking spaces, in the {stilt/open/compound/basement} of the said building and the proportionated share in the common areas, amenities and facilities of the said building, being constructed on the portion of amalgamated plots bearing R1-1, R1-2, R3 & R4 situated in "G" Block of Bandra Kurla Complex, forming part of CTS No. 4207, of Village Kole Kalyan, Taluka Andheri, District Bombay Suburban.
Further details please contact:
Mr. Myakala Tirupathi Ph: +91 22 6735 5093 / 9885667177 / 9833889979 Email: tirupathi.myakala@sc.com AND
Please refer to the link provided on Standard Chartered Bank/secured creditor's website i.e. <https://www.sc.com/in/important-information/public-sale-notice-of-properties-under-the-possession-of-bank/>
Dated: 17/01/2023
Place: Mumbai
Standard Chartered Bank
Sd/- Authorized Officer

MARKET WATCH			
SENSEX	60,092.97	▼	168.21
NIFTY	17,894.85	▼	61.75
USD/INR	81.59	▼	0.21
GOLD	56,701.00	▲	314.00
SILVER	70,054.00	▲	1,173.00

BIZ BULLETIN

Sri Lanka, Mauritius, B'desh keen on ₹ trade

Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Mauritius are keen to settle trade related transactions with India in rupee, Trade Secretary Sunil Barthwal said at a press conference on Monday. Given that the Reserve Bank of India has allowed rupee denominated trade, any country can approach India for rupee trade, Barthwal said. Other than Russia, countries like Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Bangladesh have also shown interest in rupee trade.

WDRA signs pact with State Bank of India

Warehousing Development Regulatory Authority (WDRA) has signed a memorandum of understanding with State Bank of India to help farmers in getting low interest rate loans. The MoU was signed with the intent of promoting awareness about the new loan product called 'Produce Marketing Loan' to exclusively fund against e-NWRs (electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt) with features such as nil processing fee, no additional collateral and attractive interest rates, an official statement said.

India's FTA talks with EU, UK are on track

The ongoing negotiations of India for the proposed comprehensive free trade agreements with the UK and European Union (EU) are on track and the next round of talks with both the regions will happen soon, a top government official said on Monday. India has recently concluded the sixth round of talks with the UK and third round with the EU.

TCS to provide solutions to Scotwest Credit Union

Information technology major Tata Consultancy Services Ltd today said it has signed UK-based Scotwest Credit Union as a client to provide its predictive analytics suite. TCS will deploy its artificial intelligence-driven analytics software for the purpose, the Mumbai-based company said in an exchange filing. However, the IT services exporter did not disclose the amount of the deal.

NTPC arm, Tripura govt sign MoU for RE projects

NTPC Ltd's subsidiary NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Tripura government to develop floating and ground mounted based renewable energy projects in Tripura, the company said in an exchange filing. The MoU aims at developing large renewable energy projects in Tripura and will help the government achieve its clean energy commitments.

Spencer's Retail unveils new format stores

Spencer's Retail Ltd on Monday announced opening a new format chain 'Spencer's Value Market' that targets value-conscious consumers. Part of the RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, the retailer will open the new stores in six South Indian cities this month.

L&T arm gets significant order to build office space

The construction business of Larsen & Tubro Ltd got a 'significant' order to build two towers with commercial office space in Hyderabad, the company said today in a press release. L&T classifies orders worth 10-25 bln rupees as 'significant'. The project, scheduled to be completed in 18 months, has a built-up area of 57.44 sq ft for both the towers.

DroneAcharya Aerial expands ops in SE Asia

DroneAcharya Aerial Innovations Limited, an Indian drone service provider and DGCA - certified drone pilot training organization, on Monday announced that it is commencing operations in Thailand, in association with the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). The partnership will pave the way for the company into the Southeast Asian market.

5th Indian Aerosols Expo 2023 begins on Feb 20

The 5th edition of India Aerosols Expo - India's only trade show dedicated to the Aerosol spray industry – shall be held from 20th to 21st Feb 2023 at Hall 2, Pragati Maidan, Delhi. Held every two years, IAE is the only mainstream platform in India showcasing products, technologies and machinery related to aerosol end-products as well as intermediates.

Cressanda bags order for in-coach advertising

Cressanda Solutions Ltd – leading company providing IT solutions, digital media and IT enabled services has bagged prestigious order for in-coach digital advertising in the Kolkata Metro for a period of 5 years. The contract is renewable for an additional 5 years.

Bharat Agri builds a big turnaround story

Bharat Agri Fert & Realty Ltd is building a big turnaround story. The decision of the company to move the fertilizer unit at Thane to Wada in Palghar and use the land in Thane on a commercial basis has proved beneficial. The company has completed the project of 356 flats in the first phase at Thane and has increased its bottom line by 75 crore. —*Agencies*

Govt revises calendar for release of GDP data

The National Statistics Office has rescheduled the release dates for the first, second, and third revised estimates of national income, consumption expenditure, savings and capital formation. These estimates will now be released on the last

working day of February each year instead of the last working day of January. Accordingly, the first revised estimates for 2021-22 (Apr-Mar), second revised estimates for 2020-21, and third revised estimates for 2019-20 will be released on Feb 28.

Exports decline 12.2% in December on global headwinds; trade deficit widens to \$23.76 bn

During Apr-Dec of this fiscal, India's overall exports rose 9% to \$332.76 bn while imports increased 24.96% to \$551.7 bn

PTI / New Delhi

India's exports contracted 12.2 per cent to USD 34.48 billion in December 2022, mainly due to global headwinds, and the trade deficit widened to USD 23.76 billion during the same period, according to official data released on Monday.

Imports in December 2022 also declined 3.5 per cent to USD 58.24 billion as against USD 60.33 billion in the year-ago period. In December 2021, exports stood at USD 39.27 billion and the trade deficit was at USD 21.06 billion.

During April-December of this fiscal, the country's overall exports rose 9 per cent to USD



332.76 billion while imports increased 24.96 per cent to USD 551.7 billion.

The merchandise trade deficit for the April-December 2022 period was estimated at USD 218.94 billion as against USD 136.45 bil-

lion in April-December 2021.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that despite global headwinds, "India's exports have held its head high".

"There are recessionary trends globally. So lot of head-

winds we are facing," he said.

In the first nine months of the current fiscal, crude oil imports rose 45.62 per cent to USD 163.91 billion as against USD 112.56 billion in the year-ago period.

Similarly imports of coal, coke and briquettes almost doubled to USD 40.55 billion during April-December 2022-23 as against USD 21.66 billion in the same period previous fiscal.

On the export front, engineering shipments declined about 12 per cent in December to USD 9.08 billion while exports of gems and jewellery in December fell 15.2 per cent to USD 2.54 billion.

Other export sectors which recorded negative growth in De-

cember 2022 include coffee, cashew, leather goods, pharma, carpet and handicrafts. Petroleum products exports too contracted about 27 per cent to USD 4.93 billion in December last year.

The secretary said that measures like production-linked incentives for electronics sector is helping to push exports. Exports of electronic goods increased 51.56 per cent to USD 16.67 billion during April-December 2022-23.

Imports from Russia jumped four-times to USD 32.88 billion during the April-December 2022 period on account of the decision of the government to import more crude oil, taking advantage of the lower price.

WPI inflation cools to 22-mth low of 4.95%



PTI / New Delhi

The wholesale price-based inflation declined to a 22-month low of 4.95 per cent in December 2022, mainly due to fall in prices of food articles, especially vegetables, on easing supply side pressure and a higher base of last year.

This is the seventh straight month of declining Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation. It was 5.85 per cent in November 2022 and 14.27 per cent in December 2021.

Even though declining prices of vegetables and onions pulled down inflation rate of food articles, wheat, pulses and potato remained expensive, along with protein-rich items like milk and egg, meat and fish.

Inflation in food articles during December 2022 was (-)1.25 per cent. Inflation in vegetables and onion was (+)35.95 per cent and (+)25.97 per cent, respectively.

In non-food articles, oilseeds and minerals too recorded a decline in inflation by 4.81 per cent and 2.93 per cent, respectively.

"The decline in the rate of inflation in December 2022 is primarily contributed by fall in prices of food articles, mineral oils, crude petroleum & natural gas, food products, textiles and chemicals & chemical products," the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement.

The last low level of WPI inflation was recorded in February 2021 at 4.83 per cent. The deceleration in WPI comes in line with retail inflation data released last week, which showed CPI inflation eased to 5.72 per cent in December.

Global recession likely in 2023

India may benefit from diversification of supply chains

PTI / Davos

A global recession is likely in 2023, but pressures on food, energy and inflation may be peaking, the World Economic Forum said on Monday in its Chief Economists Outlook survey.

At the same time, some economies in the South Asia region, including Bangladesh and India, may benefit from global trends such as a diversification of manufacturing supply chains away from China, the report said.

The WEF said globally businesses are expected to cut costs significantly in response to economic headwinds, but chief economists are optimistic about inflation and strong balance sheets. A

majority of the World Economic Forum's Community of Chief Economists expect to see geopolitical tensions continuing to shape the global economy, and anticipate further monetary tightening in the United States and Europe.

Almost two-thirds of chief economists believe a global recession is likely in 2023; of which 18 per cent consider it extremely likely - more than twice as many as in the previous survey conducted in September 2022. A third of respondents consider a global recession to be unlikely this year. There is, however, a strong consensus that the prospects for growth in 2023 are bleak, especially in Europe and the US.

Budget: LTCG tax likely to be rationalised

IANs / New Delhi

The government may look at rationalising long term capital gains (LTCG) tax structure in the forthcoming Union Budget for 2023-24.

As of now, shares held for more than one year attract a 10 per cent LTCG tax.

This tax was discontinued in 2005, but was reintroduced in 2018 in the Union Budget for that fiscal.

The Finance Ministry is learnt to be looking at ensuring parity between similar asset classes by rationalising the LTCG tax structure and even revising the base year for computing inflation adjusted capital gains, sources aware of developments said.

Government may look at rationalising tax rates and also the holding period for calculating LTCG in the forthcoming budget, sources added.

Mkts decline as metal, financial shares retreat amid FII outflows

PTI / Mumbai

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty gave up early gains to close lower on Monday due to selling in metal, oil and gas and financial stocks as FII outflows dampened the investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 168.21 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at 60,092.97 as 15 of its constituents dropped. The barometer opened higher and touched a high of 60,586.77 in morning session. Later in the day, it fell 297.35 points or 0.49 per cent to 59,963.83. The broader NSE Nifty dipped 61.75 points or 0.34 per cent to end at 17,894.85 as 32 of its stocks dropped.

"The sluggish mood continued as markets moved in a nar-



row range with a negative bias. Investors are taking a cautious stance as the global macroeconomic scenario remains bleak while FIIs continued to be sellers in domestic equities in the current month, thus dampening the market sentiment," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

From the Sensex pack, Axis Bank fell the most by 2.26 per

Goyal pitches for startup database in country

PTI / New Delhi

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday called for making a strong database of all startups in the country as it would help both public and private sectors.

He said the database can help the government in its procurement of goods and services. Goyal added that there must be a number of startups having different levels of success and are not there in any database. "Can we have a robust database of all startups in the country...Let's go for a database ...and make that available for all," he said.

The minister also sought views of the startup community in further reducing compliance burden, and simplification of processes to promote ease of doing business in the country. "I am sure there are many more areas where we can reduce the burden of processes for all of you," he said.

Securitisation soars 42% to ₹1.15L cr till Dec qtr this FY

PTI / Mumbai

Driven by a 20 per cent rise in the number of originators to 120, securitisation volume jumped 42 per cent to over Rs 1.15 lakh crore in the first three quarters of the current fiscal, a report said on Monday.

Led by small finance banks, securitisation activity became broad-based and the number of originators rose to 120 from 100 last year. This has the overall volume growth crossing 42 per cent to Rs 1.15 lakh crore in the first nine months of the current fiscal, according to the data tabulated by Crisil. Growth in the non-mortgage space was led by commercial vehicle (31 per cent) and microfinance (14 per cent) loans. Unsecured loans, including personal and business loans, also continued to draw investors' attention, comprising 7 per cent of the se-

curitised assets compared to 3 per cent in FY22, but the share of property-backed loans declined to 38 per cent from 43 per cent in

FY22.

According to Krishnan Sitaraman, a senior director and deputy chief ratings officer at the agency, the securitisation market is continuing to regain its mojo post-pandemic, propped up by a resurgence in microfinance and increasing preference among investors for vehicle loans. Additionally, personal and business loans seem to be gaining greater acceptance, bringing diversity to the bouquet of asset classes being securitised.

Direct assignment transactions accounted for 60 per cent of the quantum led by mortgage and gold loan pools. Correspondingly, the share of pass-through certificates (PTCs) was at 40 per cent.

MASTER DIRECTION - RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

RBI tweaks norms related to acquisition for banks

PTI / Mumbai

The Reserve Bank of India on Monday tweaked norms related to acquisition and holding of shares in banks to ensure that their ultimate ownership and control remain well diversified and the major shareholders are 'fit and proper' on a continuing basis.

The central bank has issued 'Master Direction - Reserve Bank of India (Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights in Banking Companies) Directions, 2023'.

"These directions are issued

with the intent of ensuring that the ultimate ownership and control of banking companies are well diversified and the major shareholders of banking companies are 'fit and proper' on a continuing basis," it said.

As per the Master Direction, any person who intends to make an acquisition which is likely to result in major shareholding in a banking company is required to seek prior approval of the Reserve Bank by submitting an application.

"The decision of the Reserve Bank to (a) accord or deny permission or (b) accord permission



for acquisition of a lower quantum of aggregate holding than that has been applied for, shall be binding on the applicant and the concerned banking company," it said.

Subsequent to such acquisition, if at any point in time the aggregate holding falls below five per cent, the person will be re-

quired to seek fresh approval from the RBI if the person intends to again raise the aggregate holding to five per cent or more of the paid-up share capital or total voting rights, it added.

Meanwhile, RBI on Monday proposed that banks will be allowed to design own credit loss models and spread the higher provisions over a five-year period under a newer system of setting aside money for lending.

The Reserve Bank of India will issue "broad guidance" required to be considered while designing the credit risk models, the RBI said in the paper which is now

open for public comments.

"Banks would be allowed to design and implement their own models for measuring expected credit losses for the purpose of estimating loss provisions in line with the proposed principles," the paper suggests.

At present, banks use the "incurred loss" model for loan provisioning, wherein banks are required to set aside money much later. In September last year, Governor Shaktikanta Das had announced that the regulator is mulling a shift to the newer system calling it as a "more prudent and forward looking approach".



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BIZ BULLETIN

Phoenix Mills arm acquires Janus Logistics

The Phoenix Mills Ltd's wholly-owned subsidiary Phoenix Logistics and Industrial Parks Pvt Ltd has completed the acquisition Janus Logistics Industrial Parks Pvt Ltd for 260.3 mln rupees, the company said in an exchange filing. Consequently, Janus Logistics has become a step-down subsidiary of the company. Janus Logistics owns and holds a freehold land parcel admeasuring around 33 acres in Hararyana.

JSW Ispat Products Q3 net loss widens to ₹97.98 cr

JSW Ispat Special Products Limited (JISPL) on Monday said its consolidated net loss widened to Rs 97.98 crore in the December quarter. The company had posted a Rs 27.12 crore net loss in the year-ago period, according to a statement.

Lighthouse raises ₹155.4 cr for investing in startups

Singapore-based investment firm Lighthouse Canton on Monday announced the first close of its venture debt fund, a Category - II AIF, at Rs 155.4 crore, which it will deploy in Indian startups. The total aimed corpus of Category - II AIF is Rs 550 crore with a greenshoe option of Rs 550 crore.

Alpha Alternatives Fund Advisors seeks MF licence

Alternative asset management platform Alpha Alternatives Fund Advisors LLP has become the latest entity to approach Sebi for a MF licence. It has joined the list of seven entities, which are awaiting the capital markets regulator's approval to enter the segment.

M&M aims to deliver 20K e-SUV XUV400 in first yr

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd on Monday said it aims to deliver 20,000 units of its electric SUV XUV400, which has been launched at an introductory price starting at Rs 15.99 lakh, in the first year of hitting the market.

Swiggy rolls out ambulance service

Swiggy on Monday announced the rollout of an ambulance service for its active delivery executives and their dependents in the case of emergencies. Delivery executives can reach out to a toll-free number or simply tap the SOS button without leaving the partner app in the case of an emergency.

RIL suspends gas auction after change in mktg rules

PTI / New Delhi

Reliance Industries Ltd and its partner bp plc on Monday suspended a planned auction for the sale of natural gas from their eastern offshore KG-D6 block after the government altered marketing rules to cap margins. In a notice, Reliance and its partner BP Exploration (Alpha) Ltd (BPEAL) said the auction has been suspended indefinitely.

E-bidding for the sale of 6 million standard cubic meters per day of gas was originally planned for January 18 but was later pushed back first to January 19 and then to January 24.

On January 13, the Ministry of

Maruti Suzuki transports record 3.2L units via railways in 2022

PTI / New Delhi

Maruti Suzuki India on Monday said it transported over 3.2 lakh vehicles using Indian railways last year; its highest-ever dispatch in a calendar year.

The company had obtained a Automobile Freight Train Operator (AFTO) licence in 2013 allowing it to fabricate and operate high-speed, high-capacity auto-wagon rakes on the Indian Railways network.

In the last ten years, the automaker has seen a five-fold increase in railway dispatches in terms of volumes. Share of railways in out-bound logistics has increased from 5 per cent in 2013 to 17 per cent in 2022.

"Our strategy to increase the use of rail mode in outbound logistics has resulted in dispatching a record 3.2 lakh vehicles using railways in CY2022," Maruti Suzuki India Managing Director & CEO Hisashi Takeuchi said in a statement.

This has resulted in offsetting around 1,800 MT of CO2 emissions in addition to saving



over 50 million litres of fuel during the year, which contributes to enhancing the energy security of the country, he added.

"Going forward, we aim to further increase these numbers. For this, we are setting up dedicated railway sidings at our facilities in Haryana (Manesar) and Gujarat," Takeuchi said.

Maruti Suzuki India Executive Officer Corporate Affairs Rahul Bharti said the company currently utilises the railways to transport to 18 terminals like Mumbai, Guwahati and Mundra Port.

Hikes prices by around 1% across models

INFORMIST / Mumbai

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd on Monday hiked prices across all its models because of cost pressures, driven by inflation and regulatory requirements. An estimated weighted average of cost increase is around 1.1% across models, the carmaker said in an exchange filing.

This is the second price increase by India's largest passenger carmaker in the current financial year. In April, it hiked prices by an average of 1.3% across models, which was fully absorbed in the second quarter. On Dec 2, the New-Delhi-headquartered firm had said it has become imperative to pass on costs through price increases despite taking maximum effort to reduce cost and partially offset the increase.

CIL set to increase production to meet peak demand in Apr



INFORMIST / Kolkata

Anticipating a surge in demand for coal in the coming summer, Coal India Ltd is readying itself to increase production by exposing more coal seams which can be mined easily as the need be.

"The power ministry is estimating peak demand to increase by 9% on the year in April which requires us to be ready to meet their demand from us," a Coal India official told Informist. "We are thus keeping the seams ready for extraction as the need be."

The world's largest coal miner excavated 1,154.2 mln cu mtr of topsoil during Apr-Dec, 19.2% more than last year. This excavation helped the company to complete the ministry mandated target of readying itself for increasing production three months before the deadline ends.

Bank of Maharashtra Oct-Dec net profit more than doubles to ₹775 cr

PTI / New Delhi

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Monday reported more than two-fold jump in its profit at Rs 775 crore in the quarter ended December 2022 due to increase in net interest income and improved asset quality.

The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 325 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Speaking about quarterly number, BoM managing director A S Rajeev said the net profit surged by a 138.76 per cent and operating profit has shown a growth of 35.94 per cent to Rs 1,580 crore as



against Rs 1,162 crore in the same quarter a year ago. He said the bank aims to protect the profit growth in the current quarter and also maintain the NIM at the current level of 3.6 per cent.

Net Interest Income (NII) of the bank grew by 29.65 per cent on a year-on-year basis to Rs 1,980 crore as against Rs 1,527 crore in

Federal Bank Q3 net rises 54% to ₹804 cr

PTI / New Delhi

Private lender Federal Bank on Monday reported a 54 per cent jump in its December quarter net profit at Rs 804 crore compared to the year-ago period.

The private sector lender's net interest income rose 27 per cent to Rs 1,957 crore, helped by 19.1 per cent growth in advances and a 0.22 per cent expansion in the net interest margin to 3.49 per cent. Other income came at Rs 534 crore, as against Rs 484 crore, which included the core fee income being flat at Rs 534 crore and a Rs 9 crore loss on the treasury side from a profit of Rs 72 crore in the year-ago period.

The bank's total income increased to Rs 4,967 crore in the December quarter from Rs 3,927 crore in the year-ago period.

Federal Bank managing director and chief executive Shyam Srinivasan told reporters that the bank did not struggle for deposits unlike its peers and was able to notch a 15 per cent growth in the number.

The 'war for deposits' is likely to continue in the system, and

Federal Bank will look forward to utilising its distribution network without playing the pricing game as it is aware of the "elasticity" on this front that exists, Srinivasan said.

He said the NIMs will be over 3.30 per cent going forward, and the bank is on its way to delivering the 17-18 per cent credit growth that it had guided towards for FY23. It is very much possible to continue with the trend of increasing the market share for the bank, Srinivasan said.

Its share in the overall advances now stands at 1.26 per cent. The overall provisions declined to Rs 198.69 crore for the reporting quarter as against Rs 213.98 crore in the year-ago period.

The gross non-performing assets ratio declined to 2.43 per cent from 3.06 per cent in the year-ago period.

At Rs 181 crore, nearly half of the fresh slippages of Rs 398 crore came from retail assets, which Srinivasan said is due to non-payment in restructured advances and "not alarming".

Corporate majors from Australia and Singapore to invest ₹24,560 cr in UP

RASHMI SHARMA / Lucknow

Major global conglomerates from Australia and Singapore plan to invest Rs 24,560 crore in the data centre, logistic parks and food processing sector in Uttar Pradesh. The Yogi government signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with six big companies of these two countries in this regard. This investment is likely to generate around 19,500 employment opportunities in UP.

A delegation of UP government led by the water resources minister Swatantra Deo Singh and Energy Minister AK Sharma was sent to Australia and Singapore to invite investors for the Global Investors Summit (GIS) scheduled in Lucknow next month. During the visit the delegation had business meetings with the corporate houses of these countries and 15 companies gave investment proposals worth Rs 26,380 crore. So far six of these companies have signed MoU with the UP Government

Taxpayers' expectations from Budget 2023

BY TEJI MANDI



The budget season is back! As days pass, the noise of taxpayers' expectations is getting louder. So, what exactly are taxpayers expecting from Budget 2023?

What's Happening?

The budget season is back with a bang! On 1st February 2023, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will present the Union Budget. As days pass by, the noise of taxpayers' expectations is getting louder.

Expectations of Taxpayers From Budget 2023

Income Tax Exemption

The last two years have been difficult for salaried individuals as they had to deal with inflation, high-interest rates, increased cost of living, layoffs and pay cuts. You would agree that many things have changed except for the tax slabs.

As the cost of living has been increasing, according to Economic Times, experts believe the exemption limits should be reviewed and increased from Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 5 lakh.

Higher 80C and 80TTA Limits

In the Pre-Budget Memorandum 2023, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) suggested that the deduction limit of Rs 1.5 lakhs under section 80D could be renewed to 2.5 lakhs in the upcoming budget. This will provide savings opportunities to the taxpayers.

Similarly, the deduction under section 80TTA has been static at Rs 10,000 since 2012-13. According to the Economic Times, the limit should be increased to 50,000 and include FD interest so

that individuals inculcate the habit of saving.

Different Section for Children's Education Deduction

Educating a child is no longer affordable. Parents put a lot of effort into securing a good education for their children. Currently, the deduction on child education is allowed under section 80C. But, a child's education is as important as getting insurance or investing. So, according to Economic Times, experts say that the government could consider introducing a separate section under Chapter VIA to allow a deduction for education expenses.

Exemption Limit of Health Insurance

After the pandemic, people have understood the importance of opting for health insurance, as medical procedures today are expensive, and so are the insurance premiums. Currently, the deductions for health insurance premium falls under 80D with a limit of Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000. According to Economic Times, the government should consider increasing the deduction limit from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh.

Deduction on Electric Vehicle Purchase

Individuals these days have started becoming environment and pocket conscious and hence are opting for EV vehicles. A deduction is allowed on interest paid on loans while purchasing EV vehicles under section 80EEB.

Teji Manti (TM Investment Technologies Pvt Ltd) is a SEBI registered Research Analyst (RA). Information in this article should not be construed as investment advice. Please visit www.tejimandi.com to know more.

Triton EV to acquire AMW's Bhuj plant for ₹210 crore

PTI / New Delhi

Electric vehicle maker Triton EV is in the process to acquire debt-ridden AMW Motors' manufacturing plant in Bhuj for Rs 210 crore, according to sources.

The source told PTI on the sidelines of the Auto Expo 2023 that the National Company Law Tribunal, Ahmedabad bench has approved a resolution plan submitted by Triton Electric Vehicle LLC last month.

"Triton Electric Vehicle LLC has emerged as the successful bidder for plant and machinery, land and building etc of AMW Motors for Rs 210 crore. The resolution plan has been approved by NCLT, Ahmedabad bench on December 21, 2022," the source said.

When contacted, Triton EV founder and managing director Himanshu Patel confirmed the development.

"We are working on completing the regulatory process and approvals. We will try to make the plant operational at the earliest possible time frame after all approvals are in place," Patel said.

Paytm Payments Bank gets RBI nod to operate Bharat Bill Payment System services

PTI / New Delhi

Paytm Payments Bank on Monday said it has received final approval from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as a Bharat Bill Payment Operating Unit (BBPOU).

Under Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), a BBPOU is allowed to facilitate bill payment services of electricity, phone, DTH, water, gas insurance, loan repayments, FASTag recharge, education fees, credit card bill and municipal taxes.

BBPS is owned by the National Payments Corporation of India.

So far, Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) has been undertaking this activity under in-principle authorisation from RBI.

"PPBL has got the final approval from RBI to operate as Bharat Bill Payment Operating Unit (BBPOU)



under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. As an entity under Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), PPBL has got the final authorization to conduct bill

payment and aggregation business as a BBPOU," the company said in a statement.

Under RBI's guidance, PPBL will display all agent institutions on-board on its website.

"Our vision is to drive financial inclusion by offering users greater access to digital services. With this approval, we will further increase the adoption of digital payments by merchant billers and enable them

with secure, fast and convenient transactions. Through the Paytm app, users can make convenient payments for their bills and benefit from automatic payment and reminder services," a Paytm Payments Bank spokesperson said.

91 technology companies lay off over 24K employees in January

IANS / New Delhi

The year 2023 began on a bad note for tech workers globally and 91 companies have laid off more than 24,000 tech employees in the first 15 days this month, signalling worse days ahead.

About 24,151 tech workers lost their jobs, dominated by companies like Amazon, Salesforce, Coinbase and others, according to layoff tracking website Layoffs.fyi. Crypto lending exchange Crypto.com last week announced that the company will reduce its global workforce by approximately 20 per cent amid ongoing economic headwinds and unforeseeable industry events. In India, companies like Ola (which fired 200 employees), voice automated startup Skit.ai, dominated the headlines in January. In Decem-



ber last year, over 17,000 tech employees were shown the door.

According to the website which has been tracking job losses since the start of the pandemic, 153,110 workers were let go in 2022, led by companies like Meta, Twitter, Oracle, Nvidia, Snap, Uber, Spotify, Intel and Salesforce, among others.

Meanwhile, quick-grocery delivery provider Dunzo has laid off 3 per cent of its workforce amid cost-cutting measures, the platform confirmed on Monday.

ShareChat lays off 20% of its workforce

Homegrown social media company ShareChat (Mohalla Tech Pvt Ltd) has laid off 20 per cent of its workforce due to uncertain market conditions.

Backed by Twitter, Google, Snap and Tiger Global, ShareChat has about 2,300 employees, and the layoff will impact about 500 people at the company, according to reports. "We are taking a very difficult decision today to part ways with around 20 per cent of our talented FTEs to ensure the financial health and longevity of our company in the current uncertain macroeconomic environment," said Ankush Sachdeva in a note to the employees.

PTI / Greater Noida

Tata Motors, Kia India and Hyundai are expecting sales momentum to continue this year as well after witnessing robust growth in dispatches to dealers in the last year while pressure remains of a high base effect, inflation and higher interest costs.

Tata Motors, which crossed five lakh cumulative wholesale mark in 2022, is hopeful of robust performance this year on the back of new launches as well as better traction for its internal combustion engine models, electric vehicles and CNG trims.

"It (sales growth) will be steep, hopefully, it will not be as steep as it was because the denominator used to be lower; now it is becoming higher," Tata Motors Manag-

ing Director - Passenger Vehicle and Electric Vehicles Shailesh Chandra told PTI in an interaction. When asked if the sales growth would be in single or double digits, he said: "Double digit penetration is what we are looking at."

On electric vehicle sales, which touched close to 43,000 units last year, he noted that it is bound to increase with new products expected to hit the market.

"Absolutely, it has to. If we are adding a new product completely it should. That is the intention," he noted when asked if the company expects an increase in EV sales.

Tata Motors' passenger vehicle sales outpaced industry growth last year to cross the five lakh units mark.

NATIONAL STARTUP DAY

Startups need to reserve cash, listen to customers to stay afloat

IANS / New Delhi

As Indian startups face turbulence in the global funding winter, experts on Monday said they need to reserve cash, create a long-term goal and adopt a culture of customer feedback to survive in 2023.

On the occasion of the 'National Startup Day', envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, industry experts said that the founders must continuously monitor the trends which are happening in the world. Indian startups fired more

than 18,000 employees in 2022 amid a funding winter and macroeconomic uncertainty.

"Investing in R&D can be one of the finest ways to actually tackle disruption. Make sure that as a business, you keep some of your profits or your balance sheet reserves for investing into R&D to actually learn more," Dr Ritesh Malik, Director, Alliance for Digital India Foundation, or ADIF, told IANS.

"If you feel that there is a platform like Instagram where the go-to-market strategy is more efficient, start learning Instagram

and start promoting your products there," he added.

According to Tejas Khoday, Co-Founder and CEO of trading platform FYERS, this year is special as India has emerged to be the third largest startup ecosystem in the world. "While the past year was turbulent with IPOs of several well-known startups not doing too well, the ongoing funding winter and related layoffs, in the long run, all this will be a blip on the radar," he said.

That said, this will help the ecosystem to mature and hopefully we will see startups achieve a



better balance between scale and profitability in 2023, Khoday noted. While interacting with over 150 startups, PM Modi last year announced the commemoration of National Startup Day on Janu-

ary 16 every year. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry marked an entire week as National Startup Week, from January 10 to 16. According to Malik, startups must hear back from their customers.

"The more you hear from your customers, the more you will be able to understand their changing needs. And the more your product becomes dynamic and you constantly change that product to the whims and fantasies of the customer," he noted.

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CORPORATE GALLERY

General Manager Sanjeev Kishore reviews progress of Gadag (Talkal) - Wadi new line



General Manager Sanjeev Kishore reviewed the progress of Gadag (Talkal) - Wadi new line on January 14. He inspected the ongoing work in the section from Sanganal to Linganbandi. This section i.e. Sanganal to Linganbandi (23.7 km) is targeted to be commissioned by March 2023. This new line

Project was sanctioned in 2013-14, on 50:50 cost sharing basis with Govt of Karnataka (with land free by State Govt). The estimated cost of the project is Rs 2842 crores. It may be noted that in 2022, the first stretch ie Talkal to Sanganal (22 km) has been commissioned.

Western Railway Officers participate in Tata Mumbai Marathon 2023



On Sunday, 15th January, 2023 more than 50,000 participants participated in the prestigious Tata Mumbai Marathon, which is one of the largest marathons in Asia. Western Railway under the leadership of Ashok Kumar Misra – General Manager of Western Railway participated in the Dream Run event at the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2023. A group of more than 25 officers and their family members took part in the Dream Run event of this mega sporting event which was held for the first time after a break of two years. Several senior officers of WR also participated in full Marathon & Half Marathon events.

Indian Coast Guard rescues stranded personnel at sea



The Indian Coast Guard in a swift operation undertaken on 16 Jan 23, rescued about 511 personnel stranded at sea

in two different ferries, off Kakdwip in West Bengal. At about 0915 hrs on 16 Jan 23, a message was received from District Magistrate South 24 Paraganas at Coast Guard District Headquarters No. 8 (Haldia), intimating about grounding of two ferries at sea near Kakdwip. The ferry vessels namely MV Lcchamati and MV Agramati were ferrying about 600 pilgrims from Ganga Sagar Mela at Sagar Island to Kakdwip. Upon receipt of the information the operations team of Coast Guard swung into action and after ascertaining the position immediately dispatched two ACVs (Hovercraft) from Haldia and Frazerganj to provide rescue assistance..

Workshop on strategizing & transforming Indian Higher Education in association with MIT World Peace University



The Higher Educators' Foundation (HEF), which has been established and being run by the Indian Diaspora in the US and is supported by some of the reputed private universities in India, is set to organize a 'Workshop' on strategizing and transforming higher education in India in collaboration with MIT World Peace University (MIT-WPU). The workshop will be held in Pune from January 21-23, 2023. The Indian Higher Education System has come a long way over the past half a century. However, grey areas such as application, R & D, and examination system, to name a few, remain to be improved. The aim of the Workshop is to create a unique platform to bring together Higher Educators and Researchers of Indian origin from the USA and leading academicians from India to focus on best practices in higher education.

Dabur NewU expands footprint; launches six new stores in India



Dabur NewU, a One-Stop Beauty Destination offering an array of leading brands of Cosmetics, Skincare and Fragrance Brands under one roof, today announced the expansion of its retail footprint with the launch of 6 new Exclusive Stores, taking the NewU store network to over 100 outlets. Announcing the Launch, NewU COO Mr. Manish Asthana said, "We are pleased to announce the addition of six new stores to the NewU network to cross the 100-stores-mark. The overwhelming response to NewU in the country has encouraged us to broaden our brand. The new stores are intended to meet the region's growing consumer demand. We provide the best in creating a comfortable and trustworthy shopping environment for all our customers, from value for money deals to the best quality products. NewU is currently present in 40 cities across India, with over 100+ outlets. We are expanding our retail footprint across India in a strategic manner and plan to double our store count in the next 2 years." The six NewU locations are at Vinayak City Center (Prayagraj); Spectrum Mall (Noida); Spaze Corporate Park (Sec 69, Gurugram); Forum Mall (Edappal, Kerala); RMZ (Bangalore); and KPS Mall (Hooghly). "NewU is a one-stop beauty destination that gives you access to a comprehensive range of Cosmetics, Skin Care, Hair Care, Personal Grooming and Fragrances. We have a variety of products from different categories, especially for the New Generation, Millennials and Gen-Z skin care needs. We strive to make shopping journey pleasant by offering exclusive and international products. The new NewU destinations have been designed to bring the beauty and skin care products to life and connect with the large network of make-up lovers across the country. NewU is home to innovative and creative luxury products, which are affordable so that everyone can get the best quality skin and body care," Mr. Asthana added.

whispersinthecorridors

Dr Suresh Mehrotra



Tenure of Chairman LIC to end in March

Tenure of the present Chairman of the LIC M R Kumar is coming to an end in March. There has been much progress in LIC during his tenure. If he doesn't get extension he will have a say in the choice as his successor.



Debadatta Chand to be next MD & CEO, BoB

Debadatta Chand has been recommended MD & CEO, Bank of Baroda (BoB). The Financial Services Information Bureau recommended him for the post.



New faces from poll bound states in Modi cabinet likely

Speculations about ensuing Cabinet reshuffle-cum-expansion are rife in the political circles. It is believed that new faces from the poll-bound Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana are to be inducted into the cabinet.

Top 5 in GMR- Indian multinational conglomerate

- 1 Hari Panicker -Chief Executive Officer & Chairman, Business Integration-Airports (Business Office) at GMR Group.
- 2 I Prabhakara Rao - CEO of Delhi International Airport Limited and has over 30 years of rich and diverse experience across various businesses.
- 3 Videh Kumar Jaipuriar - Chief Executive Officer Delhi International Airport Limited CEO.
- 4 Radhakrishnababu - Chief Financial Officer at Delhi International Airport Ltd.
- 5 Ashwani Lohani, IRSME 1980 (Retired) CEO GMR Services Business (GMRSB) .He is former Chairman Railway Board and CMD of Air India

Will Pankaj Kumar be powerful Director in ONGC?

Post of Director Production has been created after merging Director Onshore and Director Offshore in the ONGC. Director offshore Pankaj Kumar is expected to head this merged post, likely to come into effect from March 1.

A Sema Rajan granted Apex Pay Scale

A Sema Rajan, Director, SVPNPA, has been granted Apex Pay Scale. Rajan is a 1987 batch IPS officer of Bihar cadre.

Manoj Yadav granted Apex Pay Scale

Manoj Yadav, Director General, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), has been granted Apex Pay Scale. He is a 1988 batch IPS officer of Haryana cadre.

Sanjeev Kumar Chadha empanelled as Additional Secretary in Gol

Sanjeev Kumar Chadha has been empanelled for holding Additional Secretary/Additional Secretary equivalent posts in Government of India. He is a 1989 batch IFOs officer of Orissa cadre.



Atul Karwal granted Apex Pay Scale

Atul Karwal, Director General, NDRF, has been granted Apex Pay Scale. Rajan is a 1988 batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre.



Sanjiv Chadda's term as MD & CEO, BoB extended till June 30

The term of Sanjiv Chaddha as Managing Director & CEO, Bank of Baroda has been extended for a period till the date of his superannuation i.e. till June 30, 2023 which is further beyond his currently notified period of appointment of 3 years that ends on January 19.

The Making of History: World's Longest Cruise Journey

Under the vision of PM Narendra Modi, the world's longest river cruise journey was developed by Sanjay Bandopadhyaya, Chairman IWWI in collaboration with Raj Singh, owner of Antara Cruises. This would not have been made a reality unless hard work put in form of dredging for depth, providing jetties, coordinating with Bangladesh and State Govts would not have been done.

CIL's production and supplies at historic high

Coal India's (CIL) production, off-take and supplies to power sector have hit a historic high in FY '23, says Pramod Agrawal, Chairman of the Coal India Limited (CIL). With no slackening in the double-digit output growth since the fiscal's start, CIL's production raced to 479 million tonnes (MTs) ending December FY'23 achieving 101.4% of the progressive target and a year-on-year growth of 16%. The increase in quantum terms was a humongous 65.4 MTs. The company's total coal supplies during the referred period rose to 508 MTs with a volume expansion of 26 MTs. CIL supplied 2.6 MTs more coal over the progressive target, posting 100.5% achievement. Amid spiralling demand, coal supplies to the power sector at 432.7 MTs were up by a strong 42.5 MTs clocking 11% y-o-y growth till December FY '23. CIL's consolidated profit after tax of Rs.14,878 Crores for April-September'22, was the record high for the first half of any fiscal year so far, placing the company in the 8th rank among the top 20 most profit generating listed companies of the country.



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Menstrual leave to be extended to all Kerala universities

Thiruvananthapuram: In a pioneering decision, the Kerala Government on Monday said it would grant menstrual leave for girl students studying in all State universities coming under the Department of Higher Education. Taking a cue from the Cochin

University of Science and Technology in providing menstrual leave to its students, Higher Education Minister R Bindu said the government has decided to implement the same in all State universities under the purview of the department.

NATION BULLETIN

30 army women in command roles

New Delhi: Empowering lady officers, the Indian Army has cleared more than 30 women officers for command roles. The Indian Army is holding promotion boards for 108 vacancies of select colonel rank for women officers including batches from 1992 to 2005. The initial list of over 30 officers has been cleared from corps of engineers, signals, ordnance and electrical and mechanical engineers.

Assam to merge small madrasas

Guwahati: The Assam Government has decided to merge small madrasas used to spread radicalism with larger ones to reduce the threat, DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta said on Monday. A survey is on to create a database of all such educational institutions. Assam with a sizeable Muslim population is a "natural target" for radicalisation and such activities are usually undertaken in small madrasas, Mahanta claimed.

Yemeni robbed by 'cops' in Gurugram

Gurugram: Three people impersonating policemen allegedly stole \$4,300 from a Yemeni, officials said. On Sunday evening, Mohammad Ashk Abdul Aziz and his relative were going to Bakhtawar Chowk when three people told them they were from the police and wanted to check their bags. One of them accused Aziz and his relative of being marijuana suppliers and asked him to hand over his bag. They then stole the money and fled.

Rajasthan ACB nabs policewoman

Jaipur: The Rajasthan ACB on Monday arrested a police officer for demanding bribe. The ACB had lodged a case against ASP of the Special Operations Group Divya Mittal on Jan 14. Mittal is accused of demanding for herself and senior officials a bribe of Rs2 crore, through a middleman, from a person for not including his name in a case filed with the SOG under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

Inmate ends life in Gurugram jail

Gurugram: An undertrial allegedly committed suicide at his barrack in Bhondsi Jail, Haryana, police said. Lokesh alias Soni, 33, was lodged in jail in a robbery case. His body was found hanging in the barrack bathroom on Monday. No suicide note was found. Soni was sent to judicial custody on Nov 22. At 6am, his barrack mate found Soni hanging by a bed sheet.

Bridge collapses in Darbhanga

Patna: An iron bridge in Bihar's Darbhanga collapsed on Monday due to an overloaded truck, officials said. The incident occurred at Sabohar Ghat. The bridge, over the Kamla Balan River, connected Darbhanga with Madhubani, Saharsa and Samastipur. The driver and helper jumped into the river and save their lives.

In a first, Rajasthan HC has 2 couples as judges

FPJ BUREAU / New Delhi

Nine new judges took oath as judges of the Rajasthan High Court on Monday. One of them was Dr Nupur Bhati, wife of Justice Pushpendra Bhati, who has been a sitting judge of the same HC since 2016.

However, this is not the first time in the history of the Rajasthan High Court that a husband-wife duo will be sitting at the Bench. Subha Mehta was appointed judge to the High Court by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice on June 3, when her husband Mahendra Goyal was already a judge in the HC. It was for the first time a couple were judges in the Rajasthan HC.

In December 2020, Justice Murali Shankar Kuppuraju and his wife Justice Tamilselvi T Valayapalayamand were sworn in as judges of the Madras HC on the same day. Before that, Justice Vivek Puri and Justice Archana Puri were sworn in as judges of the Punjab and Haryana HC on the same day in Nov 2019.

PM talks to first batch of Agniveers, gives mantra

Scheme will make forces youthful, tech-savvy: Modi

PTI / New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated first batch of Agniveers on being the pioneers of the Agnipath scheme, asserting that it is a transformative policy and a game changer in strengthening the armed forces and making them future-ready.

Virtually addressing the new recruits, he said this "path-breaking" scheme will further empower women.

According to a statement, the Prime Minister said the young Agniveers will make the armed forces more youthful and tech-savvy.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called the Agnipath scheme one of the "most important and unprecedented reforms" in the armed forces.

Addressing the Agniveers, the PM said technologically-advanced soldiers will play a "key role" in our armed forces, and added the current generation of youth has this potential and Agniveers will play a leading role in the forces in the times to come.

The PM said "new India" is filled with renewed vigour and efforts are underway to modernise the armed forces and make them 'aatmanirbhar' (self-reliant). "In the 21st



Narendra Modi and Rajnath Singh interact with the first batch of Agniveers of the three Services in New Delhi on Monday —ANI

The experience they will acquire through this opportunity will be a source of pride for life.

— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

century, the way wars are fought is changing," he said, speaking about the new fronts of contactless warfare and challenges of cyber warfare. Lauding the potential of Agniveers, he said their spirit is reflective of the bravery of the armed forces which has always kept the flag of the nation flying high.

Mr Modi concluded by saying the Agniveers will provide leadership to the nation in the 21st century. Also, the new recruitment scheme will empower the women.

The PM said he looks forward

to seeing women Agniveers in all three forces, noting they are leading armed forces on various fronts and cited examples of women posted in Siachen and driving modern fighter planes.

Mr Singh said the Ministry of Defence has taken a number of decisions to empower the nation, terming the Agnipath scheme as one of the "most important and unprecedented reforms". He asserted strengthening the security is top priority amid the ever-evolving global scenario and geopolitical uncertainty.

SC raps BJP neta for conversion pleas

FPJ BUREAU / New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday held critically the conduct of Delhi BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay in filing and withdrawing different petitions before the different benches of the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court on the same subject of religious conversions.

A bench comprising CJI DY Chandrachud, Justice PS

Narasimha and JB Pardiwala was hearing a PIL by Mr Upadhyay in 2022 seeking steps against forceful and deceitful religious conversions.

During the hearing, the bench was told by Senior Advocate P Wilson, appearing for the State of Tamil Nadu, that the petitioner had in 2021 withdrawn a similar petition from the top court, after a bench led by Justice Rohinton F Nariman refused to

entertain it. He has filed and withdrawn similar petitions in Delhi High Court as well, the senior counsel said.

After referring to the proceedings cited by Wilson, the CJI told Mr Upadhyay's counsel Senior Advocate Gaurav Bhatia: "It seems the PIL petitioner does not think he is bound by rules of pleading... You cannot keep on withdrawing and filing petitions." "Is it correct you withdrew

Bull tamer, spectator gored to death at TN jallikattu events

N CHITHRA / Chennai

Jallikattu, the popular and traditional bull taming event in Tamil Nadu, claimed two lives on Monday when bulls gored a tamer and a spectator to death in separate events in Madurai and Tiruchi.

At Palamedu, one of the world famous arenas in Madurai for the bull taming sport, a 24-year-old tamer Aravindraj, who had a successful run in the initial rounds, was gored by a bull at the end of the fourth round. He had by then tamed nine bulls and stood third among the bull tamers of Palamedu. However, his luck ran out when a ferocious bull gored him causing serious abdomen injuries. Aravindraj, a construction worker, was rushed to Government Rajaji Hospital in a waiting ambulance. However, by the time he



People try to control a bull as they take part in the 'Jallikattu' event as part of 'Pongal' celebrations near Madurai on Monday —PTI

reached the hospital, he had lost heavy blood and doctors declared him dead.

As many as 31 others were injured by raging bulls at Palamedu.

Elsewhere at Periya Suriyur on the outskirts of Tiruchi, a fierce bull gored Aravind, a young spectator, to death. The 25-year-old vic-

tim sustained severe chest injuries, according to police.

He died during the treatment at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital in Tiruchi.

Chief Minister MK Stalin condoled the death of the two persons and announced a solatium of ₹3 lakh each to their respective families.

'Opposition's negative campaign against PM exposed'

PTI / New Delhi

Political resolution proposed at the BJP national executive on Monday accused the Opposition of running negative campaign and using abusive language against the Government, especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and asserted that Supreme Court verdicts exposed it.

Law Minister Kiren Rijiju

proposed the resolution at the key meeting, a pointer to his rising profile in the party as he spearheads the Government's position on legal and judicial issues, and Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and Karnataka Minister Govind Karjole seconded it, Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters in Delhi.

While Mr Rijiju is a tribal,

Kiren Rijiju proposed the resolution at the BJP national executive, a pointer to his rising profile in the party as he spearheads Government's position on legal and judicial issues

Mr Maurya belongs to the OBC and Mr Karjol is from the SC, social groups the BJP has wooed with considerable electoral success.

Ms Sitharaman cited a number of issues over which

PAPER LEAK

Rajasthan must act against big sharks: Pilot

PTI / Jaipur

Indirectly targeting his own party's Government in Rajasthan, Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Monday said the State should take action against the "big sharks" behind the string of recruitment exam paper leaks reported recently.

Addressing farmers and the youth at a Kisan Sammelan in Nagaur's Parbatsar, the former deputy chief minister also called for a legal guarantee on minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

It was the first of five public meetings to be addressed by Mr Pilot during which he met with party workers and supporters, along with his loyalist leaders, including minister Hemram Chaudhary. Mr Pilot, who is involved in a power tussle with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, said paper leak incidents hurt the aspirations of the youth who prepare for the exams in adverse conditions while their parents struggle to arrange money for books and fees.

"To instill confidence among the youth, the Government should take action against the big sharks responsible for paper leaks," Mr Pilot added without naming anyone.

SC no to plea, says HC must handle it as matter of principle

PTI / New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking the court's intervention to declare the crisis in subsidence-hit Joshimath a national disaster, saying since the Uttarakhand High Court is seized of a "broad range of issues" it should hear it as a matter of principle.

As the lawyer for the petitioner submitted people in Joshimath are dying, the top court told him curtly, "You don't want to use these proceedings for sound bytes in social media."

A bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala asked petitioner Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati to approach the Uttarakhand High Court with his petition.

"As a matter of principle, we should allow the High Court to deal with this. The High Court is seized of a broad range of issues, we will give you liberty to approach the HC. The specific aspects highlighted in the proceedings can be addressed before the HC for suitable redressal. We permit the petitioners either to institute a substantive petition before the HC so that it can be together with pending proceedings or intervene in the pending matter. The HC is requested to consider the

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JOSHIMATH CRISIS



Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati and others perform a havan to save the 'sinking' town at Narsimha Temple in Joshimath —ANI

PMO TEAM FINDS MORE CRACKS

Joshimath: PM Narendra Modi and the Centre have been monitoring the situation in Joshimath. After the Ministry of Home Affairs, a team from the PM's Office visited the holy city to inspect the land subsidence affected areas. The cracks have increased slightly. The team, headed by Mangesh Ghildiyal, Deputy Secretary PMO, visited the city on Sunday and will submit its report soon, said sources. According to sources, the purpose of the visit was to inspect the areas with visible cracks and deteriorating water quality. Disaster Management Secretary Ranjit Kumar Sinha inspected the affected areas and said there had been a slight increase in the number of cracks, but no new areas were damaged.

grievance," the bench said.

The counsel for the Uttarakhand Government submitted all the points raised by the petitioner have already been acted upon.

Senior advocate Sushil Kumar Jain, appearing for the petitioner, said people are dying and urgent steps are needed for relief and rehabil-

itation of those affected by ground subsidence.

The bench then remarked, "You don't want to use these proceedings for sound bytes in social media, what you want is relief for affected persons."

The SC asked the petitioner to approach the High Court with his petition.

Nectar will emerge from Think 20: MP CM

FPJ BUREAU / Indore

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shwivraj Singh Chouhan said contemplation sessions of the Think 20 meeting under the G-20 in Bhopal will play a critical role.

"Nectar will certainly emerge from brainstorming of the intellectuals and thinkers who will participate in this meetings," Mr Chouhan said, addressing the inaugural ses-

sion of 'Think 20' meeting being held under the aegis of G20 at Kushabhau Thakre International Convention Centre on Monday.

Lauding the event's theme 'One Earth, One Family, One Future, the CM said, "India's tradition speaks of world peace and welfare. The world is for everyone. There is no need of war. Peace, love and faith are needed. Those who are weak should be helped."

He stressed on Vasudev Kutumbakam. "The principle of one earth, one family and one future is of key importance. Our priority is to progress with nature, he added. In an apparent reference to the developed world, and deprecated the ongoing "rat race" in the global arena to beat one another, Mr Chouhan said 80% of the world's resources were being exploited by a "handful of people".



EC demonstrates remote EVMs for migrant workers

FPJ BUREAU / New Delhi

The Election Commission demonstrated prototype of the remote electronic voting machines to the political parties in Delhi on Monday, with 15 Opposition parties raising concern about its use.

They will ensure voting at remote polling stations for the domestic migrants as

a modified version of the EVM that provides technological solution, which is credible, accessible and acceptable to all stake holders, the EC told a meeting of the political parties. The EC has solicited written views of the recognised political parties by January 31.

A migrant voter would not need to travel back to his home district to exercise his franchise of voting. The machine will be able to handle multiple constituencies from a single remote polling booth. The EC invited the chair-

persons, presidents, and general secretaries of the recognised eight national and 57 regional parties to demonstrate the functioning of the multi-constituency remote EVM.

Migration-based disenfranchisement is indeed not an option in the age of technological advancement. The voter turnout in 2019 General

Election was 67.4 % and the EC is concerned about 30 crore electors not exercising franchise and differential voter turnout in States and UTs," it said.

The Opposition parties questioned the need to deploy the EC to address the issue of urban apathy towards the poll process.

"No Opposition party wants to see the demonstration of a remote voting machine. First the issue of the need to have such a machine should be settled," Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said.

KASHI-VISHWANATH PATTERN

Banke Bihari Temple to have corridor

RASHMI SHARMA / Lucknow

The Yogi Adityanath Government in Uttar Pradesh would construct a dedicated corridor for the Banke Bihari Temple in Mathura on the lines of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi. The proposed corridor would ease the pilgrims' reach to the famous Banke Bihari shrine and add to the attraction of the twin temple towns of Mathura and Vrindavan.

While the Mathura residents are opposed to the move of a corridor, the authorities said it is necessary due to the growing footfall and congested route.

The locals say the Kunj Guli, the narrow lanes leading to the temple, have remained inconclusive as they refused to give in, saying the corridor would destroy the culture and traditional look of



lies and shops dependent on the temple for livelihood. To pacify the agitated residents, Mathura MP Hema Malini held a meeting with them on Sunday and listed out the corridor's benefits. The talks remained inconclusive as they refused to give in, saying the corridor would destroy the culture and traditional look of

Mathura-Vrindavan. The politician said the corridor would boost the business and the number of visitors. As per the plan, the proposed Banke Bihari Corridor would have three entrances and an elevated broad path leading to the shrine.

Mathura administration officials said the temple has a history of stampedes resulting into deaths. The corridor would end such incidents and make the temple look more elegant. It would be built on 5acre and the pilgrims may directly reach the Yamuna banks after offering prayers. Vehicles would reach the entrance gate. The displaced shopowners would get bigger space in the complex. A 25,000 sqft parking lot would offer relief to visitors. Resting enclosures, drinking water facilities and free Wi-Fi would also be provided without touching the original structure of the Banke Bihari temple.

Opposition parties questioned the need to deploy remote EVMs

New Delhi: Delhi Police on Monday registered an FIR against unidentified persons for making indecent comments on social media about the daughters of cricketers Virat Kohli and MS Dhoni, following a

complaint by Delhi Commission for Women. DCW has taken sou-motu cognisance of social media posts targeting the two-year-old and seven-year-old daughters of Virat Kohli and MS Dhoni.



NEPAL PLANE CRASH

UP village mourns death of 4 residents

ANI / Ghazipur (Uttar Pradesh)

The aeroplane accident in Nepal's Pokhara has made the Alawalpur Afga village of Ghazipur inconsolable, as among the five Indians who were killed in the Yeti Airlines aircraft crash on Sunday, four were residents of this UP district.

The deceased are identified as Abhishek Kushwaha, Vishal Sharma, Sonu and Anil Rajbhar. All of them were between 22 to 27 years of age group and were running different businesses here. Chandra Maurya, the father of Kushwaha, said he was the only earning member of the family. The deceased used to run a public service centre. Kushwaha's brother, Abhinesh, said, "I am in a daze; I don't know what we will do now. After listening to the news about his death, my father and mother are in a very bad condition."

The same is the situation at Vishal Sharma's house where villagers gathered to share their grief while his elder brother and father spoke of their shock. His friends said that they could not believe that Sharma was no longer with them. One of his friends said that when the plane was about to land, he was liking his friend's photograph on Facebook, and Sharma was in a live chat with his friends.

Meanwhile, family members of the four men killed in the crash left for Kathmandu on Monday to receive the bodies, an official said.



People wait to receive bodies of friends and relatives, victims of a plane crash, at a hospital in Pokhara, Nepal, on Monday

Yeti aircraft was previously owned by Kingfisher Airlines

KATHMANDU: The crashed ATR-72 Nepalese passenger plane was previously used by the now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines owned by liquor baron Vijay Malviya, according to Cirium Fleets data.

According to Cirium Fleets data, which tracks aircraft fleet, equipment and its cost, the 9N-ANC aircraft was delivered to the now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines in 2007. Six years later, it was bought by Thailand's Nok Air, before it was sold to Nepal's Yeti Airlines in 2019, it said.

Kejriwal attacks L-G over teacher training

PTI / New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday asked Lieutenant-Governor VK Saxena to give in writing that he had never rejected a proposal to send government teachers for training to Finland as the two sides continued to lock horns over the matter.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal, along with his deputy, Manish Sisodia, led a march to the L-G's office to voice their protest over the issue and seek a meeting with him.

The L-G's office, however, asserted that it has not rejected the proposal but has advised the AAP government to evaluate it in totality.

"Honourable L-G saying he never rejected teachers' Finland training proposal. If that is the case, he may kindly write me a letter immediately, saying that he has no objection to the proposal and the matter will be over," Kejriwal said.

Notably, the State Council of Educational Research and Training had planned to send two groups of 30 primary in-charges to Finland in December 2022 and March 2023.



Saxena 'is not our headmaster'

Kejriwal alleged that Saxena cannot take independent decisions but he is doing that. The Delhi government's works are being deliberately impeded for political reasons, he alleged, and added that "the L-G is not our headmaster to check our homework. He has to say yes or no to our proposals". How will an elected government function if it has no power to take decisions, he asked.

The Council has also made a budget provision in its annual plan and was given a grant-in-aid by the Delhi government for conducting such training programmes abroad.

SC seeks Centre's stand on marital rape: Hearing from March 21

FPJ BUREAU / New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to file its response on a batch of petitions about the criminalisation of marital rape, and said it would begin the final hearing on March 21.

A bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, comprising Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala, asked the Centre to file its response by February 15.

The petitions filed before the Supreme Court range from the split verdict by the Delhi High Court on the

matter to the Karnataka High Court's verdict refusing to quash rape charges against a husband as well as the exclusion of marital rape under Section 375 of the IPC.

A plea by Khushboo Saifi pertains to the May 2022 split verdict by a division bench of the Delhi High Court on petitions seeking criminalisation of marital rape. While one judge said "legitimate expectation of sex" is an "inexorable" aspect of marriage, the other said the "right to withdraw consent at any given point in

time forms the core of the woman's right to life and liberty".

Another batch of petitions challenges the constitutional validity of the exception to marital rape under the IPC. Section 375 defines rape and lists seven notions of consent that, if vitiated, would constitute the offence of rape by a man. However, the provision contains a crucial exemption: "Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under eighteen years of age, is not rape."

SC to hear Google plea against NCLAT order tomorrow

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday said it will hear on Jan 18 a plea of US tech giant Google against an order of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) refusing an interim stay on the competition regulator imposing a Rs 1,337 crore penalty on it. The NCLAT, on Jan 4, had refused an interim stay on an order of the competition regulator and had asked Google to deposit 10 percent of the amount. The NCLAT admitted the search giant's challenge to the CCI slapping a Rs 1,337.76 crore fine for abusing the dominant position of its Android smartphone operating system in the country.

Review of Chandrachud's appointment plea dismissed

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday rejected a review petition against an order dismissing the challenge to the appointment of Justice DY Chandrachud as the 50th Chief Justice of India in November last year. A division bench of Justices Sanjeev Sachdeva and Vikas Mahajan said, "The review petition appears to be an appeal disguised as a review. The petitioner has not been able to point out any error on

the face of the record. No ground has been made out." The litigant, Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari, urged the bench that not only was his PIL dismissed by a bench led by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma without allowing him to read his petition in full, but a cost of Rs1 lakh was imposed. —FPJ Bureau

Unnao rape: Kuldeep Sengar granted interim bail by HC

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday granted interim bail to expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is serving life term for raping a minor girl in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao in 2017, to enable him to attend the wedding of his daughter.

Supplementary charge sheet against Chandrashekhara aide

New Delhi: Pinky Irani, a close aide to alleged fraudster Suresh Chandrashekhara, introduced him to Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez and was instrumental in disposing of the Rs 200 crore extorted by him, the Delhi police told a court here on Monday. The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi police made the allegations in a supplementary charge sheet filed before Additional Sessions Judge Shailendra Malik.

Ganga Vilas cruise 'obscene', a threat to dolphins: Jairam

ANI / New Delhi

While inaugurating the world's longest river cruise titled Ganga Vilas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called it "a new age of tourism in India", but on the other hand, Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh has termed the service "obscene".

Taking to Twitter, the Congress leader said that the service would also endanger India's national aquatic mammal.

"The river cruise on the Ganga unveiled by the PM is obscene! Who can afford Rs 50 lakh per night except the filthy rich? Ganga is still neither Nirmal nor Aviral. Now this Tamasha will also endanger India's national aquatic mammal — the Gangetic dolphin," Jairam Ramesh wrote in his tweet.

The Ganga river cruise was flagged off by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on Friday from Varanasi.

The 51-day cruise, being pitched as the world's longest river cruise, is expected to reach its final destination — Dibrugarh in Assam — on March 1.

Luxury boat reaches Patna

NEW DELHI: The world's longest luxury river cruise MV Ganga Vilas has reached Patna and the vessel will continue its onward journey as per schedule, the government said on Monday while debunking reports that the vessel was stuck in Chhapra.

Earlier, there were reports that the MV Ganga Vilas was stuck in the river in Bihar's Chapra thanks to silt and shallow water on Monday.

No invite to 8 parties for Rahul's yatra finale in Srinagar

FPJ BUREAU / New Delhi

The Congress has not invited eight political parties to the concluding event of the Bharat Jodo Yatra on Jan 30 as a coalition making strategy because of their links with Prime Minister Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.

Mr Rahul Gandhi believes most of them are working to harm the secular camp and have an implicit understanding with the BJP.

He ticked off eight parties to be kept away from the Srinagar conclave of the Opposition parties on Jan 30.

The parties are: Aam Aadmi Party of Arvind Kejriwal, K Chandrashekar Rao's Telangana Rashtra Samithi, now renamed as Bharat Rashtra Samithi, YSR Congress Party, Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal, Akali Dal, AIADMK, Asaduddin



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with supporters during the party's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', in Jalandhar district, on Monday

Owaisi's AIMIM, and Badruddin Ajmal's AIUDF.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh has declared that the Congress would not have any alliance with the AAP as it is one of the Opposition parties as puppets to bolster the BJP's electoral prospects in Gujarat and Goa.

It sees similar suspicions about Mr Owaisi's AIMIM that spoiled the Congress's prospects in Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat and UP and appears ready to do a repeat in Karnataka.

His Assam counterpart is Badruddin Ajmal's AIDUF dividing the Muslim votes in Assam.

A PIED PIPER NEEDED

Rodent menace hits Jagannath Temple

PTI / Bhubaneswar

The authorities running the Jagannath Temple of Puri may need a Pied Piper to rid it of rodents that have infested the 12th-century shrine.

The rodents, whose numbers increased manifold during the absence of devotees in the wake of the Covid pandemic, have been nibbling away at the attires of the gods — Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra — in the shrine.

The servitors and priests have voiced fears that the rodents may damage the idols of the deities, though temple administrator Jitendra Sahoo feels there is no need to take fright.



"There were few rodents in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple but their number increased significantly after the Covid pandemic," Ramachandra Das-mohapatra, a servitor, said.

The rodents also create a disturbance when the priests perform rituals, said Satyanarayan Puspalak, representing the

group of servitors who decorate the deities with garlands.

"The rats devour the flowers offered to the deities and nibble away at the valuable attires of the gods," Puspalak said.

Though the rodents cause a nuisance in the 'Garva Gruha' (sanctum sanctorum), the servitors are not

permitted to kill animals or poison them inside the temple, said Bhaskar Mishra, a researcher in the Jagannath culture.

Though the population of rodents increased due to the absence of devotees inside the temple during the lockdown, the rodents are not new to the place, Mishra said. Some animals live on the Jagannath Temple premises for generations as they get an adequate quantity of the left-over 'Mahaprasad', he said.

"The temple ROR clearly states that some specific servitors are given the responsibility to catch the rodents alive and release them outside," Mishra said.

Priyanka woos women, promises ₹2,000 a month if voted to power

SHANKAR RAJ / Bengaluru

In a big push to woo women ahead of the assembly poll in May this year, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday promised Rs2,000 a month to every woman head of households if the party is voted to power in Karnataka.

At an event called 'Na Nayaki' (I am a woman leader) in Bengaluru, she said "Rs24,000 would be directly credited to your bank accounts every year under the 'Gruha Lakshmi Yojana', an 'unconditional universal basic income'."

The Congress leader said

'Gruha Lakshmi Yojana' is an attempt of the Congress to share the "burden of the exorbitant" LPG prices and the "costly daily expenses" that a woman has to bear.

More than 1.5 crore women would benefit from the scheme, the party said.

She said a separate manifesto for women would be released in the state and alleged rampant corruption in the BJP-ruled state.

Meanwhile, Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai ridiculed Mrs vadra's event titled 'Na Nayaki', saying, "Today people have to say Na Nayaki by keeping Priyanka Gandhi's photo."

She learned the ways of India'

BENGALURU: Priyanka Gandhi Vadra became emotional on Monday when she said her mother, Sonia Gandhi, initially struggled to learn Indian traditions and disliked politics. She said: "She (Sonia) came all the way from Italy to India. She struggled to learn our traditions. She learnt the ways of India. Even though she disliked politics, she took the path to serve the nation and she served it all her life till today when she is 76 years old." —Shankar Raj

BCI team visits HC, fails to get CCTV footage

Kolkata: The fact-finding team of Bar Council of India (BCI) on Monday visited the Calcutta High Court to inquire into the incident of ruckus and boycotting of the bench of Justice Rajasekhara Mantha.

The team spoke with the Register General but failed to get any CCTV footage of the incident.

Talking to the media the team said that they didn't get any CCTV footage and also that the videos available on Youtube are not their evidence.

The team even urged that if anyone has any footage then they should send it to BCI.

—Aritra Singha

FROM FRONT PAGE

Had no way to check...

He said the BMC would be only "too happy to assist" the investigation by sharing any other information the agency might need. Of the 10 jumbo centres set up during the pandemic with ICU-dialysis and oxygen beds, one is under the agency's scanner, he said. More than 97,000 Mumbaiites had used these centres and many were saved. The Commissioner arrived at the E.D. office at around 11:30am and left at 3:30 pm. An E.D. source told The Free Press Journal that the agency would scrutinise the information he had shared and seek clarifications if needed. The agency's probe seeks to establish the identity of the beneficiaries of the contract and whether payments to the firm were made as per norms. In March-April 2020, when the pandemic hit the city, there were only 3,750 beds available at civic hospitals while the Centre and the World Health Organisation warned there could be lakhs of patients in the months to follow. As the state Department of Medical Education expressed inability to provide doctors for deployment at the jumbo centres, the authorities had to outsource the task of providing trained medical personnel to private agencies.

The E.D. probe relates to a first information report lodged at the Azad Maidan police station in August 2022 against partners of Lifeline Hospital Management Services, contracted by the BMC to set up two jumbo centres. According to the FIR, the company got the contract using forged documents and had no experience of providing manpower for any medical or health facility. Mr Chahal told reporters that when the Mumbai Police approached the BMC for information relating to the complaint, the civic body requested the former to lodge an FIR and investigate as the force has the resources to examine the documents submitted. According to the FIR, in 2020, a TV journalist died of Covid in Pune after which the Pune Municipal Corporation and the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA) jointly inquired into the firm. The PMRDA also seized the security amount of Rs25 lakh deposited by the firm. The inquiry revealed that the firm had no experience of providing medical services nor did it have adequate staff. It had junior doctors instead of seniors. Thereafter, the PMRDA issued a direction blacklisting Lifeline. Yet, the BMC awarded the same company a contract worth Rs38 crore to provide services at two jumbo

centres. The firm allegedly concealed relevant facts from the BMC. The FIR also says the partnership firm was unregistered and the partnership deed submitted to the BMC was dubious.

Viacom18 bags...

Some of the country's biggest stars in the women's game, such as national team skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and opener Smriti Mandhana, lauded the BCCI after the big announcement. "Today marks a new era where our women cricketers will get the platform they deserve to thrive, excel and develop on the global stage. I'm sure you'll be mesmerized by the talent we have!" Ms Kaur tweeted. Ms Mandhana said, "Today's a day that every Indian women cricketer will remember. The #WIPL is finally taking shape... Come on girls, it's all yours for the taking!"

State lazy, say locals...

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, JBSS convener Atul Sati accused the State Government of ignoring warnings about the disaster for 14 months and dealing with it now at a snail's pace. "The crisis has endangered the very existence of a historic town, but the relief and rescue operations being carried out by the State Government are devoid of urgency," Mr Sati said. Joshimath, gateway to pilgrimage

sites like Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib and international skiing destination Auli, is on the edge of a precipice with gaping cracks appearing in buildings, roads and public facilities.

At least 44 more buildings developed cracks in the past 24 hours, including a five-room rest house of the Public Works Department (PWD). The labourers in the premises were shifted to a safer place. On Sunday, 17 more buildings were declared unsafe and marked with red crosses. PWD Executive Engineer Surendra Patwal said cracks had widened in several houses in Singhdhar and Manoharbaag wards. Evacuation of affected families to temporary relief centres and dismantling of two unsafe hotels continued. A total of 800 people from 237 families have so far been shifted to safety by the district administration, according to the daily bulletin of the Disaster Management Authority.

Freeway extension...

At the Thane end, there will be a toll post having 10 lanes — five in each direction — to ensure that motorists do not try to bypass the toll naka at Mulund by taking the elevated road. A major chunk of vehicular traffic enters or exits the Eastern Express Highway for the Mulund-Airoli link, Powai, Ghatkopar, Santa Cruz-

Chembur Link Road and Pune.

At the Chheda Nagar junction, traffic coming from Pune and Navi Mumbai as well as from the SCLR can get on to the Freeway extension to head to Thane. The Eastern Freeway connects Orange Gate and Shivaji Nagar, a stretch of 16.4km. The extension will take its total length beyond 31 km.

BJP's target: Win all...

The party has to work to bring it to power in states where it is in opposition and to make states where it is ruling "impregnable forts", Mr Nadda said.

Starting with Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya, Assembly polls are expected to be held in Karnataka followed by Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram in one go and then Telangana this year.

The ruling party has been putting in place a number of exercises to strengthen its organisation to ensure it returns to power in 2024 at the Centre for a third term. In his nearly 45-minute closed-door address, Mr Nadda highlighted the representation given to Other Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in BJP governments in states and at the Centre, besides in constitutional positions like governor. He noted that in President Droupadi Murmu, India has its first tribal person at the top constitutional post.

"The party is getting votes of the backward classes, SCs and STs and giving them representation," Mr Nadda said. "This shows our resolve of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas." He stressed on the party's growing voter base since Mr Modi led it to victory in 2014 and 2019. He praised the party's win in the recent Gujarat Assembly polls as "extraordinary and historic", saying winning more than 150 seats in the 182-member assembly was a great achievement.

While the party lost Himachal Pradesh to the Congress, the vote gap between the two parties was less than 1%, he said.

Cops suspect...

The police have registered a case under Sections 463 (forgery) and 465 (punishment for forgery) of the Indian Penal Code and Sections 43(f) (denies or causes denial of access to any person authorised to access any computer, computer system or computer network by any means), 43A (compensation for failure to protect data) and 65 (tampering with computer source documents) of the Information Technology Act. Senior Inspector Vivek Shende of the Tardeo police station said, "We are taking the help of the cyber police to get leads. Such cases are rampant and the possibility of youngsters being involved cannot be ruled out."

Rijiju's letter revives...

The Opposition, however, hit out at the move, with Congress leader Jairam Ramesh saying that while reforms were needed in judicial appointments, the Government's remedy was a "poison pill" for the independence of the judiciary. The party said this was an "orchestrated confrontation" by the Government to "capture" the judiciary. Officials said the Law Minister has sought the setting up of a "search and evaluation committee" with representation from the Central and State Governments in the selection of judges for the Supreme Court and High Courts, respectively. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also dubbed the Government's move "extremely dangerous". "There should be absolutely no government interference in judicial appointments," Mr Kejriwal said on Twitter. Reacting to his remarks, Mr Rijiju said the move was in line with the direction of the Constitution bench to restructure the MoP (Memorandum of Procedure) of the collegium system. "I hope you honour the court's direction! This is precise follow-up action of the direction of the Supreme Court Constitution Bench while striking down the National Judicial Appointment Commission Act," the minister tweeted.

GOANS RISE IN BATTLE TO SAVE MHADEI

■ THOUSANDS ATTEND MEETING AT SANQUELIM ■ RESOLUTION PASSED DEMANDING WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL GIVEN TO DPR OF KARNATAKA ■ GOVT URGED TO COME OUT PUBLICLY IN SUPPORT OF THE MOVEMENT

THE GOAN | NETWORK

SANQUELIM

Thousands of people from all over Goa descended at Vir-di-Sanquelim on Monday, to extend their support to the Save Mhadei movement, which is being touted as the second Opinion Poll.

A couple of resolutions were adopted demanding that the Central Water Tribunal withdraw the approval of DPR granted to Karnataka as any attempt to divert the nature water course of Mhadei would have severe impact on population of the six talukas depending on their drinking water needs.

“It will also affect the flora and fauna of the river valley, as well as the people's life and culture in the area. Diversion of Mhadei will threaten the Western Ghats along with the fishermen, farmers, paddy fields, cultivated lands and biological resources that depend on the river water,” the resolution states.

Stating that the Mhadei issue is associated with the self respect, identity and future of Goans, another resolution has urged the State government to come out publicly in support of the movement.



A section of the crowd at the Save Mhadei meeting near Amona bridge, Sanquelim on Monday.

Narayan Pissurlenkar

Further, the government has been urged not to fall short in its efforts to save Mhadei and not to sacrifice Mhadei under any pressure.

Meanwhile, an array of speakers spoke at the meeting urging Goans to unite as one and take the Mhadei fight

forward.

Prof Prajal Sakhardande highlighted how almost half of Goa is dependent on Mhadei water with its six talukas dependent on the river for its drinking water.

“If 3.9 TMC feet water is allowed to be diverted, it will

spell doom for Goa and we will not allow that to happen,” Sakhardande added.

Dnyanpith awardee Damodar Mauzo likened the current movement with that of the Opinion Poll wherein several leaders participated.

“That time too, we were

told nothing will come out of such movement and today also, they will tell that nothing will happen but we will definitely taste victory if such a massive crowd is behind the movement,” Mauzo added.

TMC leader Kirti Azad opined that Goa will not re-

main the same if Mhadei water is allowed to be diverted.

“What will happen to its wildlife parks, its tourism?” he questioned and urge Goans to unitedly fight for Mhadei's cause for the sake of future generations.

Chicalim Parish Priest Fr

Bolmax Pereira chided Chief Minister Pramod Sawant for stating the Opposition is doing politics on Mhadei issue as he said that it is the duty of the politicians to resolve the issue.

“The issue can be resolved through a political answer,” he opined.

Further, Fr Pereira called upon CM Sawant and all the MLAs to resign in protest, if they fail to resolve the issue.

Adv Hrudaynath Shirodkar urged that there is a need to strengthen the hands of Rajendra Kerkar who has dedicated his life for Mhadei.

“Our government is not fighting the Mhadei case in the SC properly and hence, we have to rally behind Kerkar to take the fight forward,” Shirodkar said.

Poet Datta Damodar Naik questioned how a State is allowed to divert a river when even nations cannot do so.

“From India, 6 rivers flow to Pakistan but the flow was never stopped. Then how Karnataka is doing the same?” he posed.

Activist Xencor Polgi questioned the absence of CM Pramod Sawant at the meet even though he claims that Mhadei is more than a mother

Only 6 MLAs attend meet

SANQUELIM: Even as separate seating arrangements were made for all the 40 MLAs for the Save Mhadei meet at Sanquelim, only six attended. Among those who attended included Congress' Yuri Alemao, Adv Carlos Ferreira and Altonne D'Costa, AAP's Venzy Viegas and Cruz Silva, and Goa Forward's Vijay Sardesai. Apart from that, several former MLAs also attended including Ramakant Khalap, Pratap Gawas, Alina Saldanha, Victor Gonsalves and others.

to him.

“As the politicians have failed to protect Mhadei, it is the people who have taken the lead and politicians should extend their support to the movement,” Polgi stated.

Opining that future battles would be fought on water, GAKUVED spokesperson Govind Shirodkar said that it appears that such a battle is starting in Goa.

Earlier, the meeting began with school children singing songs and presenting skits based on Mhadei.

Famed tiatrist Francis de Tuem also sang a Konkani song dedicated to the cause.

Also, as a symbolic gesture

► read more on thegoan.net

IN SHORT >>

Leopard caught in trap at Quepem, dies

PANAJI: In yet another incident, a leopard died after being caught in snare meant for other animals. The decomposed carcass was found trapped in snare set for wild boars at Dabem, Padi in Quepem. A similar incident was reported from Kopardem, Sattari in the last week of December 2022.

Dense fog disrupts ferry services

PANAJI: Dense fog disrupted normal life of most islands dependent on ferry services on Monday morning. Commuters especially office goers and students using the busy Chorao ferry route were the worst affected. Ferry services on other routes were also affected.

Cops bust interstate gang of thieves

PANAJI: The Panaji police busted an interstate gang of thieves who stole jewelry worth Rs 4.53 lakh approx from a store where they posed as prospective buyers. The accused, all of whom have a string of cases registered against them in Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, were traced within hours of registering a theft complaint.

Vistara begins ops at Mopa airport

PANAJI: Vistara Airlines has announced the addition of Manohar International Airport, Mopa to its domestic network with daily connectivity to and from Bengaluru along with 6 weekly flights to and from Mumbai, starting February 14.

WEATHER >>

Max: 30 C
Min: 19C
Humidity: 75%

TIDES

Low: 12.31 ---
High: 04.59 20.05

Legal battle only way to stop Mhadei diversion: Kerkar

Claims K'taka's projects will spell doom for Goa

THE GOAN | NETWORK

SANQUELIM

Painting a grim picture on the Mhadei issue, environmentalist Rajendra Kerkar pointed out that legal battle is the only way forward to stop the diversion of the river.

“The Tribunal has already given the award which allows Karnataka 3.9 TMC water and we cannot stop that from happening,” Kerkar said.

However, he pointed out that in the DPR Karnataka has proposed diversion of Surla river water as well, which cannot be the case.

“On this point, we can take the legal fight forward and win,” Kerkar said.

He further said that if one studies thoroughly the projects proposed by Karnataka, then they will realize the quantum of the disaster awaiting as Goa will not get even a single drop of

KERKAR: FRANK TALK

■ Important that our MLAs first understand the issue... When we don't have knowledge, there is no possibility of achieving victory

■ I tried to pass on Mhadei knowledge to MLAs in the past, but they were not interested

■ Goans should also give equal importance to other rivers as well which are



being neglected

■ Scientists of Goa did not come forward to offer services in the fight for Mhadei when needed

water.

“It is important that our MLAs first understand about the issue. When we don't have knowledge of the issue, there is no possibility of achieving a victory,” Kerkar said and urged the six Opposition MLAs present to first read the 12 volumes which were pre-

pared on Mhadei.

“I had tried to pass on Mhadei knowledge to the MLAs in the past. But, they were not interested,” Kerkar said, while stating that in Karnataka, the MLAs are very knowledgeable on the issue.

► read more on thegoan.net

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai on Monday entirely skipped the vexed Mhadei issue even as in his nearly hour-long address to the Goa legislative Assembly on day one of the 4-day winter session, he painted a rosy picture of governance on the legs of the State's “very impressive” numbers relating to socio-economic indicators.

The Opposition was absent as their attempt to seek that the Governor speak on the Mhadei imbroglio, shouting slogans, holding placards, symbolically adorned in black and even rushing to the House well, ended with the Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar ordering their ejection by marshals.

The six MLAs -- Opposition Leader Yuri Alemao and his two Congress colleagues Carlos Alvares-Ferreira and



Altone D'Costa, AAP's Venzy Viegas and Cruz Silva and GFP's Vijai Sardesai -- however walked out and boycotted the Governor's address even before the marshals could usher them out.

RGF's lone MLA, Viresh Borkar, was not in the House at the time of the commotion but claimed he was very much with the Opposition on the Mhadei issue. Also adorned in black, he was removed from the House when he entered and took his seat.

Pillai, meanwhile, went

Slogan-shouting Oppn shown the door

PANAJI: All seven MLAs from the Opposition wore black attires and got ejected from the House after six of them sought to interrupt the Governor's address walking into the well of the House chanting ‘Amchi Mhadei Amkam Zai’ and holding placards on day one of the 4-day winter session of the Goa legislative assembly on Monday.

Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemao led the demand for the Governor Sreedharan Pillai to speak on the Mhadei issue first and was backed by five other colleagues from his Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Goa Forward Party (GFP). Viresh Borkar, the lone Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) MLA was not present in the House at the time but came in much later and also got ejected.

ahead with his address in which he said, Goa's socio-economic indicators are “very impressive” as against those of other States and claimed his government had implemented or initiated all assurances made in the 2021-

22 budget speech.

Estimated per capita income, quick estimate of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of 2021-22 at Rs 82,603.70 crore and growth

► read more on thegoan.net

Mishaps continue at Karmalghat

THE GOAN | NETWORK

CANACONA

After a gap of around two months, mishaps have continued along the dreaded Karmalghat Ghat after an interstate truck went off the road in the wee hours of Monday. The driver and cleaner escaped unhurt.

According to sources, a Karnataka-registered loaded truck was headed towards Karwar when it went off the highway after its left wheels went into the trench and the vehicle rested on the hill.

However, highway traffic was not affected as the truck came to a rest on the extreme

left of the road.

It may be recalled that frequent mishaps mostly involving inter-state transportation prompted government authorities to consider repair and widening the narrow Karmalghat section. A number of officials inspected the highway.

It is also learnt a section of the highway at Karmalghat has been taken up for widening and repairs, but motorists claim no moves have been initiated to remove the death traps particularly the stiff edges which catches many Inter-State traffic off guard at the treacherous curves and turns.

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MAPUSA

While the government has set up a committee headed by North Goa Collector to probe the fire incident at the Pilerne Industrial Estate, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has directed the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) and Water Resources Department (WRD) to inspect and clean the wells at Saipem in Candolim village.

“A committee has been appointed to look into the fire incident under the Collector, North which has around six members, which include a member each of GSPCB and



IDC. They will submit their report to the government. After getting the report, we will discuss the matter in detail and decide what action to be taken. I have also directed the WRD and GSPCB to inspect and clean the wells,” Sawant said.

Candolim Sarpanch Ferni-nio Fernandes informed that there were at least around 30 wells at Saipem and Orda in

CALANGUTE MLA WANTS HAZARDOUS PAINT FACTORY RELOCATED

► read more on thegoan.net

Candolim which have been contaminated.

“The CM has directed the WRD and GSPCB to empty and revive all the wells in the village. It has come as a big solace to the villagers. In the meanwhile, we have arranged water tankers to supply water to the locals for the moment,” Fernandes said.

The deadly fire that engulfed a warehouse of the Berger Becker Coatings Pvt Ltd

at the Pilerne Industrial Estate last week created much panic among the Saipem villagers in the vicinity.

The Fire and Emergency Services Department took almost 48 hours to bring the fire under control and used more than 2 lakh litres of water besides foam to bring the fire under control. Several fire tenders from the fire department, MPT and even the navy were used in the fire fighting operation.

Fortunately, there was no loss of life but around 44 vehicles were gutted while the paint factory's entire warehouse was gutted in the fire incident.

THE GOAN ON SUNDAY



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: The most wasted day of all is that on which we have not laughed.

— NICOLAS CHAMFORT



MUMBAI | TUESDAY | JANUARY 17, 2023

EDIT

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FOUNDER EDITOR: S. SADANAND

Gubernatorial overreach

The controversial actions of Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi have highlighted once again the contentious ties between governors and Opposition state governments. This has for long been a sticking point and was exploited mercilessly by earlier Congress governments at the Centre which dismissed legitimately elected governments at the drop of a hat at the behest of governors. Former CBI and Intelligence Bureau officer Ravi's decision to omit three crucial paragraphs from the speech prepared by the State Government for his address to the Assembly amounted to overstepping his role as the constitutional and titular head of the state. The Governor's remit is limited to reading out the speech prepared by the State Government, just as the President, in her customary address to the Budget session of Parliament, reads out the report card of the Union Government prepared by the Government itself. Any deviation from the text will result in a constitutional crisis. Fortunately most Presidents have adhered to the principle of non-interference in affairs of state. Why then are governors so intent on stirring the pot in Opposition-ruled states?

Earlier, career politicians were rarely appointed governors, but nowadays the trend is to appoint those with blatant political beliefs or former bureaucrats known to do the bidding of their political masters. Mr Ravi's gratuitous pronouncements on Sanatan Dharma and his suggestion that Tamil Nadu be renamed Tamizhagam only made the DMK Government see red. His decision to omit paragraphs in his address relating to the Dravidian model of development prompted Chief Minister MK Stalin to move a resolution against his action, making the Governor walk out in a huff. The row did not end there, with the Governor issuing invitations for a Pongal get-together at the Raj Bhavan where the state was called Tamizhagam instead of Tamil Nadu. The letterhead bore the Central Government's seal and not the State Government's emblem.

The rift between the Governor and the DMK Government has been long drawn out with Mr Ravi sitting on a dozen bills cleared by the Assembly. He has not rejected them outright but has simply refused to take any action on them. DMK leaders shooting their mouths off against the Governor has only exacerbated matters. Relations between governors and elected governments have been tense in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. The ugly row between the Centre's representatives and chief ministers does not bode well for democracy.

Nobel endorsement

An endorsement from Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has no doubt boosted Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee's ambitions. Her reaction to Mr Sen's remark that she has the ability to be the country's Prime Minister is an eye-opener. Mr Sen's advice is like an order, Ms Banerjee averred, indicating that she was more than ready for the role. However, before any such scenario can be envisaged, there has to be a measure of Opposition unity. The Trinamool may do well in Bengal, but it is unlikely to win seats in other states. The only Opposition party with a pan-India presence remains the Congress and it is highly improbable that the Grand Old Party will cede space to a regional outfit. Any Opposition formation will have to include the Congress, something the astute Nitish Kumar has realised. The overarching ambitions of regional satraps such as Ms Banerjee and Bharat Rashtra Samiti chief K Chandrasekhar Rao leader will remain just that. They can pose a threat to the BJP in their states, but they will be unable to take on the might of the saffron juggernaut in parliamentary polls. Therefore the BJP's assertion that there is no vacancy for the Prime Minister's post rings true despite the arrogance of the statement.

There has never been a greater need for Opposition unity than now, but that will need a great deal of statesmanship. Egos will have to be set aside and hard decisions taken for the greater good. The present Opposition set-up is riddled with contradictions and extreme wariness towards the Congress. The latter, despite Rahul Gandhi's bid for unity in the form of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, is unlikely to give up its position as the principal Opposition party, notwithstanding its poor show at the hustings. A solution seems unlikely in the near future.



SIKHS' APPEAL TO GANDHIJI

Break The Fast, Peace Assured

New Delhi, Jan. 16. A special Diwan attended by a large gathering was held today under the auspices of Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, Delhi. Sardar Harnam Singh and other Sikh leaders addressed the gathering, and stressed the necessity of keeping peace in the City of Delhi and the country generally.

State of the Union

✦ Ashutosh



For the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the years 2023 and 2024 are important not because these are major election years but because these are followed by the RSS completing a hundred years in 2025. They would like to celebrate this with a sense of victory and accomplishment. In 1925, when the RSS was founded by an ex-Congressman named Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, it was not even noticed by top echelons of power in India. It started like any other organisation but it had the appetite and immense patience to wait — indefinitely — in the wilderness. Ultimately, its patience paid off, and now when it is set to complete 100 years in 2025, it has a very powerful Government at the centre. It has successfully replaced the grand old party, the Congress, in terms of hegemonic ideas and also in governance. And there is only a remote possibility that the Congress could regain its old glory soon. It is in this context that two disruptive statements emanating from the RSS family should alarm those who believe in a democratic India.

Mohan Bhagwat is no ordinary man. He is the chief of the RSS family and technically within the family hierarchy he occupies a higher status than Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Within the RSS family, Mr

Bhagwat is the leader and others including Mr Modi have to follow him in letter and spirit. When he says that India has been at war for the last 1000 years and in war 'aggression' is inevitable, then it should be understood that Mr Bhagwat is not only justifying the current disturbing and destabilising socio-political trends but also hinting that this will continue and may lead to more disruptive features. This should seriously worry all those who espouse and dream of a harmonious and democratic India, those who take a lot of pride in its diversity.

Along with Mr Bhagwat, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar has also raised a disturbing issue when he said that the basic structure of the Constitution verdict by the Supreme Court in the Kesavananda Bharati case set a bad precedent, which does not augur well for democratic society. The Indian Constitution is a dynamic document. The writers, while drafting the Constitution, envisioned it as a living organism, not a dead document. That is why it has empowered Parliament with amendment rights and created a judiciary not only to be independent of the executive and legislature but also entrusted it with the power to interpret the Constitution as its guardian, whose primary job is not only to protect the basic rights of the citizen from any encroachment from the executive and the legislature but also to keep it democratic. The Constitution provides a framework in which conflicts between the communities are resolved in a peaceful and democratic manner. It does not allow the majority community to subjugate the minority community under any pretext. It promotes

to protect the civil and religious rights of the minority communities. When Mr Bhagwat talks about a thousand years' war, then he clearly identifies Muslims as an enemy with which Hindus are at war; and war by nature is violent and ruthless. It is a vanquishing exercise which ultimately leads to annihilation of one of the warring actors.

If one researches RSS ideological documents, it is clear that Mr Bhagwat is not saying anything new. The second RSS chief, M S Golwalkar, wrote a long time ago that Muslims are one of the three enemies of the country along with Christians and Communists. He has also written that Hindus have been at war with Muslims for more than a thousand

might of the regenerated Hindu nation strike down the enemy's hosts with its mighty arm."

Mr Modi after becoming the prime minister said 'Sabka Sath; Sabka Vikas' and many of my liberal friends were deceived into believing that the RSS had moderated its views about Muslims. This was further reinforced when Mohan Bhagwat in Vigyan Bhawan in 2018 said, "Hindutva is incomplete without Muslims". Even very recently, he said, "Why should Shriveling be searched for in every mosque?" He was also seen meeting with a Muslim leader, Arshad Madni. And this was happening when Muslims were allegedly being persecuted by the so-called Hindutvavadis in the form of

It seems that the RSS has realised that as its centenary year is approaching, it is better to expose the full might of its ideology

years. Mr Golwalkar writes in 'We or Our Nationhood Defined', "Hindu nation ... is fighting on. Ever since that evil day, when Muslims first landed in Hindustan, right upto the present moment the Hindu nation has been gallantly fighting on to shake off the despoilers. It is the fortune of the war, the tide turns now to this side, now to that, but the war goes on and has not been decided yet." Mr Golwalkar was confident that the tide of history has turned and now Hindus will not lose this war. He writes, "Nor is there any fear of its being decided to our detriment. The Race Spirit has been awakened. The lion was not dead, only sleeping. He is rousing himself up again and the world has to see the

mob lynching, their houses being bulldozed on minor pretexts, not being allowed to pray on Government-sanctioned lands, calls being given for their economic boycott, the hijab being made a huge issue, demand for banning halal meat, Muslim-run eateries being removed in Gujarat, people like Yati Narsinghanand calling for Muslims' genocide, and Government agencies implementing rule of law against Muslims in an allegedly partisan manner. If one talks to Muslims then one gets a sense that they feel they are being treated as the 'Other' and no longer feel equal to Hindus as citizens.

It appears that Mr Modi and Mr Bhagwat were both busy creating a smokescreen, behind which the

'Mighty Arm' as expressed in Mr Golwalkar's writings was at work. Mr Bhagwat has now openly justified the violent behaviour of his foot soldiers and discriminatory acts of the Government. It seems that the RSS has realised that as its centenary year is approaching, it is better to expose the full might of its ideology. Maybe the RSS has reached the conclusion that, as Mr Bhagwat admits in his interview, there is wider acceptance of the RSS ideology and there is no point in shooting from the shadows. And in this pursuit every arm of the Government has to play a decisive role.

It is no coincidence that the Vice President has given clear hints that the BJP-dominated Parliament should have supremacy, and the judiciary should not pose any hindrance to the RSS cause. The attack on the basic structure is an attack on the basic ethos of the Constitution. Let's not live under any illusion. The fact is that the RSS did not accept the Constitution when it was created. Then Mr Golwalkar had said, "While framing the Constitution our Self and Hinduness were forgotten. Due to the absence of this unifying spirit, a Constitution has been made which will bring about disintegration ... we will have to accept a unitary form of Government of one country, one nation, and one state ... with one legislature and one cabinet for the whole country."

In the last few years has the country not moved in that direction? The year 2025 is very important in this respect.

The writer is Editor, SatyaHindi.com, and author of Hindu Rashtira. He tweets at @ashutosh838

Social justice and college education

Learning Curve

✦ Vrijendra



A few weeks ago, Shelja Sen, writer and co-founder of Children First, wrote an excellent article on bringing social justice to schools and how "the transformative power of teachers" could magically change children's lives. It prompted me to reflect on how colleges in Mumbai deal with concerns regarding social justice; what values do they impart to their students in this regard? After all, college education plays an important part in shaping values among students because they are at the threshold of adulthood. Even as students bring in their own values to the classroom that they have learnt in their families, schools, neighbourhoods and so on, in my experience, they are also adult enough to be sensitive to and respond to different opinions and perceptions on social issues.

Let us look at how colleges respond to two major, deep-rooted and persistent sources of inequality in Indian society: the social inequality built into the Hindu society through the caste system (In theory, other religions like Islam, Christianity and Sikhism profess social equality;

however, in practice, in India, caste inequality remains a fact of life across different faiths) and the patriarchal foundation of an Indian family.

Let me illustrate. A large number of colleges in Mumbai are "minority" colleges. These colleges are run by private charitable trusts — many of them are financially aided by the state Government — and 50% seats in admission are reserved for students from the designated minority; in the remaining half, many other quotas are applied. As a result, the so-called open category seats are a fraction of total seats. However, the key feature of these minority-run colleges is a near absence of reservation for SC/ST students. Similarly, these colleges are largely exempt from reservation for SC/ST communities in their faculty.

Further, there are no systematic attempts, either at college level or by the university, to sensitise students and teachers towards the dilemmas and complexity of caste discrimination and caste privilege. As a result, 75 years after Independence, Dr B R Ambedkar remains primarily a Dalit leader. Ambedkar Jayanti, on Dec 6, largely remains an event of Dalits, by Dalits, for Dalits. In fact, often, a deep resentment surfaces every year among many upper caste teachers during this time about how so many Dalits from faraway places come to "our" Mumbai and make it messy/dirty/whatever. Even in non-

minority colleges which implement the reservation policy, a very large number of teachers and students (from upper castes) have a distinct, "natural" bias against Dalits and almost always talk about them as somehow "intruding into our academic spaces" and, of course, how they take seats away from "meritorious" (upper caste) students. Staff rooms too are often sharply divided between "reserved category" teachers and others, on the same grounds.

It is not that colleges are against reservations in principle. In minority

trenched caste hierarchy and caste inequality.

Then, there is the issue of discrimination against women. Gender disparity at all levels has been a very visible issue in the recent decades on account of strong and vocal national and international feminist movements. While in Mumbai, most colleges already have a large number of girl students and women teachers, in other places, in recent years, institutional attempts are being made to increase the representation of girls and

last few years. And yet, these cells have not been very successful in effectively addressing these issues affecting (young) women in colleges. The problem is that even as colleges hold seminars and workshops to encourage women's empowerment, they hesitate to question the structures and practices which continue to privilege male entitlement. They rarely question as to why work in the family and childcare continue to be the prime (if not sole) responsibility of women. Similarly, when they talk to young girls about sexual harassment, the focus often is on how the girls themselves are (and should be) responsible for their own safety! How the girls should behave and dress "properly". And often, teachers suggest that students should not get involved in sexual relationships in the first place! "Boys will be boys" continues to dominate the sexual dynamics and perceptions.

Beyond the gender binary, when it comes to trans students and/or students with gender fluidity, most college teachers do not even have the basic clarity about such students, their rights and dignity. In such a scenario, bringing social justice to colleges remains a difficult, largely, unfulfilled task.

Vrijendra taught in a Mumbai college for more than 30 years, and has been associated with democratic rights groups in the city

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In the interest of democracy

Shame on those who found a Hindu-Muslim Sangle in the Haldwani encroachment case. If seen, for the last several years, the feeling of mistrust towards the Supreme Court and the rest of the judicial system is increasing among the general public. One reason for this is that courts take different approaches to similar cases. In such a situation, if distrust arises in the public towards the courts or any comment comes against the Supreme Court and its judges, instead of considering it as an insult to the court or the judges, it should be considered as a warning to improve the judicial system and bring transparency. It is also in the interest of democracy and to restore the dignity of the judges themselves.

Divyansha Sharma, Ujjain

Improve PM's security

With reference to the news about a young lad breaching the Prime Minister's security cordon with a garland (Jan 13), the PM should have non-scalable banners around the route taken by him and only his security should hand over garlands and bouquets to

him. In fact, it would be far better if the PM and ministers are flown directly by helicopter to their destinations to prevent traffic jams and similar such security hassles.

Peter Castellino, Mumbai

Threat to cemeteries

It is distressing to learn of harassment of Christian institutions by the civic authorities in Mumbai from time to time. Their demand for land for road widening seems never-ending. This time it is the St Peter's cemetery at Bandra which is facing the threat of losing land which, apparently, is for slum development according to reports (Jan 6). One wonders how illegal/unauthorised slums were allowed to proliferate with the BMC turning a blind eye? And how, for years together, were they not in a position to demolish the slums, but they could give a dear seven days' notice to the Church for giving up their legitimate land? The peace-loving community that we are, the authorities seem to be taking advantage and trying to bulldoze their way through. This harassment must stop.

Melville X D'Souza, Mumbai

Women to the fore

It seems to be the year of many firsts for Indian women cricketers. We will have the

first women's IPL this year and the news of N Janani becoming the first woman umpire in the Ranji Trophy tournament is heartening, to say the least. Kudos to the BCCI for giving an opportunity to a woman to umpire a Ranji game; this will further encourage and motivate young girls to pick up this beautiful game, as they will know that there is a professional career even after retiring from playing.

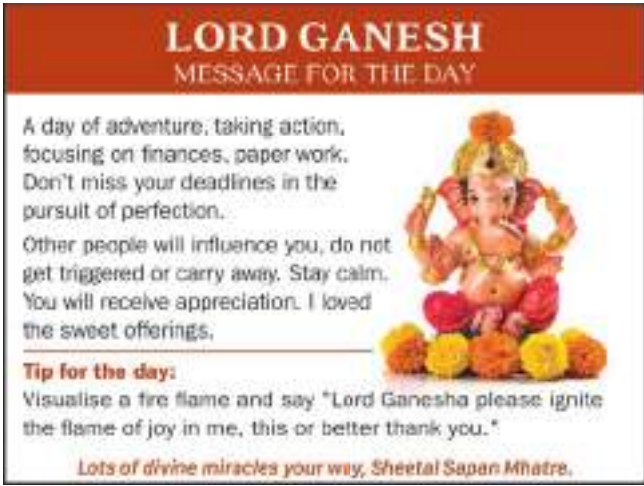
Bal Govind, Noida

Youth are frustrated

While inaugurating the 26th National Youth Festival 2023, PM Narendra Modi rightly said that "yuva shakti" is the driving force of India's journey. But the ground reality is that the talents of Indian youth are getting wasted and the PM remains a mute spectator. I am sorry to say that the PM may have a vision, but it has not translated into action. Indian youth are a frustrated lot and are cursing their fortunes. The situation is going from bad to worse.

Arun Gupta, Kolkata

Dear reader,
We are eager to know your opinions, comments and suggestions. Write to letters@fpj.co.in with the title of the letter in the subject line. Using snail mail? Send your letters to The Free Press Journal, Free Press House, Free Press Marg, 215 Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021.



Dakar (Senegal): At least 50 women have been abducted by Islamic extremists in Burkina Faso's northern Sahel region, a local official said on Monday. The kidnappings occurred on Jan 12 and 13 approximately 15

kilometres from the town of Arbinda in Soum province, Sahel Governor Lt Col PF Rodolphe Sorgho said in a statement. The women were kidnapped while out in the countryside gathering wild fruit, he said.



GLOBAL BULLETIN

2 killed in China plant explosion

BEIJING: An explosion at a chemical plant in northeastern China has killed at least two people and left 12 missing. Another 34 people were injured in the explosion on Sunday on the outskirts of the city of Panjin in Liaoning province east of the capital Beijing. News releases from the local government showed photos of flames and thick black smoke rising from the complex of chemical processing machinery, pipes and storage containers. Fire crews have brought the blaze under control and the local environmental department was monitoring the impact on air quality in the area, the government of Panshan County said.

IS claims church bombing in Congo

KASINDI: Islamic extremists claimed responsibility for a bombing of a church in eastern Congo as authorities said on Monday that the toll from Sunday's attack had risen to at least 14 dead. The Islamic State group and its Aamaq news outlet issued statements saying that its militants had planted an explosive device inside the Pentecostal church in Kasindi and detonated it while people were praying. "Let the Congolese forces know that their continued attacks on the Mujahideen will only bring them more failure and losses," the group said in its statement.

Man dies after car crash in Berlin

BERLIN: German police said on Monday that a man has died after crashing a car into Berlin's iconic Brandenburg Gate. Images from the scene show the mangled wreck of the dark-coloured sedan between two pillars of the capital's popular sightseeing spot. Poland's consul in Berlin, Marcin Krol, tweeted that he could confirm that the "driver of the Mercedes that hit the Brandenburg Gate yesterday at 23:30 was a Polish citizen. The car was also registered in Poland." Police said initial information indicated that other people weren't harmed in the crash, which happened shortly before midnight.

London cop admits rapes

LONDON: A London police officer on Monday admitted raping and sexually assaulting a dozen women over a 17-year period, in what prosecutors described as one of the most shocking cases involving a serving police officer. David Carrick, 48, pleaded guilty to 49 offences, including 20 counts of rape and charges that included assault, attempted rape and false imprisonment. The officer, who joined London's Metropolitan Police force in 2001, had served with the parliamentary and diplomatic protection command.

Palestinian teen dies in Israeli raid

JERUSALEM: Israeli security forces fatally shot a 14-year-old Palestinian during an early morning raid on Friday into a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian health officials said, the latest incident in weeks of surging violence. The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the deceased teenager as Omar Khumour and said he died after being struck in the head by a bullet during an Israeli military raid into Dheisha refugee camp near the city of Bethlehem.

Activists leave German village

BERLIN: The last two climate activists holed up beneath a German village due to be destroyed for the expansion of a nearby coal mine left the site on Monday, the dpa news agency reported. The activists had remained inside a self-dug tunnel for days in a bid to prevent heavy equipment from being brought in to bulldoze the hamlet of Luetzerath, west of Cologne. Meanwhile, anti-coal protests continued in the region, with activists chaining themselves to a giant digger at another nearby mine and others absailing from a bridge to block access to Luetzerath.

Toll in Dnipro apartment missile strike climbs to 37

Analysts say there are sign that the Kremlin is preparing for a long war

AP / Kyiv

The toll from a weekend Russian missile strike on an apartment building in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro has risen to 37, authorities said on Monday, as western analysts identified signs the Kremlin was preparing for a drawn-out war in Ukraine after almost 11 months of fighting.

The victims from Saturday's strike on the multi-story residential tower included two children, Ukraine's National Police reported, and 15 children are among the 75 injured.

The rescue and search operation was ongoing, with 39 people, including six children, taken from the ruins so far, the police said in a statement.

About 1,700 people lived in the apartment building. Residents said there were no military facilities at the site.

The reported death toll made it the deadliest single attack on civilians since before the summer, according to The Associated Press-Frontline War Crimes Watch project. The European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, called the strike, and others like it, "inhumane aggression" because it directly targeted civilians.



A Ukrainian soldier walks past bloody stretchers outside a stabilisation hospital not far from the front line in Donetsk region on Sunday

■ 15 children are among the 75 injured in the strike	The victims from the strike included 2 children	■ EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, called the strike "inhumane aggression"
■ About 1,700 people lived in the apartment building		■ "There will be no impunity for these crimes," Borrell said
■ Rescue and search operation was ongoing, with 39 people rescued		■ Ukraine said it did not have the means to stop the Russian missile

humane aggression" because it directly targeted civilians.

Asked about the strike on Monday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the Russian military doesn't target residential buildings and

suggested the Dnipro building was hit as a result of Ukrainian air defence actions.

The strike on the building came amid a wider barrage of Russian cruise missiles

across Ukraine.

Fierce fighting continued to rage in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, where military analysts have said both sides are likely suffering heavy troop casualties.

Gina Lollobrigida: 'Mona Lisa of 20th Century'

AP / Abu Dhabi

Italian actress Gina Lollobrigida has died at the age of 95.

With her large, limpid brown eyes, statuesque figure, and seductively deep voice, 'Lo Lollo' was one of the world's best-known actresses and sex symbols in

the 1950s and 1960s.

Often described as "the most beautiful woman in the world", her films included *Beat the Devil*, the *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Crossed Swords*.

She co-starred alongside the likes of Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra, Rock Hudson and Errol Flynn.



Her career faded in the 1960s and she moved into photography and politics.

Lollobrigida was one of the last surviving icons of the glory days of film, who Bogart said "made Marilyn Monroe look like Shirley Temple".

Movie mogul Howard Hughes showered her with

Germany's defence minister resigns

AP / Berlin

Germany's defence minister announced her resignation on Monday, as her department steers the project of modernising the military and oversees expanding weapons deliveries to Ukraine.

Christine Lambrecht said she had submitted her resignation request to Chancellor Olaf Scholz, adding that "months of media focus on my person" had stood in the way of a debate about the military and Germany's security policy. "The valuable work of the soldiers and many people in my department must stand in the foreground," she said.

The 57-year-old has been defence minister since Scholz became chancellor in December 2021.

Critics have long portrayed her as out of her depth but Scholz stood by her, describing her last month as "a first-class defence minister".

Pressure on her mounted after an ill-judged New Year's video message. The resignation comes at a time when Scholz faces pressure to make another step forward in German military aid to Ukraine by agreeing to deliver Leopard 2 tanks.

19 dead, dozens injured in Senegal road crash

AP / Dakar

A bus swerved to avoid hitting a donkey and collided with a truck, killing at least 19 people and injuring dozens of others in Senegal on Monday, authorities said.

The collision happened near Ngeun Sarr in the country's north, President Macky Sall tweeted.

"Yet another fatal accident on our roads," he said. "My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Speedy recovery to the injured."

The crash involved a public bus and a transport truck, the fire department said. The bus was apparently trying to avoid hitting a donkey, local fire department commander Lt. Ousseynou Ndiaye said.

Last week, 40 people were killed in a bus crash in Gnivy village, in Senegal's Kaffrine region. After that crash, the government announced reforms to try and stem collisions.

Traffic crashes happen regularly in the West African nation because of poor roads, bad cars and drivers not adhering to the rules, locals say.

In 2017, at least 25 people were killed when two buses also crashed. Many of those people were heading toward the central town of Touba for the annual Muslim pilgrimage.



People at a night market in the county-level city of Ruili in Dehong prefecture, in China's west Yunnan Province

China claims sharing accurate Covid data

IANS / Hong Kong

After the World Health Organisation (WHO) and top global leaders asked China to share more data on Covid and the virus origin, top epidemiologists from the country said it takes time to generate Covid data amid caseload surge and the country is "actively publishing and sharing" accurate Covid-related data with the world.

State-run Global Times reported that China has conducted multiple technological exchanges with the WHO, and will continue to support the organisation in the global effort to combat the deadly disease.

Liang Wannian, head of China's Covid response expert panel under the National Health Commission, said that rather than focusing on the Covid death toll in China, "the priority for the world is

WORLD

NEPAL PLANE CRASH

Black box recovered from accident site



Rescuers inspect the wreckage at the site of a Yeti Airlines plane crash in Pokhara on Monday

—AFP

PTI / Kathmandu

The black box of the Yeti Airlines aircraft has been recovered from the accident site on Monday, as a search is on for the four persons still missing after the plane with 72 people, including five Indians, on board crashed into a river gorge while landing at Nepal's newly-opened airport in the resort city of Pokhara.

Officials said 35 bodies out of 68 have been identified so far as Nepal began a national day of mourning on Monday.

Both the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder have been recovered as search and rescue teams rappelled down a 300-metre gorge to continue their efforts, which were suspended overnight.

The Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) records radio transmissions and other sounds in the cockpit, such as conversations between the pilots, and engine noises. The flight data recorder (FDR) records more than 80 different types of information such as speed, altitude and direction, as well as pilot

actions and performance of important systems.

According to Kathmandu airport officials, the boxes were recovered from the site of the accident, a day after Yeti Airlines' 9N-ANC ATR-72 aircraft crashed on the bank of the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport minutes before landing.

The boxes were handed over to the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN), said Sudarshan Bar-taula, a spokesperson of the Yeti Airlines.

Police Inspector Gyan Bahadur Khadka, acting information officer of the Kaski District Police Office, said that at least 35 bodies have been identified so far.

The five Indians, all reportedly from Uttar Pradesh, have been identified as Abhisekh Kushwaha, 25, Bishal Sharma, 22, Anil Kumar Rajbhar, 27, Sonu Jaiswal, 35, and Sanjaya Jaiswal.

Of the five Indians, four were planning to participate in paragliding activities in the tourist hub of Pokhara, said a local resident, who travelled with them to Nepal.

Sikh family alleges racial discrimination at Windsor

IANS / London

Accusing two British Army guards of racially discriminating against them at Windsor Castle, a Sikh family has threatened to take legal action against the U.K. government.

Rapinder Kaur, 36, said she, her turban-wearing husband and their two-year-old child were subjected to racial taunts by guards during a visit to the castle last year, The Independent reported.

She said that as the family were walking alongside the castle's wall, two soldiers standing in a palace window made inappropriate "We are watching you" gestures while laughing and showing them the middle finger. According to the report, the family then complained to the Royal Collection Trust, which operates the palace, and the Ministry of Defence (MOD), which bears responsibility for the guards.

But the family said that all they have received is an email apology from a top-ranking lieutenant, and guidance that the soldiers would receive refresher training.

"The claimant believes that the sole reason for being targeted and singled out by the soldiers was because of their skin colour and the fact that her husband was wearing a turban," a letter sent from the family's solicitors to the Government Legal Department in Jan 2022 read.

Top 1% have twice as much as rest combined

OXFAM REPORT



The richest 1 per cent have bagged nearly twice as much wealth as the rest of the world population put together over the past two years, a new report said on Monday.

In its annual inequality report released on the first day of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting here, rights group Oxfam further said that billionaire fortunes are increasing by USD 2.7 billion a day even as at least 1.7 billion workers now live in countries where inflation is outpacing wages.

raise USD 1.7 trillion a year; enough to lift two billion people out of poverty.

The report, titled 'Survival of the Richest', further said the richest one per cent have grabbed nearly two-thirds of all new wealth worth USD 42 trillion created since 2020, almost twice as much money as the bottom 99% of the world's population.

During the past decade, the richest 1% had captured around half of all new wealth, it added, while noting that extreme wealth and extreme poverty have increased simultaneously for

the first time in 25 years.

"While ordinary people are making daily sacrifices on essentials like food, the super-rich have outdone even their wildest dreams. Just two years in, this decade is shaping up to be the best yet for billionaires," Oxfam International Director Gabriela Bucher said.

"Taxing the super-rich and big corporations is the door out of today's overlapping crises. It's time we demolish the convenient myth that tax cuts for the richest result in their wealth 'trickling down' to everyone else," she added.



Caimi emerges overall 10th, Buhler 14th for Hero in Dakar Rally

PTI/ RIYADH: Hero Moto Sports Team Rally completed its Dakar 2023 campaign with a top-10 overall finish, including two stage

wins and a stage podium, making it the team's best performance in the gruelling rally.

FOR GIVING HIM BATTERS WORLD-CLASS PRACTICE

Kohli gives credit to practice partners

“In my honest opinion, all three of them have given us world-class practice every time we play. They challenge us in the nets like any 145 or 150 kmph pace bowlers would do in the game. They always try to get us out and make sure that they test us regularly”

FIANS / NEW DELHI

Talismanic India batter Virat Kohli credited throw down specialists Dayanand Garani, Nuwan Senewiratne and D Raghavendra for making the batters look better with world-class practice through relentless deliveries.

“At times, it feels very intense. For me that has been the difference in my career to be very honest. From where I was as a cricketer before I started getting this kind of practice to where I am today.”

“A lot of credit has to go to these guys, who have given us practice regularly and I am sure Shubman will also feel the same. Their contribution has been unbelievable. You guys should remember their names and faces because, behind our success, a lot of effort has been put in by these guys. Thank you to all for your very, very honest efforts which have helped us,” said Kohli in a video posted on bcci.tv.

Raghavendra, referred to as Raghu in the Indian cricket circles, has been associ-



CAREER BATTING - ONE DAY INTERNATIONALS
Innings: 259 Aggregate: 12754 Highest Score: 183
Average: 58.24 Highest Average: 60.31

ated with the team for a long time as a throw-down specialist. Garani started as a throwdown specialist with Indian team after working with Punjab Kings while Senewiratne was roped in as a throwdown specialist in 2018 to help Indian batsmen counter left-arm fast-bowling.

Right-handed opener Shubman Gill was also in praise of the throwdown specialists of the Indian team. “These three guys combined would have had 1200 to 1500 wickets very easily. They put in a lot of hard work and prepare us for all kinds of conditions we need to practice in heading into the match. These are the people who give us the confidence that we can perform at this level.”

FOR UPCOMING FOUR-MATCH TEST SERIES

Ian Healy predicts 2-1 victory for India over Australia

FIANS / NEW DELHI

Former Australia wicket-keeper-batter Ian Healy has predicted a 2-1 series win for India in the four-Test series against Australia starting from Nagpur on February 9. Healy added that his prediction can come true if the hosts aren't preparing “unreasonable wickets”.

India and Australia will play four Tests in Nagpur, New Delhi, Dharamsala and Ahmedabad to decide the winner of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The se-

ries is of extreme importance for India, as a spot in the final of the World Test Championship (WTC), to be held in June 2023, is at stake.

“They've got a good team but I'm not too scared of their spinners unless they produce unreasonable wickets. If they produce unreasonable wickets like they did half the series last time (we won't win), two wickets were just terrible, unfair; spinners jumping over your head on day one.” “So that type of thing they will play better on

than we will, but if they get flat wickets that India used to put out, nice flat batting wickets and bowlers have to work really hard, I think we can do it. But (my prediction is) 2-1 India, if Starc's unavailable in

the first Test,” said Healy on SEN radio show. Starc will be joining the Australian team from the second Test due to a finger injury to his bowling hand, which he sustained during the second Test against South Africa at the MCG in December 2022.

Australia's next overseas Test assignment is the Ashes against England in June-July. Healy predicted that

Australia should win 3-1 over England, who have been on a high in the format thanks to “Bazball” strategy of Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, provided the Pat Cummins-led side don't have any injury concerns.

“I think for once we'll cope the best against Anderson and Broad, Anderson is 40 years of age, we've got to really get some pressure back on him. Our best players for mine, Pat Cummins and Steve Smith will be our stars,” he concluded.



Rawat edges past Mehta to finally taste success

FPJ NEWS SERVICE / MUMBAI

Laxman Rawat of PSPB finally tasted success as he overcame his compatriot Aditya Mehta 9-6 in an entertaining best-of-17-frame final of the National Sports Club of India (NSCI) organised 'Baulkline' NSCI Rs 13 lakh prize-money All India Snooker Open 2023, played at the NSCI billiards hall. Rawat had finished runner-up losing to Sourav Kothari (PSPB) in the final of the last edition.

The summit clash contested between the accomplished Indian Oil cueists Rawat and Mehta witnessed top-quality positive play as both were aggressive and went for their shots and there was not a single dull moment throughout the 15 frames.

However, the 31-year-old Rawat, who was a little bit more consistent, managed to wrest the initiative and enjoy a 5-3 lead at the break. On resumption, Rawat was a bit scratchy and Mehta did well to win two frames to draw level at 5-all and stay in the fight. But, Rawat came roaring back winning the next three frames to surge to an 8-5 lead and within distance of winning one more frame to settle the issue. Mehta managed to pocket the 14th frame, but could not stop Rawat from winning the next to clinch victory with the frame scores reading 0-110, 74-42, 83-7, 0-89, 104-0, 55-87, 87-0, 112-0, 28-89, 54-62, 69-1, 83-45, 89-24, 20-65, and 62-12 in favour of the



Champion Laxman Rawat (left) and runner-up Aditya Mehta, both of India Oil pose with their respective trophies of the National Sports Club of India (NSCI) organised Rs 13 lakh prize-money 'Baulkline' NSCI All India Snooker Open 2023, at the NSCI billiards hall

latter. Rawat who was in good nick was unfortunate to narrowly miss on constructing the maximum on the eighth frame. He miscued when he attempted to pot a not easy last 15th red and his break terminated at 112 points. Besides the massive effort Rawat's other efforts were 69 (2nd frame), 83 (3rd), 98 (5th), 55 (6th), 46 (12th) and 89 (13th), while Mehta compiled breaks of 48 and 53 (1st), 89 (4th), 60 (9th) and 59 (14th).

A relaxed Rawat was happy to

the match. I easily potted the 14 reds, but actually miscued on the final red and lost a good opportunity to reach the magical break,” he further stated. Rawat was richer by Rs 3 lakh, while Mehta received a cash prize of Rs 1.5 lakh.

Results - Final: Laxman Rawat (PSPB) beat Aditya Mehta (PSPB) 9-6 (0-110(48,53), 74(69)-42, 83(79)-7, 0-89(89), 104(98)-0, 55(55)-87(50), 87-0, 112(112)-0, 28-89(60), 54-62, 69-1, 83(46)-45, 89(89)-24, 20-65(59), 62-12).

Pride of place for Rutva in Willingdon JSW Squash

FPJ NEWS SERVICE / MUMBAI

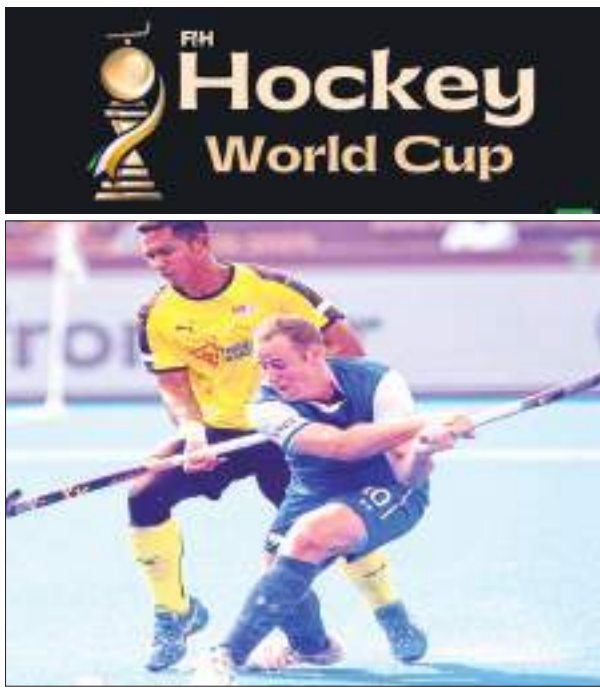
Maharashtra's Rutva Samant has been given pride of place in the Boys Under-19 age category in the 4 Star Willingdon JSW Junior Open Squash Tournament, which will be played at the Willingdon Sports Club from January 19 to 22, 2023.

In excess of 300 leading squash players, representing 13 States, will feature in this event, being promoted by Sport-sXL, under the aegis of SRFI and MSRA. Rutva is ranked No. 6 in the country and has been performing consistently in tournaments the past year, positioning himself in the top 3 at the last few tournaments.

The other players from the State who have been seeded and are fancied to go the distance are Akanksha Gupta, top seed in the Girls U-15, Aaashi Shah, top seed in the Girls U-11 and Vivaan Bhatia, second seed among the Boys U-17. Akanksha is ranked No. 3 in the country, while Vivaan Bhatia is ranked India No. 6. Vivaan is the winner of the Jodhpur Junior Open and the Sanjay Gupta Memorial Open, as well as the recently concluded Scottish Junior Open.

The other players of note in the event are Boys U-17 top seed Avalokit Singh from Rajasthan; boys U-15 top seed Yusha Nafees from UP; boys U-11 top seed, Kiaan Kanade from Gujarat; boys U-13 top seed Shreshth Iyer from Karnataka and Girls U-13 top seed Aroma from UP.

Malaysia earn hard-fought 3-2 win over Chile



ANI / ROURKELA

Malaysia managed to keep its hopes of further progress in the ongoing FIH Men's Hockey World Cup alive after a fighting 3-2 win over Chile in their Pool C match at the Birs Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela on Monday.

With this win, Malaysia climbed to third in their

pool and can advance further in the tournament if they do well in the cross-overs. Chile, on the other hand, is at the bottom of the table with zero points and no win in two matches.

In the first quarter, the Malaysian Firhan Ashari tried to attack, but missed the goal by inches as the ball went flying into the stands. Malaysia almost scored minutes later after

France registers first World Cup win, beats South Africa 2-1

In the Hockey World Cup, the third match was played between France vs South Africa. There was a tough fight between both the teams in this match. Till the first half, there was a 1-1 goal draw between the two but in the end, France won the match 2-1. In the fourth quarter, France took the lead through a penalty corner. This was France's first win in World Cup 2023. France controlled the ball from the start and soon got their first penalty corner. Victor Charlet of France converted the penalty. Shortly after this, South Africa also demanded a penalty and after the video referral, the African team got a penalty, which they converted into a goal.

the ball went breezed past goalkeeper Adrian Henriquez but Vicente Goni made a timely intervention to ward off the threat. Sumantri received the 'Player of the Match' award for his match-winning goal for Malaysia.

AUSTRALIA OPEN

Nadal wins hard-fought battle against Draper

FIANS / MELBOURNE

The 22-time Grand Slam champion, Spain's Rafael Nadal won the Australian Open first-round match against Britain's Jack Draper to kickstart his title defence here at Rod Laver Arena on Monday.

The Spaniard registered a 7-5, 2-6, 6-4, 6-1 victory over the 21-year-old Draper to

Swiatek crosses Niemeier hurdle

World No.1 Iga Swiatek of Poland began campaign with a hard-fought 6-4, 7-5 win over Germany's Jule Niemeier.

Swiatek will face Colombia's Camila Osorio in the second round on Wednesday. A semifinalist in Melbourne last year, Swiatek worked hard in her opener. The 21-year-old made clear before the tournament she was not taking Niemeier lightly, and the German once again proved to be a tough matchup for the World No.1.



earn his first win of the 2023 season.

Playing for a record-extending 23rd Grand Slam singles titles, Nadal is seeking his third Australian Open Trophy. He will meet American Mackenzie McDonald, who won 7-6(5), 7-6(1), 1-6, 6-7(10), 6-4 against countryman Brandon Nakashima, in the second round on Wednesday.

Tsitsipas kick-starts No 1 bid with comfortable first-round win

Stefanos Tsitsipas is playing for a double prize at the Australian Open. The Greek started his campaign like a man on a mission on Monday at Melbourne Park, where he eased past Quentin Halys 6-3, 6-4, 7-6(6) to reach the Australian Open second round.

The 24-year-old Tsitsipas, who reached the semifinals at the opening Grand Slam of the season in 2019, 2021, and 2022, is chasing his maiden major crown. Should the third seed go all the way in Melbourne, he would also overtake the injured Carlos Alcaraz to become No. 1 in the ATP Rankings for the first time. He will meet home wild card Rinky Hijikata, who battled back to beat Yannick Hanfmann 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(5), 6-3, in the second round.



Sinner downs Kyle Edmund; Shang Juncheng makes history with win

Jannik Sinner made a stunning start with a win against Kyle Edmund to open Monday's play in Melbourne here at John Cain Arena. The 15th-seeded Italian ran away with a 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 win against Edmund. Next up for Sinner is either Tomas Martin Etcheverry or Gregoire Barrere.

Elsewhere, Shang Juncheng made history for China on Monday in his Grand Slam debut, as the Chinese star became the first man from the Asian nation to win an Australian Open match in the Open Era. In a 6-2, 6-4, 6-7(2), 7-5 triumph against Germany's Oscar Otte, the 17-year-old qualifier used his attacking game to control play in Melbourne.

Netherlands down New Zealand 4-0

Three-time champions Netherlands continued their good run at the ongoing FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in Odisha as they defeated New Zealand 4-0 with Brinkman Thierry scoring two goals in a Pool C match at the Birs Munda International Hockey Stadium here on Monday.

With this victory, the Netherlands are at the top of their pool with six points with two wins in two games and look set for a direct quarterfinal qualification. On the other hand, the Black Sticks are in the second position in the table, with three points and one win in two games. The Netherlands kept an aggressive pace in the match. They got off to a good start as skipper Brinkman scored in the second minute to give his side



an early lead. A pass came from Tjep Hoedemakers near the circle and there was little New Zealand defenders could do to stop him.

New Zealand also got themselves some chances including a penalty corner in the fourth minute and a strike from Joseph Morrison, but both did not lead to goals. The Dutch seemed to dominate the proceedings.

AUSTRALIA HOLD ARGENTINA 3-3

Blake Govers' last-gasp goal has helped Australia hold Argentina to a 3-3 draw. In a thrilling encounter, Australia and Argentina did not budge.

Determined Gaglani rallies to down Shah

FPJ NEWS SERVICE / MUMBAI

Kushal Gaglani played with plenty of determination to overcome Vivek Shah 3-2 in a first round qualifying match of the Rs 12.1 lakh prize-money CCI Snooker Classic 2023, organised by the Cricket Club of India, and played at the CCI's Sir Wilson Jones billiards hall on Monday. In a match of fluctuating fortunes, Gaglani was twice in arrears, but he fought back and won the last two frames to snatch a 49-58, 51-27, 40-82, 57-18 and 48-42 victory. In another match, Simranjeet Singh defeated Alam Shaikh 3-1 (62-33, 63-20, 33-42, and 57-37), while Alex Rego proved too good for Amanullah Shaikh and charged to a 3-1 (65-55, 67-30, 57-68, and 61-54) win. Results: Alex Rego bt Amanullah Shaikh (AP) 3-1 (65-55, 67-30, 57-68, 61-54); Kushal Gaglani bt Vivek Shah 3-2 (49-58, 51-27, 40-82, 57-18, 48-42); Simranjeet Singh bt Alam Shaikh 3-1 (62-33, 63-20, 33-42, 57-37).

MUMBAI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION LEAGUE Patil slams all 4 in Atlanta's victory

FPJ NEWS SERVICE / MUMBAI

Prolific goal-scorer Himanshu Patil was in prime scoring form and struck all the four goals as Atlanta FC defeated D.K. Pharma 4-2 in an Elite Division match of the Mumbai Football Association (MFA) League and played at the Neville D'Souza ground, Bandra on Monday.

In another match, Sellenbrich FC riding on the twin strikes from Kartik Bele got the better of India Rush SC 5-3 to collect all the three points. Bele's teammates Suyash Ghadi, Ricky Bagade and Harshit Kapoor contributed with the other three goals, while India Rush scored through Saurabh Ramteke, Shahbaz Khan and Sujal Ghanekar. In Second Div play-off matches, Waves FC blanked United Villagers WA 3-0 and Future Stars FC 'B' prevailed over Navanagar SC 2-0.

U19 WOMEN'S T20 WC

Shafali, Shweta star in India's massive 112-run victory over UAE

FIANS / BENONI

Captain Shafali Verma hit a blistering 78 while her opening partner Shweta Sehrawat slammed 74 not out and carried her bat through the innings to set up India's massive 122-run victory over UAE in their second Group D match of ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup at the Willowmoore Park on Monday.

Led by Shafali and Shweta's entertaining knock with the bat, apart from Richa Ghosh's quickfire 49, India managed to post a mammoth 219/3 in their 20 overs, the first time a team in the tournament posted a 200+ score. In reply, the Indian bowlers, led by pacers Titas Sadhu and Shabnam M.D., were brilliant upfront, picking a wicket each and were immaculate with their line and length to defend the huge total with great ease, restricting UAE to just 97/5 in their 20 overs.

Left-arm spinner Mannat Kashyap and leg-spinner Parshavi Chopra also picked a wicket each as India now sits on top of the Group D points table with



two wins in as many matches. Their final match of Group D will be against Scotland on Wednesday.

Brief scores: India 219/3 in 20 overs (Shafali Verma 78, Shweta Sehrawat 74 not out, Samaira Dhanidharka 1-33, Indhuja Nandakumar 1-47) beat UAE 97/5 in 20 overs (Lavanya Keny 24, Titas Sadhu 1-14, Parshavi Chopra 1-13) by 122 runs

New sales process at Byju's to curb misuse

Edtech firm Byju's has rolled out a 4-tier tech-driven internal sales process replacing its existing direct sales process to check mis-selling, the company said on Monday. The development comes against the backdrop of summons issued to the

company by child rights body National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) over allegations that the edtech firm is indulging in malpractices to lure parents and children to buy their courses. Under the new sales model,

interested customers having minimum monthly income of Rs 25,000 will be eligible to buy courses from BYJU's and will need to give consent for placing the order and before closing of the sales.

- PTI

State forms inter-departmental panel for NEP 2020 implementation

SANJAY JOG / Mumbai

The Maharashtra Government on Monday formed an 11-member inter-departmental committee for state-level coordination, control and guidance in the effective implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The committee is headed by the additional chief secretary of the school education department and includes officers from various departments.

School Education and Sports department Joint Secretary Imtiyaz Kazi in a Government resolution released on Monday said that the department wise

officers appointed on the committee will focus on coordination among various departments for the effective implementation of the NEC 2020. They will submit periodic reports to the committee's head.

"For the effective implementation of the New Education Policy-2020 in the state, the cooperation of the school education department along with other departments is important.

"Along with the school education department, some schools in the state are under the control of other departments, so for the effective implementation of this policy, it is also necessary to coordinate the department and



REPRESENTATIVE PIC/PIXABAY

the other departments," reads the Government resolution.

A senior School Education and Sports department officer told The Free

Press Journal, "The state Government has already taken a decision to implement the policy which recommends four year undergraduate degrees with multiple entry and exit options.

"The objective is to improve gross enrollment in higher education to 50% by the year 2035. Another facility of taking a break from the ongoing study for pursuing any different course has been provided. Several changes have been made in the existing education policy, which includes Graded Academic, Administrative and Financial Autonomy. Besides, e-courses in regional languages are being

promoted. The Government plans to develop virtual laboratories. A National Educational Technical Forum (NETF) will be developed for facilitating science education."

In the NEP 2020, the structure of 10+2+3 has been changed to 5+3+3+4. It covers certification from foundation level to graduate level. The first five years include three years of practical examination and 1st and 2nd grade and in this level the examination is given based on games, research and work. With the aim of enabling the students to carry out comprehensive reading up to grade 3 proficiency.

Odisha students make giant hockey sticks with scrap

PTI / Berhampur (Odisha)

Students of a government Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Odisha's Berhampur have made a pair of giant 43-foot-long hockey sticks using scrap iron.

The sculpture, with the theme 'waste to wealth' was inaugurated by Berhampur MP Chandra Sekhar Sahu on the occasion of the ongoing Men's Hockey World Cup in the state.

The giant hockey sticks, painted in tricolours and fitted with lights for illumination, have been installed at the open-air scrap sculpture park on the ITI campus.

Around 400 students of various trades, including fit-

The scraps were collected from the institute's workshop and some garages in the town

ters, welders, electricians and painters, took around a fortnight to erect the sculpture using over four tonnes of scrap iron, ITI principal Rajat Panigrahy said.

The scraps were collected from the institute's workshop and some garages in the town.

Sahu said even after the end of the world cup, the sculpture will continue to inspire generations to play the national game.

UGC extends deadline for foreign uni suggestions

STAFF REPORTER / Mumbai

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has extended the date for comments, suggestions, and feedback for the body's draft regulations on campuses of foreign universities in India till Feb 3, 2023.

The stakeholders can send the suggestions and comments to ugcforeigncollaboration@gmail.com.

"In view of the requests being received from the stakeholders to extend the last date for submitting comments/suggestions/feedback on the aforesaid draft Regulations, the last date for receiving comments on the draft regulations is hereby extended to 3rd February 2023," read the notification by UGC.

India has witnessed an outflow of 28-30 billion dollars with more than 6 lakh Indian students now studying abroad which is why UGC is trying to bring foreign varieties to the country so a huge proportion of the young talent remains in India while also pursuing cheaper education.

Foreign universities that factor into the top 500 (overall or subject-wise) of international university rankings will be welcome to set up their campuses in India. Those universities that do not participate in these rankings but have a distinguished reputation due to their research and publications will also be allowed to open up a campus after an approval from UGC. The foreign varsities will

be at the liberty to determine their syllabus and admission processes, as long as the quality of the knowledge imparted does not differ from that of their parent campus, said UGC Chief Jagadeesh Kumar. The qualifications bestowed by foreign varsities in India will also be at par with their counterparts abroad. It will be mandatory for these colleges to impart education in a physical classroom as online teaching or distance learning will not be permitted under this setup, as reported by the **Free Press Journal**.

The reaction to the proposed norms have received mixed reactions from professors, counsellors, academicians who see both positives and negatives with UGC's intentions.

Panjab Univ VC Raj Kumar resigns

PTI / Chandigarh

Panjab University Vice Chancellor Raj Kumar has resigned from the post, official sources said on Monday.

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, who is also the Chancellor of the university, has accepted his resignation, the sources said. The reason for his resignation was not immediately known.

Dhankhar has given the charge of the VC to Renu Vig, Dean University Instructions (DUI) till further orders. Kumar had joined as VC of Panjab University in 2018. Before joining the University, Kumar was the Director, Dean and Head of Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

JEE Main eligibility not so relaxed after all, say students

ADITI ALURKAR / Mumbai

Days after the Ministry of Higher Education decided that those who emerge in the top 20 percentile of their respective state boards can appear for the JEE counseling process, students believe that the eligibility relaxations are still not enough while demanding a lower cutoff.

Candidates appearing for JEE Main 2023 observed the extreme disparities between the top scores of various state boards over the past few years and believe that the proposed screening system is unfit for a nationwide entrance exam.

"The top 20 percentile scores for Maharashtra state board went over 75% in the previous years, for ICSE it might even be 90%, whereas the Bihar state board has 65% over the past few years. This means that

do so, then they will be screened as per the top twenty percentiles of the CBSE or the national board, explained Advocate Anubha Srivastava, President of India Wide Parents Association Lawyer.

"The top twenty percentiles for the CBSE board have seldom fallen below 85%, reversing the purpose of these relaxations. These benefits will only be available for some students to reap, the others won't be able to get into an IIT or an NIT even if they top the JEE Main," said Anubha.

The National Testing Agency announced the eligibility criteria a month before the January session of JEE Main 2023. These criteria were reinstated for the 2023 exam after a two-year hiatus caused by the covid-19. The students who had dropped out of the JEE Main 2022 coun-



PIC: UNSPLASH

only students from certain states are allowed wiggle room when it comes to the benchmark of 75%," said a class 12 student preparing for JEE Main 2023.

The practicality of this benchmark has also been called into question as several state boards have discontinued the practice of releasing their top twenty percentiles after the class 12 board exams were taken online during COVID.

If state boards choose not to divulge these lists this year as well, then the onus of procuring proof of being in the top twenty percentile from the state will lie upon the students. If these JEE candidates are unable to

selling process to improve their rank by reappearing for the exam now find themselves in a fix.

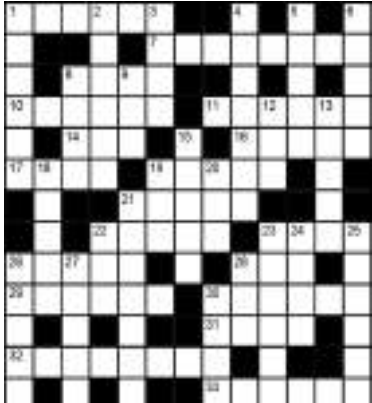
"This would not have been such a problem only if NTA had announced the eligibility a few months before the exam. I focused on my JEE preparation and chose not to reappear for my class 12 boards since I managed to score 74.08%. If Maharashtra board's top twenty percentile is higher than this, then I will have to let go of another year only because of a mere 0.2%," said Chinmay Donghe, a Pune student who intends to take a second shot at JEE Main in 2023.

Crossword # 662

Across

- Spheres or globes (4)
- Bob up (6)
- Chemist's workshop in short (3)
- Heroic tale (4)
- Desire (8)
- Wealthiest (7)
- Journey (6)
- Disregard, overlooked or ignored (9)
- Physics unit (3)
- Ancient Roman household deity (3)
- In time past (3)
- Annoying (9)
- Conviction (6)
- Language of Maharashtra (7)
- Panic merchant (8)
- Canine in Oz (4)
- Pig's dwelling (3)
- Senior citizens of the society, in a way ? (6)
- Taj Mahal city (4)

- Above or done with (4)
- a-brace: things of



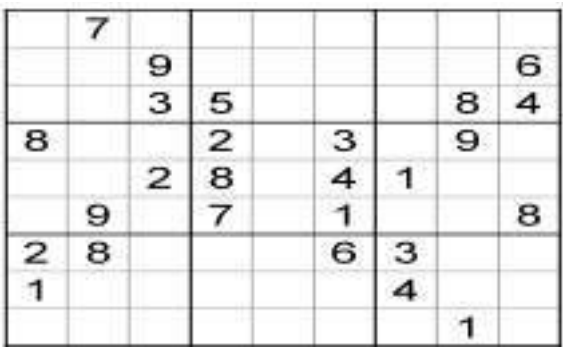
- little value (4)
- on? (3)
- 24 hour periods (4)
- Take ____ : shoot? (3,2)
- A portion of time (6)
- Should (5)
- prefix (3)
- On the ship (6)
- Remorse (6)
- Pests (6)
- Take a ____ : gamble? (3)
- Random Hse. mail (3)
- Scottish musician (5)
- Indian wheat flour (4)
- Offspring (5)
- Chinese secret society (4)
- Girl's name (4)
- Jason's ship (4)
- Audacity (4)
- Least amount (4)
- Musical symbol (4)
- Hollywood actress ____ Adams (3)
- Be a burden or strain

Solution

Across: 1 Orbis, 4 Appaal, 8 Lab, 10 Epic, 13 Yearning, 14 Belcher, 15 Voyage, 17 Neglected, 21 Red, 23 Ago, 26 Vexatious, 27 Belief, 28 Marathi, 32 Alarmist, 34 Torso, 35 Sky, 36 Boydens, 37 Agira.

FPJ - SUDOKU - 67

Level: Hard



WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.



YOUR DAY



ARIES: You will be forced to keep your feet out of the house. Investment in shipping or tourism is indicated. People in fields like fisheries or import-export will be benefited. A cruise or travel for education is indicated. Some people may suffer from sciatica.



TAURUS: Control your communication, as it may affect profits. You may pay insurance premium or education loan instalments. People in fields like consultancy will get success. Students will do well in their studies. You may suffer from muscle pain.



GEMINI: Businessmen will see growth in production. Working people may get promotion. You may invest for business expansion. People in fields like law and banking will get success. You will be able to manage business and family life.



CANCER: Today is the day to connect to your higher soul. You may spend money on court matters. People in fields like law and education will get benefited. You may attend a religious activity. Some people may suffer from muscle pain.



LEO: You will be likely to put others before you. Expenditure is expected on education or home loan payments. People in the field of law and construction will get success. You may have to deal with children's problems. Some people may suffer from muscle pain.



VIRGO: You will be happy in both career and family life. You may spend on business expansion or household items. People in fields like construction and education will do well. Some people may suffer from lower back pain.



LIBRA: You will enjoy commercial stability today. Your communication or presentation today will help your business. People in fields like banking and production will get success. Good news from the maternal family is expected. You may suffer from inflammation.



SCORPIO: Today is the day for meditation or religious rituals. You may spend on children. People in fields like banking and finance trading will be benefited. You will organise a family reunion. Some people may suffer from throat pain.



SAGITTARIUS: Relax and carry out your regular responsibilities today. You may spend on house renovation or education. People in fields like consultancy and law will do well. House renovation is indicated. Some people may suffer from headache or chest pain.



CAPRICORN: Today is the day to keep your work out of your house and travel. You may have to spend money for your spouse. People in fields like tourism and communication will benefit. Some of you may suffer from ear problems.



AQUARIUS: Today is a day of economic growth. Expect expenditure for family needs. People in fields like banking, consultancy and education will be successful. Single people are likely to find their match. Some people may suffer from throat problems or indigestion.



PISCES: Get involved personally in your work and don't depend on others. You may invest in business expansion. People in fields like banking and production will be benefited. You will take part in household activities. You may suffer because of weight gain.

By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar

Centre's fund not enough for WB mid-day meal, says Trinamool

IANIS / Kolkata

At a time when the Union ministry of education has decided to send an inspection team to West Bengal to review the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme in the state, Trinamool Congress has raised a counter-question on whether the Central fund allocation per student under the scheme is sufficient to provide nutritious food.

The state government has chalked out an estimated per-student cost for a mid-day meal for a school which on average has 100 students.

As per that estimate with a school with 100 students, the average daily cost

for running that scheme is Rs 595, which includes the price of cooking items, spices, fuel and the payment to cook. However, the average daily fund allotment under the scheme for such a school with 100 students is Rs 545. "So often the school authorities are forced to compromise on quality and at times even quantity of food to stay within the prescribed allotment. We cannot expect the teachers or headmasters to pay the excess amount from their own pockets," a state education department official said.

On an average, he added, each student in a meal is allotted 50 grams of rice, eight grams of pulses and 100 grams of vegetables. "Now add the cost of spices,

fuel which is mainly cooking gas and the payment to the cook. Often there are demands for the addition of protein food like eggs or fish. With this paltry allotment when it is difficult to meet the bare minimum adding more nutrition is out of the question," he added.

According to senior Trinamool Congress legislator Tapas Roy, the decision to send the Central field inspection team without increasing the fund allotment under the mid-day meal scheme is prompted by narrow political motives. "First the Union government should send such inspection teams to the BJP-ruled states instead of just isolating West Bengal," Roy said.

'TRAGEDY PARADOX'

Sad music helps when you're down; IIT researchers find out why

PTI / New Delhi

Why does listening to sad music help in times of sadness? Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi are looking for answers behind the "tragedy paradox".

According to IIT Mandi Director Laxmidhar Behera, music has a powerful ability to affect our emotions, and it's no secret that people often turn to music to boost their mood or to help them through a tough time.

"But why do we sometimes seek out sad music, even when we try to minimise sadness in our lives? Despite our natural inclination to avoid sadness, this particular emotion has a strange and enduring appeal when expressed through art. This so-called 'tragedy paradox' has puzzled philosophers for centuries. It has been postulated that the tragedy paradox arises simply because of the aesthetic appeal of gloomy tunes," Behera said.

"Is it proof that a thing of beauty is a joy forever, or is there a more profound, bio-

logical reason for sad music making us feel better? We wanted to find out how the brain reacts when listening to sad music after having an adverse experience or memory. For this, the researchers used electroencephalography (EEG) to measure the brain activity of 20 people under different conditions. They focused on brain regions involved in emotion and memory processing," he added.

The 20 participants had no musical training to avoid pre-programmed reactions to the selected music. EEG was measured under three states. In the first, EEG was recorded with no input - the baseline. In the second state, EEG was recorded as the participants recalled a sad experience and wrote about it - the Sad Autobiographical Recall or SAR condition. In the third, EEG was measured when they were made to listen to an Indian classical raga "Mishra Jogiya". The music was selected by a panel of five music experts and is known for invoking "Karuna Rasa" (sad emotions).

EEG measures the electrical activity of the brain, com-



REPRESENTATIVE PIC: UNSPLASH

monly known as brain waves. It is known that brain waves are of five types — alpha, beta, gamma, delta and theta — representing a different mood and state of mind. Within the current context, alpha is, for example, associated with cognitive information processing, while gamma is associated with episodic memory processing.

The researchers found that

when recalling a sad experience, there is enhanced gamma wave activity, while listening to sad music leads to increased alpha brain activity.

"Listening to Mishra Jogiya Raga (sad music) appears to promote processing of emotions and memories in the brain, through a three-channel framework involving the alpha brain wave. These mechanisms include in-

creased global and local connectivity in brain areas involved in emotion and memory processing, and increased alertness," Behera said.

The finding that has been published in the journal "PLOS One" shows that the brain's activity when listening to sad music is unique and distinct from both the SAR state and the baseline resting state. The coping

mechanism of sad music arises from better processing of emotions and memories under the alpha state.

"The coping effects are not simply due to the aesthetic appeal of the music, as previously believed, but an inherent property of 'sad music,'" said Ashish Gupta, a PhD scholar.

While it is clear that music can affect our emotions and cognitive abilities, the scientists believe that more research is needed to understand the relationship between sad music and the brain entirely.

While EEG studies have provided insights into the brain response to sad music in terms of brain cortical activity, the researchers also intend to study the deeper sub-cortical areas using fMRI scans in the future. "The current study is a part of ongoing work investigating the effect of Indian ragas on human cognitive functions. This work has significance for music therapy, music training, etc. where music is used or can be used as a therapeutic tool," said Braj Bhushan, Professor, IIT Mandi.

ANWESHA BARARI

Best potted plants for a balcony garden

Potted plants are both easy to maintain and convenient for a small indoor garden. Most of us live in apartments these days. There is no extra space in an apartment for gardening. The only space you can utilise in an apartment for a garden is the balcony. That is why balcony gardens are greatly in vogue these days. Due to the constraints of space, potted plants are best suited for balcony gardens. The balcony is a unique location for a garden. It is neither totally indoor or outdoor. It gets sunlight at some times of the day, but it's mostly indirect sunlight. But shade loving plants are ideal for the balcony garden. Keeping shade loving potted plants in your balcony can make a green spot in your balcony. In this way, the mud and dirt from the garden does not come into the house but you still have a lovely garden to be proud of. Potted plants require less space and are easy to maintain, therefore, gardening effort reduces a great deal. Here are some of the potted plants best suited for your balcony garden.

■ **Basil:** Basil is a holy plant in India and almost every Hindu household has a potted basil in their courtyard. Basil is a quick growing plant but if it is pruned properly, its growth can be restricted to the appropriate limit of a potted plant.

■ **Boston fern:** The Boston fern is a miniature variety of fern. This variety of fern grows like a shrub and is ideally suited for a potted plant.

■ **Rose:** Roses are versatile plants that can grow both indoors and outdoors. Winters are the best time for the blooming of roses. Make sure they get at least a few hours of sunlight every day.

■ **English Ivy:** The English ivy is a fast growing climbing plant. But you can easily plant it in a plastic container and then hang it. The ivy will spread across the walls and add lots of green foliage to your balcony.



■ **Peace lily:** Peace lilies are typically indoor plants. But if you have a very shady spot on your balcony, you can keep your potted peace lily there. Just make sure it is away from direct sunlight all the time.

■ **Spider plant:** Spider plants make great potted plants due to their texture. You can easily keep them in hanging containers or use them as foliage plants in your balcony garden.

■ **Azalea:** Azaleas are flowering bushes. They can grow into very bushy shrubs. However, if they are well pruned, they make great bottled plants. Azaleas can tolerate moderate sunlight.

■ **Coleus:** Coleus is a very attractive looking plant as its leaves are shaded. It comes in shades of red, white and green. Coleus plants do not grow very tall and they are easy to maintain.

■ **Columbine:** Columbine is a plant that has whistle-shaped flowers. They are medium sized shrubs and can be easily planted in containers.

■ **Bamboo:** Bamboo is probably the most versatile plant in the world. It can tolerate harsh sunlight and also sustain in low light. Potted bamboo plants tend to grow tall depending on how much sunlight they get.

SOMYA OJHA

A pimple is something that can pop up at any part of the body, however, when it pops up at sensitive places like eyelids, they can cause a great deal of discomfort and pain. Often caused by clogging up of the oil glands, pimples appearing on the eyelids can be hard to deal with. And, if you've ever suffered from this problem, then you may know that a majority of over-the-counter ointments and creams don't work as effectively as certain home remedies. In case, you're wondering which home remedies can be used for treating an eyelid pimple, commonly known as a sty, then we've got you covered. We've curated a list of age-old, effective home remedies that can help you get rid of an eyelid pimple. These remedies are loaded with anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties that can give you relief from the annoying symptoms of an eyelid pimple. Read on to know more about these remedies here.

Note: If an eyelid pimple causes a lot of discomforts, then it is highly recommended to check with a specialist before trying anything at home.

1 Warm compress

Soak a clean washcloth in hot water. Squeeze the cloth and place it on the affected area. Allow it to stay there for 5 minutes. Use this home remedy at least 3-4 times through the course of the day to get rid of the inflammation and redness.

2 Green tea

Take a green tea bag, dip it into a cup of lukewarm water. After 5 minutes, take out the tea bag and squeeze it to get rid of the dripping water. Once done, place the tea bag onto an eyelid pimple and let it stay there for 5-10 minutes. Use this potent remedy at least twice a day to get desired results.

3 Turmeric

Put a pinch of water to a cup of hot water. Stir and close the lid to get the solution ready. After a few minutes, dip a cotton ball into the solution and press it gently onto the affected area. Gently press the cotton ball onto a pimple for 3-4 minutes before rinsing it off with water.

Eyelid Pimples

Treat them effectively with these home remedies



4 Aloe vera gel

Scoop out the fresh gel of an aloe vera plant. Dip a cotton ball into the gel and gently press it on the troubled area. After 5 minutes, rinse off with water. Repeat the usage of this effective home remedy at least 2-3 times a day for visible results.

5 Castor oil

Dip a Q-tip into castor oil and gently apply it to a pimple on your eyelid. Allow the oil to stay on the affected area for 10-15 minutes before rinsing it off with tepid water. To banish an eyelid pimple, try to use this age-old home remedy at least twice a day.

6 Coriander seeds

Pour 2 cups water into a pot and add a handful of coriander seeds to it. Allow it to boil for 5-10 minutes before removing the pot from the stove. Strain the solution in a bowl and set it under the fan to cool off.

7 Guava leaves

Put a handful of guava leaves in a pot of boiling water. Let the leaves boil for 10-15 minutes before taking the pot off the stove. Allow the homemade solution to cool off for a little while. Once done, soak a clean cloth into the solution and gently place it on the affected area. Try using this remedy at least twice a day to effectively treat an annoying eyelid pimple.

Hypothyroidism and menopause have a connection that you need to know

NEHA GHOSH

What is Menopause

Menopause is a normal change



DR SURABHI SIDDHARTHA
Consultant
Obstetrician &
Gynecologist,
Motherhood
Hospital, Kharghar

Symptoms including weariness, mental dullness, and weight fluctuations are frequent in women over 40. But are they brought on by menopause or a thyroid condition? In order to manage your symptoms and maintain maximum health and wellness, let's discuss what you should know about perimenopause, menopause, your thyroid, and other related topics.

What you need to know about Hypothyroidism

When the thyroid does not produce and release enough thyroid hormone into your circulation, it is known as hypothyroidism. Your metabolism becomes slower as a result. Hypothyroidism, also known as an underactive thyroid, can make you feel exhausted, put on weight, and have trouble with cold weather. Hormone replacement therapy is the primary method of treatment for hypothyroidism. Low thyroid hormone production is a symptom of this illness. Some symptoms of menopause and hypothyroidism are similar. The majority of women in their middle years also have hypothyroidism. Women are going through menopause at this time. Continue reading to find out more about how your thyroid and menopause are related, as well as how hypothyroidism may impact menopausal symptoms and consequences.

typical throughout perimenopause, which is the period before menopause, and menopause. In some women, this may even be the time that hypothyroidism manifests.

Many symptoms of hypothyroidism and menopause are similar. Even if you've had hypothyroidism for some time, the distinction between the two conditions might become hazy as you get older and approach menopause. Hypothyroidism symptoms might be mistaken for menopause-related symptoms. The identical symptoms include:

- Shortened menstrual cycles
- The quantity of bleeding has changed
- Interruption of sleep
- Fatigue
- Mood changes
- Forgetfulness
- Gaining weight
- Arid skin
- Hair fall



Risks and difficulties

The risk of menopause-related disorders might be increased by thyroid issues. For instance, osteoporosis, a disorder in which bone density is decreased, is more likely to occur in women following menopause. The risk of the illness might also be increased by an overactive thyroid. Similar to how menopause raises the risk of cardiovascular disease, thyroid issues similarly raise the risk. Thyroid issues may work together in this way to raise the risk of difficulties during menopause.

Taking Care of Hypothyroidism While in Menopause

Menopause symptoms may get worse if you have hypothyroidism. Therefore, it's crucial to continue hypothyroidism medication during menopause rather than brushing off your symptoms. Elevated cholesterol from untreated thyroid illness may result in atherosclerosis, heart attack, or stroke risk as well as increased cholesterol. Additionally, hypertension brought on by hypothyroidism may result in similar cardiac

problems. Osteoporosis is also a documented result of overusing thyroid hormones. Healthcare professionals are trained to modify thyroid therapy depending on your unique needs, including those that arise after menopause. People using levothyroxine to treat hypothyroidism may notice a shift in their thyroid hormone requirements, often downward, when oestrogen levels decline around menopause.

The symptoms of the menopause and thyroid issues may be identical. HRT and phytoestrogen supplements don't appear to impair healthy thyroid function, but they could make it harder for hypothyroid patients to absorb their thyroxine medicine. Consult your doctor or pharmacist before using any alternative, complementary, or "natural" medications for menopausal symptoms.

NEHA GHOSH

The next time you eat watermelon, don't spit out the seeds. Wondering why? Watermelon seeds are packed with an array of vitamins and minerals. Eating watermelon seeds is considered safe and can actually be good for your overall health. Watermelon is a refreshing fruit with nutritious seeds which when roasted or dried can be eaten as a healthy snack. They consist of healthy fats which are omega 3 fatty acids and omega 6 fatty acids. The seeds are good for your health and the oil extracted from the seeds also works wonders for your skin and hair.



1 Promote heart health Watermelon seeds contain magnesium, an essential mineral that contributes to heart health and regulates blood pressure. The seeds contain a substance called citrulline, which helps to reduce aortic blood pressure. Eating the seeds will lower your bad cholesterol levels and increase good cholesterol levels.

2 Strengthen immunity

Watermelon seeds are packed full of antioxidants which protect your body from the harmful free radicals that cause cell damage, cancer and other diseases. In addition, the magnesium in the seeds play a role in enhancing the immune system according to a study.

3 Improve male fertility

Watermelon seeds contain a good amount of zinc, an important mineral beneficial for the male reproductive system. A study was conducted on the effect of watermelon seed oil on some sex hormones such as progesterone, prolactin, testosterone, estradiol, luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle stimulating hormone (FSH). The results showed that there was a 5 per cent and 10 per cent increase in prolactin, luteinizing hormone, estradiol, and testosterone.

4 Treat diabetes

The antidiabetic effect of watermelon seed extract was studied on diabetic rats. The results of the study found that the methanolic extract of watermelon seeds promoted glucose homeostasis and helped to maintain body weight by improving fasting glucose level, oral glucose tolerance, body weight, food and fluid intake.

5 Aid in weight loss

According to a study conducted in Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences in Bengaluru, Karnataka, the watermelon seed extract has antiobesity effects. Watermelon seeds in medium and high doses were fed to obese rats and the result was reduction in body weight, food intake, serum glucose, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels.

6 Prevent arthritis

Watermelon seeds have a positive effect in preventing arthritis as they contain magnesium, manganese and calcium. The watermelon seed extract in medium and high doses exhibit a significant antiarthritic activity which helped reduce arthritis in rats, as per a noted study.

7 Have anticarcinogenic effect

The tripterenoids and phenolic compounds in the methanolic extract of watermelon seeds have been known to have anticarcinogenic properties. A study found that consuming watermelon seeds showed a significant decrease in stomach ulcers and also lowered acidity.

8 Promote feminine health

Watermelon seeds contain 58 mcg of folate, also known as folic acid or vitamin B9. Folate is an essential vitamin responsible for proper brain function and helps control homocysteine levels. Women of childbearing age require more folic acid as a deficiency of this vitamin is linked to neural tube birth defects.

9 Maintain skin and hair health

Watermelon seeds are an excellent source of unsaturated fatty acids and antioxidants which aid in keeping the skin healthy and slow down skin ageing. It can help treat skin problems like rashes, oedema, etc. Also, watermelon seed oil can help to get rid of dandruff and the protein present in them can strengthen your hair.

AMRITHA K

Crohn's disease: Types, symptoms, causes and treatment

An inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), Crohn's disease causes inflammation of your digestive tract, which can lead to fatigue, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, malnutrition and weight loss. It is a chronic condition and is also termed as ileitis or enteritis. The affected areas in the digestive tract can vary in different people. Crohn's disease usually affects the very last segment of the small intestine, but may also affect other places in the intestinal tract. It is slightly more common in women than men. According to studies, the incidence of Crohn's disease in India is 7 per 100000 population with a male to female ratio of 3.2:1. Read on to know more about the inflammatory bowel disease.

Types of crohn's disease

The inflammatory bowel disease is classified into six types, depending on the location affected by Crohn's disease.

Ileitis: This type of inflammation affects the last part of the small intestine. 30 percent of people with Crohn's disease have ileitis.

Ileocolitis: It is the most common variation of the disease and affects not only the ileum but also the colon. Almost 50 per cent of people with Crohn's disease have ileocolitis.

Jejunocolitis: This affects your jejunum and is rarely reported.

Gastrointestinal Crohn's disease: This variant of the

condition affects the duodenum and your stomach. About 5 percent of people with Crohn's disease have gastroduodenal Crohn's disease.

Crohn's colitis: This variant affects only the colon and is found in about 20 percent of people with Crohn's disease. Like ulcerative colitis, Crohn's colitis also impacts the colon but on a more severe level.

Perianal disease: This type of Crohn's disease can be painful as it causes deep tissue infections, as well as sores and ulcers on the outer skin around the anus. Around 30 percent of people with Crohn's disease have the perianal disease.

Symptoms of crohn's disease

The signs of the condition develop only gradually and can become worse over time. In some extremely rare cases, the symptoms may arise suddenly. Likewise, the symptoms vary depending on the part affected.

The common symptoms of Crohn's disease are as follows:

- Urgent bowel movements
- Blood in your stool
- Diarrhoea
- Weight loss
- Stomach pain
- Abdominal cramps
- Lack of appetite
- Mouth sores
- Some of the other (less common and severe) symptoms are as follows:
- Painful sore near your anus
- Delayed growth or sexual development, in children
- Inflammation of the liver or bile ducts
- Inflammation of skin, eyes and joints
- Arthritis

Causes of crohn's disease

Studies have revealed that one possibly develops Crohn's disease from an abnormal reaction in the immune system. However, there is a lack of clarity as to exactly why the condition develops. Diet and stress were previously thought to be the cause of the condition.

Some of the possible causes of Crohn's disease are as follows:

Immune system: Virus or bacterium may trigger Crohn's disease and when this occurs your immune system tries to fight off the invading microorganism, which in turn attacks the digestive tract cells.

Heredity: The condition is commonly found in people who have family members with the disease. Due to this, it has been ascertained that the genes of an individual may play a role in causing the disease.

Environmental factors: It has also been pointed out that certain environmental factors such as substances from something you've eaten, cigarette smoke and microbes may trigger the condition.



Risk factors of crohn's disease

The factors that pose a risk to the condition are as follows:

- Ethnicity
- Family history
- Smoking habit
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications
- Place of residence
- Age

Complications of crohn's disease

The following complications may arise due to Crohn's disease:

- Ulcers
- Bowel obstruction
- Anal fissure
- Colon cancer
- Medication risks
- Anaemia
- Arthritis
- Liver diseases
- Fistulas
- Malnutrition
- Skin disorders
- Osteoporosis

Treatment for crohn's disease

For each individual, the treatment differs as there is no specific treatment or a specific cure for the condition. The treatment methods aim to manage and control the symptoms of Crohn's disease, especially inflammation.

Nutrition therapy: In some cases, the individual will be recommended a special diet given via a feeding tube. It can also be done by injecting nutrients into a vein.

Surgery: In the case of the other treatment measures not working, the doctor will suggest surgery. Surgery for treating Crohn's is relatively common.

Diet for crohn's disease

Changing your dietary habits may help in managing the symptoms of the condition. However, the diet that may work for one individual may not work for the other.

- Manage the fibre intake
- Control consumption of fatty food
- Limit your dairy consumption
- Consider alternative sources of vitamins and minerals
- Avoid spicy foods, alcohol and caffeine
- Some of the other dietary shifts are, eating small meals, drinking plenty of water and talking to a dietician.

Richard E Grant to host BAFTA Film Awards



Swazi actor Richard E Grant is set to host the 2023 *BAFTA Film Awards* ceremony, the awards body announced Monday morning. The actor joins a panel of newly announced hosts around the event, which includes presenters Alison Hammond and Vick Hope, as well as film critic Ali Plumb. Hammond will host a new *BAFTA Studio*, offering viewers an extra experience during the event featuring interviews and insights. Plumb and Hope will take the reins on the red carpet, reports *Variety*. "I feel hugely privileged to be hosting the EE BAFTAs for the first time and the opportunity to celebrate the very best of the extraordinary range of this year's films," Grant said in a statement accompanying the announcement. — IANS

THE UNIFORM GIRL!

Actress Regina Cassandra reveals how her athletic body helps in getting roles from the defence background



A still from *Jaanbaaz Hindustan Ke*

ROHIT BHATNAGAR

Regina Cassandra, who predominantly works down south, marked her unconventional Hindi screen debut alongside Sonam Kapoor Ahuja in *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga* (2019). In 2022, she was seen in shows like *Rocket Boys*, and *Shoorveer*, and now she is all set to play the role of an IPS officer in her upcoming show, *Jaanbaaz Hindustan Ke*, which is helmed by Srijit Mukherji. In an exclusive chat with *The Free Press Journal*, Regina talks about playing roles in the defence forces and more. Excerpts:

Are you attracted to the uniform roles from the defence?
For the longest time, people kept telling me that I should play the roles of a police officer, sportsperson, athlete, etc. I took things as they came; I never forced myself to do anything. And it so happens in my career that I have been doing such roles off late. But I have to strike a balance between such roles and other kinds of roles.

Go on...
With *Saakini Daakini*, *Shoorveer*, and now *Jaanbaaz...*, a lot of people might think that I am only doing these roles, but I also have *Rocket Boys 2* and another Telugu girl role where I played a normal NRI girl. My choices are varied,

PIC: INSTAGRAM/REGINA CASSANDRA

and that's how I always wanted them to be.

What were your preparations for playing IPS Kavya Iyer?

Firstly, I made sure that I had all the information from the writers, including whom they were basing it on and why. I saw a couple of interviews of Sanjukta Parashar, who is an IPS officer. Srijit sir made me rehearse with every other character in the show, be it Deepika Amin, Chandan Roy, etc. And I am grateful for these rehearsals, as they were of the utmost importance.

Do you believe that the physicality of an artist helps in being approached for certain roles?

I think that's a given. I absolutely agree with it because physicality is part of your appearance. If one stands in civilian clothes as a police officer, you should be able to tell that the person is in the armed forces. I feel physicality is important while casting, which is why actors gain or lose weight for a particular role they are being offered. Appearance also plays a major part in getting into the skin of the character.

Elaborate further...

Whenever I have worn a police uniform, people have liked it. I am also a physically active person in the sense, that I

like doing fight scenes, and taking a gun out. I also wanted to see if I would be able to pull off such characters since I believe that looking athletic and pulling them off in front of the camera are two different things.

Are you a strategist or do you go with the flow when it comes to choosing characters?

It has pretty much been the latter right from the beginning of my career, but it's not that easy to put it this way either. I do pretty well when I am presented with offers and I have to choose. There's a bit of structure to it.

LIVING HER DREAM

Actress Priyanka Dhavale talks about her recent show *Kyunkii Tum Hi Ho* and working with senior actor Amar Upadhyay



A still from the show

LIPIKA VARMA

Priyanka Dhavale, who is known for her television show *Mehndi Hai Rachne Waali*, is currently seen playing the female lead in *Kyunkii Tum Hi Ho* opposite *Kyun ki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* actor Amar Upadhyay. The show is produced by Amar himself.

The romantic drama has become popular among Indian households and Priyanka has earned quite a fan following. The actor recently spoke to *The Free Press Journal* about how she bagged the lead role in the show, her character, and working with Amar Upadhyay for the first time.

"Kavya Sharma is the girl next door. She is simple, naive, and down to earth. She is a believer in destiny. She thinks nothing will go wrong with her because she has always had somebody to support her, like Ayushmann Bhargav played by Harsh Nagar. Her biggest dream is to get married to her dream boy," says Priyanka who bagged the lead role in the show after a couple of auditions.

"My final audition was taken by Amar (Upadhyay) sir himself. I was told that you have to come for the audition, which will be conducted by the director and the D.O.P. There was one more girl with me. We were waiting for the director, and suddenly Amar sir walked in, and I was completely surprised. I knew him as a senior actor. He told me that he would be taking my audition. I felt nervous at that moment. Luckily, the audition went well, and after a few hours, he called me and asked, 'Are you available for a month?' and I said yes. That's when he told me, 'You've been chosen to play Kavya, the show's lead'," she recalls. Priyanka grew up with the dream of

becoming an actor. Working on this show as a lead actor is like a dream come true for her. "I was always passionate about acting. I never had a plan B. It is like a dream come true, and what better way to start than working opposite Amar sir? The concept of the show is great. I'm happy and blessed that I'm getting to play this character every day. With each passing day, I'm getting to learn new things, and it feels amazing," she says.

When asked about her experience of working with Amar she says it's a pleasure working with him. "The experience has been great. After our first mock shoot I asked him (Amar) if he was doing any show and he told me that he is producing *Kyunkii...* and acting as well. I always had that pressure on my shoulders, as he is the producer as well as an actor in the show. I learn a lot of things from him every day," says the actress in conclusion.

Director's Cut

EXPERIMENTING WITH PATHAAN

Director Siddharth Anand talks about how Shah Rukh Khan's break has created excitement for *Pathaan*



CJ DESK

Pathaan, starring Shah Rukh Khan, Deepik Padukone, and John Abraham, is one of the most anticipated films to release this year. Touted as one of the biggest ever action spectacles, the film is even more special as it marks SRK's return to the silver screen with a full-fledged role after four long years.

Director Siddharth Anand, in a video released by the makers, talks about why *Pathaan* has become the most hyped film globally and how SRK's return to the cinemas after four years has added to the humongous buzz that the film is carrying! Siddharth said, "Directing SRK is a responsibility, and it's even greater now because of the break that he took, and that has created immense expectations and excitement with his audience. I'm realising now, as the film nears completion and release, what and how large that fan base is. So yeah, that is an amazing feeling, and it's somewhere exciting because we know that we have hopefully

made a film that they will be happy with and proud of." About the electrifying SRK and Deepika pairing in *Pathaan*, Siddharth said, "Just the fact that SRK and Deepika have done so many films before and fortunately all of them have been really successful. It became a challenge to see how different can they look and so, our team really worked you know intricately to present them in a new way." SRK and Deepika are one



A still from *Pathaan*

of the biggest on-screen pairings in the history of Indian cinema, given their epic blockbusters *Om Shanti Om*, *Chennai Express*, and *Happy New Year*. Siddharth mentioned, "The fact that Deepika is looking different from her films and SRK is looking different from his films, automatically, their pairing will look fresh. So that is the approach we took, and it's amazing. I think the audience is loving it." The movie is all set to hit the silver screen on January 25.

TWITTER TREND OF THE DAY



Adorable B'day Wishes!

Actor Siddharth Malhotra turned a year older yesterday. He is known for his versatility in his choice of roles in each film. He started his acting career in 2012, and since then he has delivered many amazing performances. His fans took to the microblogging site to send him birthday wishes. Here are a few of them:

@kriti_admirer: "Happiest birthday @SidMalhotra. May you have a superb year ahead! God bless you."

@Akkivish55: "Happy Birthday to the most handsome actor in Bollywood @SidMalhotra."

@sidheart stan: "I love his each movie but this is just so different, him as a Nikhil bhardwaj is my forever fav character Happy Birthday Siddharth Malhotra."

@Itsmeiinna: "Happiest Birthday to my *ishq wala love* since 2012 lom! Wishing you all the love, happiness, joy & success."

@loveSidkiara1: "Wishing you a very Happy birthday sid, keep shining. Love you a lot. No matters what we always there to support you & hopefully we get to see u getting married."

@Princess1khushi: "Siddy you deserve everything in this world, May year ahead be as awesome as u are. I just adore you, love everything about you, lots of love always @SidMalhotra" — CJ Desk

Caught on Camera!

Glitterati were snapped as they were out and about in Mumbai



Prachi Desai

Shah Rukh Khan

Tiger Shroff

Hina Khan

Aparshakti Khurana

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