

# THE INDIAN MAIL

ENGLISH DAILY

FRIDAY, 12 January 2024

VOLUME : 14 ISSUE : 135 PAGES : 12 ₹ 4

PUBLISHED FROM HYDERABAD, VIJAYAWADA



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## Ex-Minister Mukesh Goud's son quits BJP in Telangana

Hyderabad, Jan 11 (IANS) : Vikram Goud, son of former state minister Mukesh Goud, resigned from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday. The youth leader hailing from Goshamahal constituency in Hyderabad sent his resignation to BJP state president G. Kishan Reddy. Vikram Goud, who is also an entrepreneur and film producer, was disappointed over lack of recognition in the party.



## People craving for change in Telangana : Kadiyam Srihari

Hyderabad, Jan 11 (IANS) : Former deputy chief minister Kadiyam Srihari today claimed that the people in the State were craving for immediate change in Telangana. Stating that since 1978 till now, there have been various political changes in the State, he said late NTR brought about many reforms, but lost in 1989 assembly elections. He said the same NTR had defeated the Congress in 1994 and added that the Congress was defeated without the status of Opposition party noting that change is natural in politics. **Continued on pg 02**



## Telangana Congress leaders told for victory of majority Lok Sabha seats

Hyderabad, Jan 11 (IANS) : The Congress high command has directed the Telangana leaders to strive hard for winning majority of seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi held a meeting of

party coordinators for the Lok Sabha polls in New Delhi on Thursday. Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar, Jupalli Krishna Rao, Uttam Kumar Reddy, Seethakka and Konda Surekha and MLC Jeevan Reddy participated in the meeting and discussed about strategies to be followed for the upcoming Lok

Sabha polls in Telangana. Speaking to the media, Minister Konda Surekha informed that a meeting of the party coordinators of Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu States was held and it was discussed how to proceed in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. **Continued on pg 02**

## Google vice president meets CM Revanth

Hyderabad, Jan 11 (NSS) : Google vice president Chandrasekar Thota paid a courtesy call on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy at his residence here on Thursday. The Google vice president discussed with the Chief Minister about the investments in Telangana and expressed his company's desire to work together with the government. Chandrasekar told the Chief Minister about the Artificial Intelligence that is transformed every sector and excited to partner to develop a digitization agenda for Telangana in farming, education, health and have deep technology.



## BRS failed to effectively counter Congress false propaganda during Assembly polls : KTR



Hyderabad, Jan 11 (IANS) : BRS working president KT Rama Rao felt that the BRS failed to effectively communicate and publicise about its achievements during the electoral campaign, leading to its defeat in the recent Assembly elections. However, he pointed out that the Congress succeeded in its false propaganda and misinformation campaign, resulting in its victory. Introspecting into the challenges faced by the BRS during the poll campaign during the Lok Sabha election preparatory meeting on Mahabubabad constituency at Telangana Bhavan here on Thursday.



## ECI issues notification for two MLC seats in Telangana

Hyderabad, Jan 11 (IANS) : The Election Commission of India ( ECI) on Thursday issued a notification for the by-election to two MLC seats under the MLA quota in Telangana. Accordingly, the last date for filing nominations is January 18 and scrutiny will be held on January 19.

While the last date for withdrawal of candidatures is on January 22, polling will be held on January 29 from 9 AM to 4 PM. The counting of votes will be begun at 5 PM soon after completing the voting process. The process of election shall be completed on February 1.



## Ahead of Sankranti, HSI urges citizens to report cockfighting events

Hyderabad, Jan 11 (IANS) : Ahead of Sankranti festival, Humane Society International (HSI) India, an animal protection organisation, has urged citizens to report cockfighting. Cockfighting is widely prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu during Sankranti despite the ban and warnings by police. Crores change hands as people bet big on the cockfights,

which were banned in 2018 on the orders of the Supreme Court. In cockfights, two roosters, often fitted with razor-sharp curved blades on their spurs, are forced to fight each other to death. The fight ends with either one or both the roosters dying. The winning rooster inevitably dies from grievous injuries sustained during the fight, the HSI said. **Continued on pg 02**



## Search continues for missing tigers in Tgana forest amid poisoning scare

Hyderabad, Jan 11 (IANS) : Over 100 Forest Department officials and animal trackers continued their search for the three tigers that went missing after consuming poisoned.

## GHMC receives Swachh Survekshan Award

Hyderabad, Jan 11 (IANS) : The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has received the Swachh Survekshan Award for the year 2023. The GHMC received a five-star rating in the All India Clean City category. Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri presented the award to GHMC Commissioner D Ronald Rose at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Thursday. GHMC Additional Commissioner (Sanitation) R Upender Reddy, Project Manager.

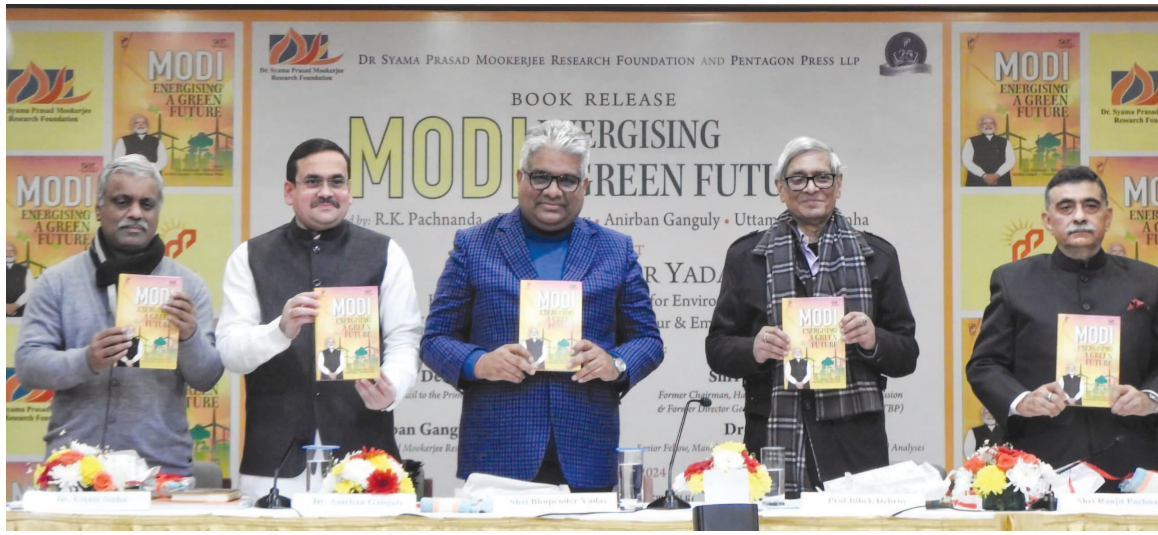


## Sanjay slams Congress on Ayodhya Ram temple issue

Karimnagar, Jan 11 (IANS) : BJP MP Bandi Sanjay has made some controversial remarks on Ram temple in Ayodhya. "This is a historic and religious event that all political parties and every Indian should participate in it," he said while noting that he was not aware as to why the Congress party was behaving in a different manner on the Ayodhya Ram temple issue.







## Bhupender Yadav highlights huge emissions gaps between West and Global South

**New Delhi, 11 Jan (IANS) :** Analysing and addressing the compounding crisis of climate change and energy security, and spotlighting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to drive environment-friendly policies and practices, Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav's book 'Modi: Energising A Green Future' was launched here with a call to the West to scale back its emissions before "preaching and pontificating". The volume, brought out by Pentagon Press, is a curation of 18 chapters by experts from India and abroad. It is edited by R.K. Pachnanda,

Chariman, Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission; Bibek Debroy, Chairman, PM's Economic Advisory Council; Anirban Ganguly, Director, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation; and Uttam Kumar Sinha, Senior Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, and leading commentator on trans-boundary water issues and climate change. This book is yet another volume from Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation brought out by the quartet. Yadav, who's also the Union Minister for Labour and Employment, said that the over the last 300 years, "development" across nations has been propelled

by the exploitation of energy sources, and consequently, the earth has gotten worryingly warmer. "The West's model of development is anthropocentric," he said, adding that it is in urgent need to be balanced with bio-centric development. Referring to the world's first-ever conference on the environment, namely, the 1972 Stockholm Conference, Yadav said it was only after the 1970s that an "ecological sense" developed on a much wider scale, and this essentially meant moving back to Eastern philosophy: "We protect nature, nature protects us."



## SC dismisses plea against Delhi prison rules capping number of visits to inmates

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a plea filed against the 2018 Delhi Prison Rules fixing a cap on the number of visits to an inmate by family members, relatives, friends and legal advisers. Terming the issue raised as a policy matter, a bench of Justices Bela M. Trivedi and Pankaj Mishra said that it was not inclined to interfere with the order of the Delhi High Court passed in February last year. In its order, the High Court had said that capping the total number of visits to two times a week cannot be said to be completely arbitrary. "In matters of policy, the Courts do not substitute its own conclusion with the one arrived at by the Government merely because another view is possible. Therefore, this Court is

not inclined to pass any order issuing writ of mandamus," had said a bench of then Chief Justice S.C. Sharma and Subramonium Prasad. However, the High Court had asked the PIL petitioners -- Jai A. Dehadrai and Sidharth Arora -- to give a representation to the government of NCT of Delhi providing their suggestions. The PIL had prayed for amendment of prison Rules to include interview with legal advisers be open from Monday to Friday for an appropriate allotted time with no cap on interviews per week. The petitioners had contended that limiting the number of visits twice a week is violative of Article 21 of the Constitution of India inasmuch as it limits the right of an undertrial to have adequate resources to legal representation.

## UP transgender community elated over Ram temple opening

**Ayodhya, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The mood in the transgender community in Uttar Pradesh is upbeat ahead of opening of Ram temple in Ayodhya. 'Gaddipati' and the President of the Kinnar Samaj in Ayodhya district, Pinky Mishra, said it was this community that cradled Shri Ram in their arms, played the dholak-majira to celebrate, offered blessings, and accepted the 'neg' (offering). This 'neg', declined by many despite King Dasharatha's countless requests, was embraced by the community. Pinky added: "When Lord Shri Ram returned from exile, the community expressed their heartfelt devotion, sharing with him, 'Lord, we remained away from Ayodhya, patiently awaiting your return, engaging in meditation, worship."



## Makki ka achar is the new favourite of cattle rearers in Punjab

**Bathinda (Punjab), Jan 11 (IANS) :** Makki ka achar is emerging as an alternative fodder to meet the nutritional requirements of cattle in Punjab. Farmers cut the green maize crop to ferment it into this special feed, which is not only good for their animals' health but also easy on their own pockets. In Punjab, maize is sown mainly in Hoshiarpur, Rupnagar, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Patiala, Ludhiana, SAS Nagar and Fatehgarh Sahib districts. In recent years, farmers of Bathinda in Malwa region, Mansa, Barnala, Ferozpur, Moga, Muktsar, Sangrur and Fazilka districts have taken it up. "Silage is made using maize in

milk-forming stage. This keeps all the nutritious elements of green fodder intact. Besides securing animal health, silage increases milk yield. Not just that, the milk produced contains more fat. All these factors make silage increasingly popular," Dr Rajdeep Singh, Deputy Director, Department of Animal Husbandry, Bathinda, tells 101Reporters. Farmer Mewa Singh (35) from Burj Mansa village in Bathinda district sowed maize in his four bighas of land the last two years to tide over poor wheat yield. "I sow maize only to make silage. I have been feeding straw and silage to my animals for two years. There is no need to purchase wheat flour, animal feed and grains for them," he attests. Nirmal Singh (27) from Chhoti Baho tells 101Reporters that he had to spend Rs 350 per day on a

milch animal to buy wheat, oil cake, green fodder and straw. All that has changed because he now feeds only oil cake and silage. "Around Rs 10,000 is spent on making silage per acre, which includes employing a machine to sow maize, diesel for tractor, fertiliser, pesticides, labour charges, harvest charges of maize chopper and rent for the machine that grinds maize into fodder. Yet, silage costs us only Rs 2 per kg." Dr Hasan Singh, Chief Agriculture Officer, Bathinda, tells 101Reporters that farmers in Malwa belt did not grow maize earlier. "At present, they feed silage to their animals and sell the rest to landless cattle herders. Selling standing maize crops to silage-making entrepreneurs is another source of income." Farmers sell silage for Rs 400 per quintal, while facto-



ries sell for Rs 600 per bale. By selling standing crops to entrepreneurs, Rs 45,000 to 50,000 per acre can be obtained. "Silage has been prepared in Punjab for many years, but farmers started sowing maize in large tracts only in the last two to three

years after adverse weather affected wheat crop and fanned shortage of traditional fodder. In 2022, maize was sown in about 8,000 hectares in Bathinda district; it was 10,000 hectares last year. Now farmers in all districts of Malwa region have started sow-

ing it," he details. "We sow maize when the fields remain empty from mid-April to July after harvesting rabi crop (November to early April)," informs Bhagwant Singh from Dalel Singh Wala in Mansa district.



## Mayawati can ask BJP Govt to pull down the bridge : Akhilesh

**Lucknow, Jan 11 (IANS) :** After Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) President Mayawati alleged a security threat due to the presence of a bridge near her party's state unit office on Mall Avenue in Lucknow, Samajwadi Party (SP) chief

Akhilesh Yadav asked her to get the government to bulldoze the bridge. The bridge was built during Yadav's tenure as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister. "If she has a security threat, then she should write a letter to the BJP Government," Akhilesh told re-

porters on the sidelines of a party event. Justifying construction of the bridge, he said, "The bridge was built to rid the area of traffic snarls and ensure the smooth flow of vehicles for the convenience of people." To another question, Akhilesh said that there was never any discussion about bringing the BSP into the INDIA bloc. "Had there ever been any such discussion, then I would have known it," he said. Without taking names, Akhilesh hinted that the BJP was trying to weaken the bloc in many ways. Asked about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's forthcoming 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra', Akhilesh said: "The yatra is not for the alliance. It is merely a Congress yatra. Had seat-sharing been decided before the yatra, then all alliance partners, too, would have participated in it."

## Kerala HC says witness box for Pocco case victims worse than a kennel

**Kochi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The Kerala High Court expressed its deep displeasure over the kennel-like witness boxes where minor victims of sexual offences depose in cases tried under the Pocco Act. The Court of Justice Sophy Thomas made the observations while considering a list of regular bail applications, several of which had been moved by people accused under the

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocco) Act. "In Pocco courts, there is a box in which children have to testify. It is meant for the victim and it is just like a kennel. Children would be scared just to enter it. Asking children to go into that cage would itself be very traumatising," said Justice Thomas. She recalled that once when she was at a Pocco court.



## Stop going to temples that don't let you in, says CM Siddaramaiah

**Bengaluru, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said that people should stop going to those temples which don't allow them inside. Speaking at a book release programme organised by Savita Samaj at Gandhi Bhavan in Bengaluru, Siddaramaiah said, "Social reformer from Kerala Narayana Guru had asked people to stop going to temples where they are not allowed. You build your own temple and start worshipping. You should follow this. "Until the end, I will carry forward the politics of self-respect and social justice.

## OPINIONmail

INDIA AND PAKISTAN HAVE  
TAKEN RIGHT DECISION IN LATEST  
TALKS ON NUCLEAR FACILITIES

India and Pakistan are nuclear-weapon countries engaged in a troubled relationship. That is a cause of concern for the populace and leadership of both the countries. The moot point is whether the duo can live side by side in some safety and not the technological achievement both have reached to arm themselves thus. Of late, the 33rd consecutive exchange of the list of nuclear installations is a step in the right direction. It would be too early to say that this is an all clear sign to the citizens of both the countries.

But together with the nuclear installations' locations, the exchange of prisoners and fishermen is a pointer to a thaw. It is a testament to the endurance of the diplomatic protocol established more than three decades ago. Indo-Pak relations has had many highs and lows. The old timers will recall a teary eyed Pakistani President Ayub Khan lending his shoulder to the cortege of Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri who passed away after inking the treaty in Tashkent ending the hostilities 1965 war between the two countries. The Lahore bus journey with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on board was another attempt to usher in peace.

But the initiative of Ayub Khan floundered when his successor launched Operation Searchlight to stifle the people's verdict in the then East Pakistan only to make way for the creation of Bangladesh with Indian military cooperation. Kargil stopped the endeavour of peace process of the Lahore bus trip in its tracks. The recent exchange marks a shared realisation of the catastrophic consequences that a nuclear conflict may unleash. It is rooted in the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities which was arrived at in 1988. Both countries prefer maintaining a studied silence in respect of the details of the nuclear facilities on their soil. What is commendable about the exchange is the degree of transparency achieved over a critical area. Of course, differences on broader geopolitical challenges remain.

But it is indeed a go ahead signal fostering dialogue on nuclear related concerns. The exchange of civilian prisoners and fishermen twice a year adds a human dimension to the matter. Grievances will arise and will be addressed but the human factor in the exchange of citizens of both the countries lends the issue a soft touch.

Individuals were caught in the cross current and their rescue will add to the reservoirs of goodwill for each other to a considerable extent. It is beyond the grand narrative of the statecraft.

It highlights the concern of both the countries who seek to sink their differences. Indeed it reflects a concern for humanitarian matters, the absence of formal dialogue between the two countries post 2008 Mumbai attack notwithstanding.

The high level talks may have come to a halt for now. But back-channel contacts and intelligence driven interactions have done a commendable job. Indeed a pivotal role has been essayed. One has to make haste slowly to carry it forward now. The exchange of lists is a glimmer of hope. It comes in the wake of terrorist attacks and a complex historical backdrop.

India and Pakistan are navigating a complex route. It requires delicate diplomatic handling. Can peace prevail over confrontation? The answer lies in picking up a tortuous path in a tumultuous relationship. A small but crucial step has been taken. Diplomatic threads must endure to make the endeavour for peace a lasting initiative. Both countries must be aware that hostilities are not quite affordable. Let both the nations strive to find out ways for living as good neighbours without constant worries.

By Tirthankar Mitra

EDITORIAL  
the indian mail

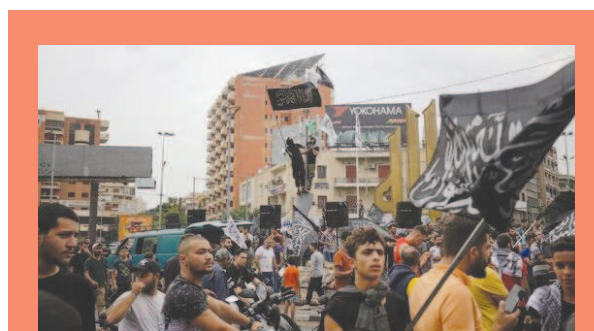
## URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT RISES SHARPLY IN DECEMBER 2023

As India heads towards General Election 2024, sharp rise in urban unemployment in December 2023 exposes again the falsehood of government's narrative and propaganda regarding employment generation under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi. Though under the new narrative on the employment front on the eve of Lok Sabha Election 2024, it is being said to convince the people that Modi government have been serious in providing jobs to the people, the data for December

2023 released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) reveals that urban employment rate has increased from 9.31 per cent in November to 10.08 per cent in December. Rural unemployment during this period fell from 8.68 per cent to 7.97 per cent, which was partially a result of increased activity in agricultural activities – both on account of reaping of Kharif, and sowing of Rabi leading to about 5.8 per cent of fall in demand for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

(MGNREGA). Obviously, it is a very temporary phenomenon that will soon change to push up unemployment rate again in the coming months when there would not be less agricultural works available. PM Modi led government in the meantime is busy in spinning an attractive narrative on employment front by telling people that the government is very serious on providing jobs to the people. Employment fairs are being organised across the country and PM Modi himself have been distributing employment letters,

however, people know these were nothing more the tokenism, while unemployment scenario remains grim. Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav has now said that his ministry will soon be launching the "advanced version" of the National Career Service (NCS), namely NCS2.0 "to facilitate better job matching and search facility for jobseekers along with a recommendation engine for skilling by the use of latest technologies and leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning."

ISRAEL'S GAZA WAR EXPANDS TO  
LEBANON, IRAQ; ENTERS FOURTH MONTH

Israel's Gaza war has entered its fourth month on January 7 this year leading to a death toll of more than 22,500. The entire Gaza strip has been devastated by the Israeli bombings. Apart, the Israel Defence Forces have targeted areas of both Lebanon and Iraq giving the war against the Palestinians a regional dimension in the West Asia. Backed by full support from US president Joe Biden and his NATO allies, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has become desperate to not only finish Hamas militants from the Gaza strip and carry out the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians from the occupied area.

## GERMANY REJIGS ITS MILITARY MIGHT, AIMS TO BE EUROPE'S DEFENCE PILLAR

The commencement of the Russia-Ukraine crisis in 2022 changed Germany's defence and diplomatic strategies. The Israel-Hamas conflict erupted in October 2023, once again drawing Germany's attention to security concerns.

Germany, which has long practised 'pacifism' and 'military restraint', has steadily increased its military capabilities during the past two years.

The country issued its first post-World War II 'National Security Strategy' in June 2023, followed by its first defence policy guidelines in 12 years just five months later. Germany also advocated a new role for the country in the defence sector, namely that of a cornerstone of European deterrence and collective defence.

## MUMBAI'S INFRA RUSH PUSHES THE CITY'S FRAGILE ECOLOGY TO ITS LIMIT

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi is slated to inaugurate the 22-kilometer Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) on January 12, it's time to look at the fragile ecology yet expanding infrastructure ecosystem of Mumbai. MTHL, India's longest sea bridge, snakes gracefully across the Thane Creek, connecting Navi Mumbai to Mumbai. This engineering marvel promises to slash travel times between the two cities, unlocking new economic integration and development avenues. The City of Dreams pulsates with ambition and relentless energy. Home to over 20 million inhabitants, it grapples with the typical challenges of a megacity – choked roads, overburdened infrastructure, and a constantly expanding footprint. Yet, Mumbai dreams big, and its latest undertakings reflect this spirit. Mumbai's land area is less than one-third of Delhi's, yet it is home to a larger population. That speaks of

the population density and the importance of mobility in this mega city. Besides, Mumbai has 167 km of continuous coastline. New infra projects are constantly battering the ecology of this precious coastline. The area between Mumbai and Pune is nestled in the Sahyadri range. Still, there is hardly any environmental concern for the mountain forest ecosystem regarding greenlighting residential or infrastructure projects. Three colossal projects – the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, the Mumbai Coastal Road, and the Navi Mumbai International Airport – promise to reshape the city's landscape.

## INDIA'S GENERAL GOVERNMENT DEBT NEEDS TO BE CONTROLLED

There is nothing to panic immediately about India's current general government debt, for which the International Monetary Fund has warned that it may exceed 100 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in the medium term, or by 2028. In its annual 'Article IV' consultation report, IMF said that long-term risks are high and stressed the need for "new and preferably concessional sources of financing." Interestingly, K.V. Subramanian, India's executive director at the IMF, said: "The risks from sovereign debt are very limited as it is predominantly denominated in domestic currency. Despite the multitude of shocks the global economy has faced in the last two decades, India's

public debt-to-GDP ratio has barely increased from 81 percent in 2005-06 to 84 percent in 2021-22 and back to 81 percent in 2022-23." The IMF report carries his statement. The IMF visualized the global debt at US\$97 trillion in 2023. The IMF said India needs "ambitious" fiscal consolidation over the medium term to reduce its public debt. It said: "A sharp global growth slowdown in the near term would affect India through trade and financial channels. Further global supply disruptions could cause recurrent commodity price volatility, increasing fiscal pressures for India. Domestically, weather shocks could ignite inflationary pressures and prompt further food export restrictions."



## UNPREDICTABLE NITISH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WEAKENING OF INDIA BLOC

Increasingly, it seems that it is not the BJP per se, but the leaders of the constituents of the united opposition's INDIA bloc are its worst enemies. While the core committee of the senior BJP leaders has been burning the midnight lamp finalising the list of the candidates, working out electoral strategy and collecting demographic data of the constituencies from which the party intends to field its candidates, the leaders of the INDIA bloc have been engaged in bitter fighting over share of seats in various states and are yet to finalise their strategy.



## IT executive, Mayor, state Senator in race for US Congress, Samosa Caucus

**Washington, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The Samosa Caucus is growing. From one in 2013, it has grown to Five+One, that is five Indian-descent lawmakers in US Congress, and former colleagues of theirs in the White House. And it could welcome new members in 2025. Rishi Kumar, an IT professional from Mumbai who calls himself the "Slumdog Engineer", is running for US Congress from California for an open seat vacated by a longtime Democrat. He had run to unseat her in 2020 and 2022 and although he had lost, he looked in

a position to win because he had won enough votes to make it on the general election ballot, beating other competitors in the primaries (California has had a top-two primary system since 2011). Ravinder Bhalla, a Sikh American who is mayor of Hoboken, a city in New Jersey state, is challenging his own party's lawmaker from the state Rob Menendez, whose father Senator Bob Menendez is facing federal charges that he worked on behalf of the Egyptian government while serving as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and accepted bribes, including a gold brick. He is probably hoping for the elder Menendez's legal problems to doom his son's re-election chances.



## Air-raid alerts across Ukraine over Russian missile launches

**Kiev, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Air-raid alerts were sounded across Ukraine on Thursday, with the country's Air Force confirming missile launches from Russian Tu-95MS strategic bombers and MiG-31K fighters. The alerts were sounded at about 6 a.m., and it lasted for over two hours, the Ukrainska Pravda newspaper reported. "Enemy Su-35/Su-34 activity in the north. The threat of use of aircraft missile weapons," the Ukrainian Air Force said in a social media post. It went on to say that there was "missile danger" in the areas where alerts had been sounded. "There is a threat of cruise mis-

sile launches from Tu-95MS aircraft. A total of 11 Tu-95MS strategic bombers are in the air. Do not ignore the air-raid warning! Take shelter." After more than two hours later, an all clear was given at 8.24 a.m., the Ukrainska Pravda added. Last week, 25 people were killed and more than 100 injured in one of the deadliest attacks on Russia since it invaded Ukraine in February 2022. The attack followed a recent huge wave of Russian strikes on Ukraine, which killed dozens and injured over 160. Those strikes were described by Kiev as Russia's biggest missile bombardment of the war so far.

## 7 bodies found in shallow grave in Philippines

**Manila, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Filipino police on Thursday said they have recovered seven bodies from a shallow grave in Lanao del Norte province. According to the police, the bodies were discovered by locals on Thursday, reports Xinhua news agency. The victims, who bore bullet wounds, comprised a 54-year-

old man, his 50-year-old wife, his 43-year-old sister and her husband, as well as their three children. Initial investigations showed that the victims were residents of nearby Zamboanga del Sur province. An investigation is underway to identify the alleged abductors of the victims and the motive for the killings.



## Palestinian death toll in Gaza exceeds 23,000: Health Ministry

**Gaza, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip exceeded 23,000, the Gaza-based Health Ministry said. The Ministry said on Thursday in a press statement that the Israeli army killed 249 Palestinians and wounded 510 others during the past 24 hours, Xinhua news agency reported. This brings the total number of deaths to 23,084 and injuries to 58,926 since the Israel-Hamas conflict broke out on October 7, 2023, it noted.



## 'Fauda' star Idan Amedi seriously injured in Gaza

**Tel Aviv, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Idan Amedi, one of the popular stars of web series, 'Fauda', which is a big hit on the OTT platform Netflix, and a renowned singer in Israel with millions of followers on YouTube, is seriously injured in Gaza while fighting Hamas terrorists. The family of Amedi announced the news of his injury late Thursday evening. The Fauda star was fighting in the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) counter-terrorism unit and was injured while fighting in the strip. Amedi was fighting in the counter-terrorism unit as a reservist since the war began immediately after the Hamas rampage on October 7. He has documented moments from the mili-

tary service on his Instagram account and had said, "This is not a scene from Fauda, this is real life." He also added that he and his fellow soldiers were motivated by their concern for the victims of Hamas' October 7 massacre. "May God and us avenge their blood," Amedi said. He joined the hit web series 'Fauda', and portrays his role as Sagi, a member of the counter-terrorism unit headed by Doron (played by actor Lior Raz).

## Wrong to infer I didn't back Rwanda plan as UK Chancellor: Sunak

**London, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Ruling out that he had doubts on the Rwanda plan as Chancellor, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said it was his job to ensure value for money on every proposal while he was in the Treasury. According to The Evening Standard, Sunak said it was "wrong" to infer that he did not back the scheme to stop channel crossing, following a BBC report, which said he was not convinced of the plan's effectiveness. Citing No 10 papers from March 22, the BBC said last week that Sunak was also concerned about the cost of sending asylum seekers to Africa and wanted to limit the numbers.

Sunak said he has not seen the documents the report was based on as he appeared on the BBC on Thursday. However, he did not rule out having voiced concerns about the cost of sending asylum seekers to the east African country when at the Treasury. "My job (was) to ask probing questions of every proposal that crossed my desk as chancellor," the Conservative Party leader told the BBC. "You should always ask probing questions, you should always approach things from a position of scepticism to ensure that you get value for money for taxpayers. "But to infer from that that I don't believe in the scheme or the principle of deterrence is wrong. I was doing my job to get good value for money for taxpayers," the Prime Minister added. The documents



had said that as Chancellor, Sunak felt "hotels are cheaper" than reception centres to house migrants, and was reluctant to fund "Greek-style reception centres" at a cost of 3.5 million pounds per day. The Rwanda plan, launched in April 2022 by then Prime Minister Boris Johnson, became the core of Sunak's policy to stop the boats -- one of five key priorities, which he set out to achieve when

he became the premier in October the same year. Calling the British Government to publish the No 10 papers, Labour MP Yvette Cooper said: "It is time the Tory Government was honest with the public, and publish both the papers outlining Rishi Sunak's concerns and the full details of the cost of the scheme."

## 10 injured in light plane crash on Australia's Great Barrier Reef island

**Canberra, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Ten people were injured on Thursday after a light plane flipped and crashed on a small island in Australia's Great Barrier Reef, local media reported. The plane with 10 people on board was returning to the runway on Lizard Island, about 1,600 km northwest of Brisbane, shortly after taking off on a scheduled service to Cairns early Monday morning, Xinhua news agency quoted The Australian daily as saying in a report. Pictures from the scene showed debris littering the field near the badly damaged upturned fuselage. During the climb, the engine of the Cessna 208 operated by Townsville Airlines began to run rough and the pilot attempted to return to Lizard Island, Australian Transport Safety Bureau chief commissioner Angus Mitchell said.



## Record British ethnic minority MPs to sit in Commons after elections : Think-tank

**London, Jan 11 (IANS) :** A record number of female and ethnic minority MPs in Britain are expected to sit in the House of Commons, following the much-anticipated general elections in the next half of this year, according to a report. Whatever the actual outcome of the election, the number of ethnic minority MPs is most likely to rise from 65 to as many as 83, The Guardian reported, citing a study by think-tank British Future. The number crossing 75 means a five-fold jump in a decade-and-a-half,

with the 2005 to 2010 parliament having just 15 ethnic minority MPs out of 650. "The next parliament will be the most diverse ever, reflecting a new norm across political parties. More ethnic minorities and more women are likely to sit in the Commons than ever before. Parliament is gradually catching up with the electorate that it represents," said Sunder Katwala, director of British Future. "But this needs to accelerate further if it is to keep pace with the growing diversity of our society and close the gender gap,"

Katwala added. The study estimates that in a first, there will be over 250 women in the Commons post the next general election -- up from 220 in 2019 -- with 153 of them in the Labour party and 72 in the Conservative. In case of the Labour winning 326 seats, the think tank claims that there will be 254 women MPs -- 39 per cent of the total in the Commons. According to the news report, seven of the 14 constituencies in which Labour MPs have decided to stand down, have selected ethnic minority candidates.



## Enhance joint patrolling during night hours to prevent terrorist movement : IGP Kashmir

**Srinagar, Jan 11 (IANS) :** In order to enhance and evaluate security measures across the Valley, IGP Kashmir V.K. Birdi on Thursday conducted a comprehensive security review meeting that was attended by top officers of security agencies including police, CRPF and army, an official statement said. "During the meeting, the participating officers briefed IGP Kashmir about the overall security scenario and the security measures being adopted to counter the challenges. The discussions encompassed various facets, including intelligence gathering, threat assessments, emergency response protocols in view of VIP

Visits and upcoming events like R-Day functions," the statement said. "The IGP Kashmir actively engaged with the officers, delving into discussions about initiatives aimed at maintaining law and order, as well as anti-terrorist operations within the valley." Highlighting the importance of continued efforts and coordination among different forces on the ground, Birdi Kashmir stressed upon strengthening collaboration between different law enforcement agencies for seamless information sharing and joint operations besides, exploring innovative technologies to augment ex-

isting security infrastructure and response capabilities. "He urged officers to intensify anti-terrorist operations and take stringent action against individuals or organisations supporting anti-national activities. Besides, directed them to enhance joint patrolling especially during the night hours to prevent any terrorist movement," the statement said. During the meeting, the IGP also emphasised the importance of precision and coordination, outlining strategic measures to address potential challenges and uphold the highest standards of security.

## Dalit man beaten to death over 'love affair' in UP's Muzaffarnagar

**Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh), Jan 11 (IANS) :** A man belonging to the Dalit community was allegedly beaten to death over an "illicit affair" with a married woman of the same village belonging to a different caste in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district, the police said. The incident took place on Thursday in Jasaula village of Khatauli area. Police said the victim Ankit Kumar had fallen in love with the woman who is in her 30's. On the day of the incident, Kumar was found in a semi-conscious state with hands and feet tied. He was badly injured and taken to hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The woman's husband and a few other locals from the village were later detained by the police. Deputy Superintendent of Police, Khatauli, Ravi Shankar Mishra, said, "A case was registered against 'unknown persons' under IPC section 302 (murder) and SC/ST Act. The body was sent for autopsy and the report is awaited. Initial probe revealed the crime took place over an illicit affair." Kumar's family told police that he was taken away by a man from their home.



## CBI submits fresh charge sheet accusing Partha Chatterjee of involvement in all cases related to WBSSC irregularities

**Kolkata, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The CBI on Thursday filed a fresh supplementary charge sheet in a special Kolkata court accusing former West Bengal Education Minister and Trinamool Congress Secretary General Partha Chatterjee of direct involvement in all the four cases registered by the agency on irregularities in recruitment of secondary and higher secondary teachers as well as non-teaching staff done by the West Bengal School Service Commission. However, it is not yet clear whether this fresh supplementary charge sheet is the final charge sheet filed by the CBI in the matter. Chatterjee is currently in judicial custody and he has been there since his arrest by the ED, which is conducting a parallel probe in the school job case, in July 2022. The fresh charge sheet by the CBI is significant given the Supreme Court fixing a specific deadline for the central agency to wind up the investigation process in the school job case.



## Vibrant Gujarat Summit: Gandhinagar lit up; office opening time changed

**Gandhinagar, Jan 11 (IANS) :** As Gandhinagar gears up for the 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, the Gujarat capital has transformed into a city of lights and colour. The event, set to begin on January 11, has seen key locations like Mahatma Mandir, Dandi Kutir, and GIFT City illuminated with vibrant 'moonlight' lights. In anticipation of the summit, the administration has implemented special arrangements to ensure smooth operations and public convenience. A significant change is the revised start time for all government offices in Gandhinagar on the inauguration day. To minimise traffic disruptions and facilitate easy access for dig-

nitaries, offices will now open at 12 p.m., a shift from the usual 10.30 a.m. Heads of Survey Offices in the city have been directed to strictly adhere to these changes. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel reviewed the preparations on Thursday. He also visited the Mahatma Mandir and Helipad Ground, accompanied by key state cabinet members and senior officials. Moreover, the city's aesthetic enhancement is not limited to the event venues. Hotels and government buildings across Gandhinagar have been adorned with thematic lighting and laser displays, creating an enchanting visual experience that has captured the attention of both locals and visitors.



## Gunfights between militants and forces continue in Manipur's Moreh along Myanmar border

**Imphal, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Manipur's Moreh, on the India-Myanmar border, continue to remain a trouble spot with gunfights between suspected militants and security forces continuing in area for the second day on Thursday. Police said that the gun fight between the suspected militants and the security forces has been reported in Moreh

on Wednesday and Thursday but there is no reported casualty on either side. Additional security forces have been sent, and massive search operations were underway to nab the militants. Since December 30, 10 Manipur Police commandos and a Border security Force (BSF) trooper have been injured in different incidents of attacks by suspected Kuki militants at Moreh in Tengnoupal dis-

trict. Moreh, which is just 4 km to the west of Myanmar's largest border town Tamu, is 110 km south of state capital Imphal. Some tribal organisations are opposing the deployment of state forces in the area. The mixed populated border area had also witnessed a series of violent incidents since May 3.



## Rajasthan minister resigns after losing Assembly poll

**Jaipur, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Rajasthan's Minister of State for IGNP and Agriculture Marketing Surendra Pal Singh T.T. on Thursday resigned from his post after losing in the Srikaranpur Assembly poll. Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma forwarded the minister's resignation to Governor Kalraj Mishra, who accepted it, a Raj Bhawan statement said. Congress candidate Rupinder Singh Koonar defeated the minister in Srikaranpur Assembly seat by a margin of 11,283 votes. The Chief Minister, in a post on X, said that Surendra Pal Singh TT "happily accepted the mandate and resigned from the post of minister. He will again be dedicated to the development work" of the constituency.



## Ram idol's Ayodhya tour cancelled due to crowd management concerns

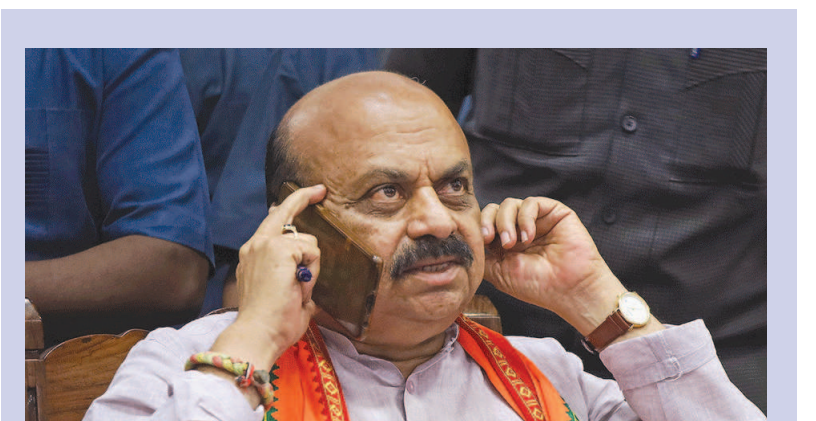
**Ayodhya, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has cancelled a procession scheduled for January 17 that would have allowed devotees to catch a glimpse of the new idol of Ram Lalla across the Ayodhya city, ahead of the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony, a Trust official said.

Instead, the trust will now arrange a tour of the new idol inside the premises of the Ram Janmabhoomi on the same day (January 17), a senior functionary of the Trust said. Crowd management concerns raised by security agencies have led to the cancellation of the city tour.

## Hindu group seeks FIR against Bihar Minister for 'hurting sentiments'

**Patna, Jan 11 (IANS) :** A Hindu group has moved an application in a police station here, seeking an FIR be registered against Bihar Education Minister Chandra Shekhar for his comments which had "hurt sentiments". Hindu Shivbhawani Sena chief Lav Kumar Singh alleged that the statement of the

minister that the path going towards the temple took the people towards mental illness while the path towards school and education bring light had "hurt sentiments of the community". An officer of Kotwali police station said that the application was received and it is being studied but no FIR has been registered yet.



## Credit for 'Anna Bhagya' scheme in K'taka goes to PM Modi : Bommai

**Bengaluru, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Thursday said the rice for the 'Anna Bhagya' scheme in the state is provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi while claiming "the Congress-led government was not giving a single grain of

rice". The success of the 'Anna Bhagya' scheme must go to PM Modi. He was reacting to the statement by the Congress leaders that the 'mantrakshathe' being distributed to the people in connection with the inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya was part of the 'Anna Bhagya' scheme.



Homegrown social commerce platform DealShare appoints new CEO

New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) : Homegrown social commerce unicorn DealShare on Thursday announced to appoint Kamaldeep Singh as the new CEO of the company. In July last year, DealShare's co-founder and CEO Vineet Rao stepped down and worked with the board to "help identify the right CEO". With the new development, Sourjyendu Medda will step down from executive position in the company. However, he will continue to be one of the key shareholders.



RIL market cap crosses Rs 18 lakh crore

New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) : Reliance Industries' market capitalisation crossed Rs 18 lakh crore on Thursday as the stock hit a record high. RIL stock jumped 2.5 per cent crossing the Rs 2,700 mark and RIL market capitalisation jumped to Rs 18.36 lakh crore. Siddhartha Khemka, Head, Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said Nifty traded sideways throughout the session to close marginally positive at 21,647 levels ahead of US inflation data and start of Q3FY24 earnings season from Thursday. Among the sectors, oil and gas, consumer durables, auto, and PSU banks were top gainers on Thursday. Cement stocks witnessed fresh buying on the expectation of improved demand ahead of the general elections. IT space is expected to be in focus on Friday as investors would react to TCS and Infosys Q3 results. Their management commentary and guidance would provide an insight into the future outlook for the sector, he said. Nagaraj Shetti, Senior Technical Research Analyst, HDFC Securities said after showing a sustainable upside from the lows on Wednesday, Nifty shifted into a consolidation with positive bias on Thursday and closed the day higher by 28 points. After opening with positive note, the market started to show gradual weakness amidst a range movement for better part of the session.



NTT launches new data centre campus in India

New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) : Global IT infrastructure and services company NTT on Thursday launched its new data centre campus in India. The campus is in Noida's data centre corridor within Delhi NCR. It is carrier neutral, interconnected with NTT's other data centre locations for minimal latency and offers seamless access to top-tier public cloud providers, the company said. The campus, spanning six acres, will support a planned capacity of 52.8 MW critical IT load in two data centres. "With this new site we reaffirm

our commitment to delivering reliable infrastructure that can support the demands of our clients' digital transformation ambitions around the globe," Doug Adams, CEO and President, NTT Global Data Centers & Submarine Cable, said in a statement. The campus' advanced features include high levels of automation that monitor and optimise facility performance and resources like power and water. According to the company, this is the first data centre campus in the country to incorporate seismic dampers, ensuring uninterrupted operations even during significant

seismic events. "Clients will now be able to access our trusted data centre services, from an interconnected campus in North India. As India's digital economy accelerates towards the one trillion-dollar milestone, we will continue to provide the infrastructure for this growth," said Shekhar Sharma, CEO & MD, NTT GDC India & NTT Com India Network Services. With this launch, NTT's Global Data Centers division expanded its India footprint to more than 268 MW with 18 data centres across Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bengaluru.



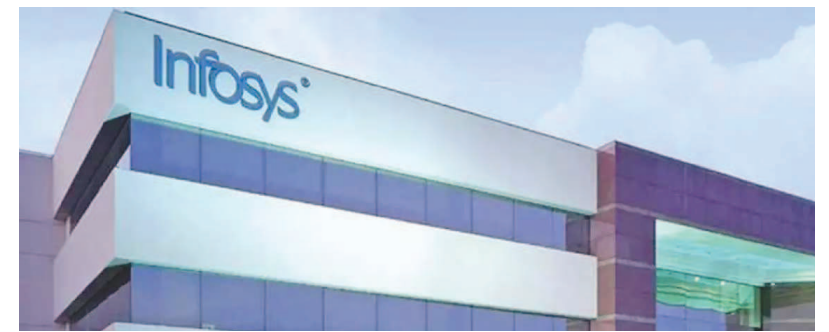
TCS posts higher profit in Q3, declares interim & special dividend of Rs 27

Chennai, Jan 11 (IANS) : Software major Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) on Thursday said that it closed the third quarter of FY24 with higher net profit of Rs 11,097 crore. The company also said the Board of Directors have declared a third interim dividend of Rs 9 and a special dividend of Rs 18 per equity share of Re 1 each. In a regulatory filing TCS said it closed the FY24 Q3 ended

December 31, 2023 with a revenue of Rs 60,583 crore (Q3FY23 Rs 58,229 crore) and a net profit of Rs 11,097 crore (Rs 10,883 crore). "Our strong performance in a seasonally weak quarter buffeted by macroeconomic headwinds, demonstrates the strength of our business model with a well-diversified portfolio and a customer-centric strategy. We are seeing strong deal momentum across markets resulting in a solid order book providing visibil-

ity into our long-term growth. We are seeing tremendous interest in Generative AI and are leading the innovation and exploratory efforts for our customers in this area," said K. Krithivasan, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director. N. Ganapathy Subramaniam, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director, said: "The quarter saw us make significant progress in many projects of national importance, demonstrating our execution strength. Our products and plat-

forms had a strong quarter with new wins and go-lives. The MCX platform is scaling well and processing record transaction volumes. We are on course with the BSNL 4G/5G network roll out. We are making good progress in upskilling our employees in Generative AI through our AI playground platform." The company's workforce stood at 603,305 as on December 31, 2023.



Infosys to acquire semiconductor design company InSemi for Rs 280 crore

Chennai, Jan 11 (IANS) : Software major Infosys Ltd on Thursday said it will acquire InSemi, a semiconductor design and embedded services provider, for Rs 280 crore. In a regulatory filing, Infosys said the acquisition of Rs 153.6 crore revenue InSemi is expected to close during the fourth quarter of fiscal

2024, subject to customary closing conditions. "Consideration including earn-outs, and management incentives, and retention bonus totaling up to INR 280 crores subject to customary closing adjustments," Infosys said. The Bengaluru headquartered InSemi has a headcount of over 900 persons.



Spot Bitcoin ETFs may follow the footsteps of gold ETFs in long run : Experts

New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) : The approval of spot Bitcoin exchange-traded funds (ETFs) in the US not only symbolises a maturing market but also signifies support from regulatory authorities, industry experts said on Thursday. The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has finally approved a number of spot Bitcoin ETFs and with the decision, the world's largest cryptocurrency has joined the global financial system. "The readiness of the sector to list these ETFs and the commitment of the broader market to

continue the growth momentum, highlight the industry's confidence in regulatory decisions," said Rahul Pagidipati, CEO, ZebPay. "We believe that the approval of Spot Bitcoin ETFs will not only enhance accessibility for investors but also contribute to the establishment of a more robust and regulated crypto market, aligning with our vision for a thriving web3 economy," he added. Gold ETFs transformed the gold market two decades ago, triggering a huge rally in gold's price. Over \$100 billion is currently stashed in gold ETFs that trade in the US.



Rupee edges up against US dollar

Mumbai, Jan 11 (IANS) : The rupee edged up by 2 paise vis-a-vis the US dollar to close at 83.01 on Thursday, making it the seventh consecutive day of gain for the Indian currency. Lower crude oil prices in the global market and sustained buying of equity in the stock markets by foreign funds has helped the rupee to stay steady.

Customer benefits being kept in mind while regulating Fintechs: RBI Gov

Mumbai, Jan 11 (IANS) : Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Thursday that post-pandemic digital lending has seen an exponential rise in India and at the same time, it has also raised a host of business conduct issues on which the central bank was keeping a close watch. "Various regulatory dilemmas have emerged wherein a balanced approach had to be taken. It was necessary to weigh the customer benefits brought in by innovative business models of FinTechs on one side and the emerging business conduct and regulatory concerns on the other," he said at a media function. The regulatory objective was to rein in the negative externalities while retaining the salutary effects of innovative digital business models. The data on private equity flows into the digital lend-



ing space after the issuance of these guidelines demonstrates the faith of investors on the Indian digital lending story and the belief that, going forward, digital lending under the regulatory gaze of the RBI will spur the FinTech sector even more, he said. Structural changes have also been implemented to enhance the agility, flexibility, and specialisation of the RBI's supervisory structure.

## Sajjan Jindal bats for setting up industrial parks near airports in Karnataka



**Bengaluru, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Invest Karnataka Forum (IKF) Co-Chairman Sajjan Jindal on Thursday pitched for setting up industrial parks in regions that are about two hours road drive from airports in the state. Making the suggestion while participating online in the first-reconstituted IKF meeting chaired by Large and Medium Industries Minister M.B. Patil, he opined setting up such industrial parks would facilitate attracting increased investment. Jindal said that being an industrialist residing in the state, he knew very well why Karnataka stands out as a preferred investment destination. Responding to his suggestion, Patil said that the govern-

ment also intended to set up industrial parks in an area of about 5,000-10,000 acres. To enable the operational of industries, plug-in facilities will be established in such parks, he added. Investments of Rs 55,000 crore have been confirmed in the present government and various proposals of about Rs 40,000 crore to Rs 1 lakh crore are in various stages of the process, Patil said.

It was also decided in the meeting to form sub-groups within the IKF to focus on sectoral investment. The meeting reviewed key developments in the last months and deliberated on framing the roadmap for going forward.

## Bengal LoP writes to I-T Dept, seeks probe against Abhishek Banerjee on funding source for govt scheme



**Kolkata, Jan 11 (IANS) :** West Bengal Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Suvendu Adhikari on Thursday wrote to Income Tax Department seeking probe on source of funds for sponsoring the special benefit scheme for senior citizens introduced by Trinamool Congress General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee. The government claimed that under the scheme, at least 76,120 senior citizens in Diamond Harbour will receive a month benefit of Rs 1,000 the cost of which

will be met through donations from benevolent donors identified by the Trinamool volunteers. In the communication to the I-T Department, a copy of which is available with IANS, the LoP has claimed that considering huge amount -- Rs 7,61, 20,000 crore -- involved there are apprehensions that the amount may have links with the several financial scams in the state in which central agencies like CBI and ED had been conducting parallel investigations.



## 108-feet long incense stick on its way to Ayodhya from Gujarat

**Ayodhya, Jan 11 (IANS) :** A 108-feet long incense stick is being taken to Ayodhya from Vadodara in Gujarat to fill the Shri Ram temple with a divine fragrance. This incense stick reached Fatehpur Sikri and Kiravali in Agra on Thursday where hundreds of people reached the

highway and after seeing the incense sticks, started raising slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram'. The journey that started from Vadodara has turned into a procession. A large number of people gathered to see the 108-feet-long and about three-and-a-half-feet wide incense stick weighing 3,610 kg. This incense stick was made

in six months and has been prepared in Vadodara. Many types of herbs have been used in making this special incense stick. This incense stick will remain lit for about one-and-a-half months and will spread its fragrance in an area of about 50 km. Gujarat resident Bihabharbad, who manufactures incense

sticks, said that the 'Pran Pratishtha' of Shri Ram temple in Ayodhya is to be held on January 22 and this incense stick is his offering for the occasion. Many types of herbs, including desi cow dung, desi cow ghee, incense ingredients, have been used in its preparation.



## Delhi HC warns YouTuber of contempt for tweet in defamation case by Gurmeet Ram Rahim

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The Delhi High Court on Thursday expressed its displeasure over a tweet by YouTuber and journalist Shyam Meera Singh, saying that he was putting a video related to Gurmeet Ram Rahim in private mode out of compulsion. During the previous hearing, the court had asked Meena to delete his tweets against the Dera Sacha Sauda chief.

On Thursday, the court warned Meena of contempt if such statements were repeated in the future, stressing the need to respect the court's dignity.

Justice Jasmeet Singh clarified that the court did not compel Meena to make the video

private, and any such portrayal would be considered a serious matter. The court has listed the matter for further hearing on January 10. On December 29, 2023, the court had issued a notice to Meena in response to a defamation plea, which seeks directions to the defendant to remove his YouTube video alleging that Ram Rahim deceived his followers. In 2017, Ram Rahim was handed 20 years in prison for allegedly raping two women disciples. In 2019, he was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of his employee Ranjit Singh. In 2021, the Dera chief was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of a journalist.

Vacation judge Manoj Jain had directed the defendant (Shyam) to delete the tweets that were posted by him.

"While the matter is sub judice, no further tweets...I want you to be responsible. If he is a journalist, he needs to be responsible. Please do not make any tweets which interfere with the justice delivery system," he had remarked.

## Delhi Police bust int'l racket of fraudsters; 2 foreigners held

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** With the arrest of two foreigners, including a woman, the Delhi Police have busted an international racket of fraudsters involved in cheating people on the pretext of "Customs clearance, RBI fee", among others, an official said on Thursday. The arrested individuals were identified as Benita Gift Agene (27), presently residing in Chhatrapur Pahari, and Izunna Paul Uzoma (34), living in Maidan Garhi -- both from Nigeria.

The arrest came after Delhi Police received a cheating-related complaint. The complainant claimed that he came into contact with a UK-based girl, namely Rebecca, on the Internet. "Soon they became friends and started chatting and calling on WhatsApp. She told the complainant that she was working with Citibank Power Station, UK, and wished to visit historic places in India. She also shared her flight ticket from Heathrow to Mumbai via Dubai with the complainant," said Deputy Commissioner of Police, Hemant Tiwari. On November 20, 2023, the complainant received a call from a fake "Customs officer from Mumbai airport", who told him that Rebecca was facing some document-related issues at the airport for which she needed some money for Customs clearance. "They shared bank account details and directed him to deposit money in the said account. Initially, he refused to give any money but she then started crying and promised to return the money.



## LU professor to join priest panel for Pran Pratishtha ceremony

**Lucknow, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Shyamlesh Kumar Tiwari, an assistant professor at Lucknow University's (LU) oriental studies in the Sanskrit department, has been selected to be among 10 priests who will be conducting the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of the

Ram Lalla idol at the newly constructed temple in Ayodhya from January 16-22. A letter in this regard was received by Tiwari (41) from the camp office of Shri Ram Janambhoomi Teerth Kshetra on Thursday. As per the letter, Tiwari's name was recommended by two renowned scholars from

Varanasi, Pt Ganeshwar Shastri Dravid, who did calculations of the ceremony date and Pt Laxmikant Mathuranath Dixit, under whose leadership the priests will perform the seven-day rituals from January 16 till Ram temple's inauguration on January 22. Both the scholars recommended that Tiwari be part of the ritual of 'Pran Pratishtha'. Shyamlesh Tiwari said: "I feel privileged to be part of Ayodhya Ram Temple Pran Pratishtha and prayers. I will be leaving on January 15 and will be part of a team of 10 priests who will be performing the puja from January 16 till January 22." He said that apart from 10 priests, 130 other scholars will be part of the prayers. He said on January 16, 'praayashchit' (atonement) will be done in which prayers will be offered to forgive all sins done before we begin with the auspicious work of 'pran pratishtha'. On January 17, a 'Jal Yatra' will be held in which water from the Saryu will be filled in pots and taken to the temple. This Saryu water will be later used in prayers at the temple. Also on the same day, Ram Lalla's idol will be taken on a city tour.

## No one can beat Shashi Tharoor in Thiruvananthapuram: BJP leader Rajagopal

**Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Veteran BJP leader and former union minister O. Rajagopal on Thursday said that no one can beat senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor in the upcoming Lok Sabha election in Thiruvananthapuram. "No one can beat Tharoor in Thiruvananthapuram. He came from Palakkad and has won the hearts of people here. That is why he continues to win. No one can defeat him in the years to come," Rajagopal said while speaking at an award function in presence of Tharoor. Rajagopal finished as runner up to Tharoor during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. After Rajagopal finished his speech, Tharoor touched the feet of veteran BJP leader.



## Our only goal is to double the income of farmers: Raj farm min

**Jaipur, Jan 11 (IANS) :** State Agriculture and Horticulture Minister, Dr Kirodi Lal Meena, on Thursday directed officials to adopt innovations in the field of agriculture for doubling the income of farmers. These innovations will increase production, which in turn will strengthen the economic condition of the farmers, he said. Emphasis will be laid on organic farming instead of traditional farming and for this, growers will be made aware of techniques by organising special camps, he added.





## Goa oppn claims govt stifling voice, threatens to boycott Assembly Session

**Panaji, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Goa Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Yuri Alemao on Thursday said that the BJP government is stifling the voice of opposition and threatened to boycott the upcoming legislative assembly session if the convention of allowing one question from ruling and another from opposition is not followed. Goa legislative assembly will have six sittings, starting from February 2 to 9. During a presser, after a meeting of opposition parties legislators, Alemao said that there are chances that mixed questions will be taken by the legislature department. "BJP government is rattled to face opposition. It is trying to silence the voice of opposition. We will boycott the coming assembly if the tradition of 'dadagiri' and dictatorship continues. It is not in the interest of democracy," Alemao said. He said that the opposition will boycott the assembly session if the convention of allowing one question from ruling and another from opposition each is not followed.

## Bengaluru CEO arrested for killing her 4-yr-old son in Goa

**Panaji, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Goa Police have arrested a 39-year-old CEO of a Bengaluru-based AI company for allegedly murdering her four-year-old son at a service apartment in the coastal state. She was arrested. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) Vishwesh Karpe said the accused woman was identified as Suchana Seth, 39, from Bengaluru. "She had checked into a service apartment in Candolim- north Goa on Thursday morning with her son and left for Bengaluru after committing crime in the room. "She was arrested in Karnataka. We have taken transit remand of her and are expected to reach Goa by tonight," Karpe told IANS, adding that the Goa Police team is in Karnataka. Sources informed that the woman fled in a cab allegedly with her son's body stuffed in a bag.



## UP BJP to hold OBC conventions for school, college students

**Lucknow, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The Uttar Pradesh BJP has decided to hold OBC conventions for school and college students in an apparent bid to tap backward class youths as potential voters ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. The group-specific youth meets is a first in the state's recent political route. BJP will soon be appointing conveners for the purpose at the state, district and divisional levels, according to the note, issued by UP minister and state BJP OBC Morcha chief Narendra Kashyap.

According to a draft note of BJP, the conventions would comprise at least 200 OBC students who will be informed not only about various state and central schemes but also the impact of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership on a global scale. OBC morcha vice-president Chiranjeev Chaurasia maintained that the meets would aim to "invoke the spirit of nationalism" among youths from the backward sections." The development has triggered sharp reactions from the opposition, with Samajwadi Party spokesperson Sunil Singh Sajjan terming it a manifestation of BJP's

"double standards". "Schools and colleges are places where students are taught about equality. But BJP is planning to stoke casteism and divide the society at its very foundations," he said. According to Sajjan, the move also negates Prime Minister Modi's oft-repeated narrative that there are just four castes in society -- farmers, women, youths and poor. "Why does BJP always accuse the opposition of being casteist? This again proves the ruling party itself seeks to stoke division of society based on caste," Sajjan alleged.



## Lokayukta sleuths conduct raids at 30 locations in Karnataka

**Bengaluru, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Lokayukta sleuths conducted raids in 30 locations across Karnataka, including at multiple locations in state capital Bengaluru on Thursday. Sources said the raids have led to huge amounts of cash, gold jewellery, foreign currency, costly watches and mobile phones being unearthed. Simultaneous raids are underway in Bengaluru, Bellary and Ramanagara districts on the residences and offices of government officers attached to the

Public Works Department, Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company and Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Limited (KRIDL). According to sources, the residence of a Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) has also been raided. The sleuths have found huge amount of cash, foreign currency, silver articles at the residences and other properties of Syed Muneer Ahmad, an AEE at KRIDL. The Lokayukta teams are riding six properties owned by the officer.

The raids were also conducted on Bescom Chief General Manager, ML Nagaraj, who was caught red-handed while allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 7.5 lakh. The teams are conducting raids on two properties in Bengaluru and five locations in Bellary. The officers have documents of nine plots, three houses, two petrol bunks, an education institution and farm land at four locations in the name of Nagaraj, sources stated.



## Govt plans to invest Rs 45,000cr to develop river cruise tourism

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The maiden edition of Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) chaired by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal in Kolkata on Thursday has committed an investment of Rs 45,000 crore for the development of river cruise tourism in the country. An estimated Rs 35,000 crore of this ambitious allocation has been earmarked for cruise vessels while Rs 10,000 crore will be invested for the development of cruise terminal infrastructure by 2047. Sonowal also launched 'Harit Nauka' guidelines and 'River Cruise Tourism Roadmap, 2047' at the inaugu-

ral session of IWDC. "The immense growth potential must be realised as we work towards becoming a leader in the Blue Economy of the world, in accordance with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Sonowal said. A roadmap was drawn at the meeting to create capacity in an additional 26 waterways, fit for River Cruise tourism from the current operational strength of 8 waterways. The number of cruise circuits with night stays will be increased from 17 to 80 during the same time, according to an official statement. In an effort to boost infrastructure in the inland waterways.

## Teen alleges honour killing of his 'wife', TN Police probe

**Chennai, Jan 11 (IANS) :** In a suspected case of honour killing, a man from Tamil Nadu's Tanjavur district was accused of murdering his daughter with support from a few of his relatives. A 19-year-old youth, Naveen, from the Scheduled Caste Adi Dravidar Community, has filed a case in the Vattathikottai police station against Perumal from Neivabiduthi in the same district.

Naveen in the petition said that he and Iswarya (19), who is the daughter of Perumal, were in love since school days, and both got jobs in an apparel unit in Tiruppur. They got married at a local temple. (The marriage is void as Naveen is only 19).



## Elderly man beheaded in Bihar's Muzaffarpur

**Patna, Jan 11 (IANS) :** A 70-year-old man was found beheaded at his residence in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, a police official said on Thursday. The victim has been identified as Ram Pravesh Pandey, a native of Bahilwara Rupnathpur village under the Saraiya police station limits.



## ED raids Shiv Sena (UBT) ex-Minister Ravindra Waikar's premises

**Mumbai, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) swooped down on seven residential and official premises linked to Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA, Ravindra Waikar, a former state minister, in connection with an alleged money laundering case, here on Thursday morning. A team of around ten ED sleuths de-

scended at various locations in Jogeshwari for the alleged irregularities pertaining to the construction of a deluxe hotel in the same suburb, including the famed Matoshree Club. The ED case arose out of a Mumbai Police FIR accusing the MLA of allegedly getting illegal approvals for building a five-star hotel on a plot reserved for a garden which caused a huge loss to the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation. Waikar, 64, a prominent leader of Shiv Sena (UBT) led by ex-Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, has been a five-time municipal corporator, a three-term MLA and was a minister in the state government (2014-2019).

## Meghalaya outfit's interlocutor accuses govt for withdrawal of the group from peace process

**Shillong, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Five days after Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) withdrew from the tripartite peace talks with the Centre and the Meghalaya government, the outlawed militant outfit's interlocutor for the peace talks, Sadon Blah on Thursday blamed the government for group pulling out of the peace process. He said that the HNLC was forced to withdraw itself from the peace process after the government adopted a "legal" instead of a "political approach". "The government must consider the general and basic demands of the HNLC to facilitate the participation of the



leaders in the peace talks and take forward the peace process by considering the matter from the political perspective and not from the legal angle," he told the media. Blah stated that the ball is in the government's court, and if they are ready to reconsider amnesty to the cadres of the HNLC, the tripartite peace talks with the Centre and State government can be resumed.



### Cong awaits Manipur govt's consent to use ground in Imphal for Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra

**Imphal, Jan 11 (IANS) :** AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal (Organisation) on Thursday said that they are waiting for the permission to use the Hapta Kangeibung ground in Imphal East district on January 14 to launch the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra led by former party President Rahul

Gandhi. The Congress leaders met Manipur Chief Secretary Vineet Joshi on Thursday and requested him to provide permission to hold the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra launching meeting at the Hapta Kangeibung ground. The Chief Secretary assured the Congress leaders that they will be informed about the granting of the

permission very soon. A Congress leader said that the party applied to the government on January 2 seeking permission for the launching of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra at Hapta Kangeibung in Imphal.

Claiming that the Yatra is not a political programme or any election campaign, Venugopal said it demands justice for the women, youth, farmers and poor and this Yatra will be historic as well. "Don't make politics by denying the permission of the ground," the Congress leader indirectly told the BJP government. Accompanied by Manipur state Congress President Keisham Meghachandra Singh and former three-term Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh (2002-2017), Venugopal told the media person that they do not want to politicise the issue as the entire country is not looking towards Manipur. "I am from Kerala.

People from Kerala are also astonished about the grave situation prevailing in Manipur. Manipur needs justice, that's why the Yatra will be started from this state. We want to ensure the future of Manipur and the state needs healing into its grave wound," Venugopal said. He said that from Manipur, the Yatra will go to Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya and will reach Mumbai by covering 6,500 km in 15 states. Rahul Gandhi's earlier Bharat Jodo Yatra, which covered 4,500 km from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, evoked tremendous success and got unprecedented public response. The Congress Rajya Sabha member said that no political party and no political leader in India conducted such a historic campaign.



### Haryana govt instructs NHA to acquire land for Khedki Daula toll plaza

**Gurugram, Jan 11 (IANS) :** D.S. Dhesi Principal Advisor for Urban Development of the Haryana government on Thursday instructed National Highway Authority of India (NHA) to complete the process of acquiring the land of the toll plaza which being shifted from Khedki Daula to Pachgaon on the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway. Dhesi said that Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) has transferred the land docu-

ments to NHA for the toll plaza in Pachgaon. "NHA has to complete the acquisition process and start the work," he said. He said that the service road of Dwarka Expressway should also be opened for the convenience of motorists in Gurugram city. The NHA officials have informed Dhesi that this road is currently being audited and it will be opened soon during a meeting which was organised on Thursday regarding the major roads of Gurugram.

## BJP Bihar unit renames RJD as 'Rashtriya Jährila Dal'

**Patna, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The BJP Bihar unit renamed RJD from Rashtriya Janata Dal to 'Rashtriya Jährila Dal' on Thursday. Such a renaming took place following a number of RJD MLAs, including Ajay Yadav, Anita Devi, Chandrashekhar Yadav and Tejashwi Yadav, made remarks against the Ram temple in Ayodhya and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last four days.

While uploading a post on social media 'X', the BJP Bihar unit posted a video containing four windows of those four RJD leaders and their video statements on Ram temple and

PM Modi with a caption: "has the intelligence of RJD caved-in?" "While seeing the 'Pran Pratishtha' of Ram temple at Ayodhya, RJD leaders are experiencing a big jolt," the Bihar BJP unit said. "Ram temple in Ayodhya is a symbol of the religious belief of the Hindu community. They (RJD) have insulted Sanatan Dharma to keep intact their vote bank." In the first window, the video statement of RJD MLA Ajay Yadav appeared where he made a controversial statement on PM Narendra Modi and said that a blast may take place in Ayodhya and BJP will blame Pakistan or Muslims. While addressing a gathering at his house on Sunday

evening, Ajay Yadav, the RJD MLA from Atri Assembly constituency, also made a personal remark on PM Modi. "I am feeling ashamed that Modi is doing the 'Pran Pratishtha' of Maryada Purushottam Ram in Ayodhya. Shri Ram fought for his wife against the strong and learned Ravan and Modi Ji is a person who left his wife. A person who has left his wife is doing the 'Pran Pratishtha' of Shri Ram," Yadav said. Anita Devi, another RJD MLA said: "It looks like Lord Shri Ram is coming on the earth for the first time on January 22. She also added that the BJP is exploiting poor people through the Akshat distribution programme." RJD leader

Chandrashekhar Yadav also made a controversial comment on Ayodhya temple. He said that the way to the temple is considered as a path of slavery and the path of education brings you to light. Tejashwi Yadav on January 3, while addressing a gathering at Jhanjharpur in Madhubani district, claimed that the BJP government instead of spending crore of rupees in Ayodhya should spend it on education, health and jobs. He also said that Narendra Modi is the biggest producer and distributor of lies. "PM Narendra Modi is talking about Ram temple in Ayodhya but I want to ask people if Lord Ram needs Modi Ji. If Lord Ram wants, he could make a castle for himself



everywhere but Modi Ji is showing like he has given a house to Lord Ram." "Some people are projecting Narendra Modi like Lord Ram. I want to ask people if they would become sick, will they go to a

temple or hospital. Lord Ram wants prosperity for every section of society and prosperity will come through good health, education, jobs, removing poverty etc," Tejashwi said.



Odisha : Former minister Balabhadra Majhi quits BJD

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Former minister and senior BJD leader Balabhadra Majhi on Thursday resigned from the primary membership of BJD ahead of the general elections. He has reportedly resigned for being sidelined in the party. "I do hereby relinquish from the primary membership of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD). Thanks a lot for allowing me to work for long period along with you since formation of the Party 1997."

### Strong action will be taken against miscreants involved in attacking ED officials : Bengal DGP

**Kolkata, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Three days after the ED and CAPF personnel were attacked at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, the acting Director General Police (DGP) Rajeev Kumar on Thursday said strong action will be taken against the miscreants who were involved in the attack. "Strong action will be taken against those who are responsible for taking law in their own hands and who acted unlawfully. No one will be spared," the DGP told media persons. However, he refused to make comments on the allegations by ED accusing the state police of not furnishing the directorate with a copy of FIR at local Nazat Police station.

On Thursday afternoon, ED issued a strongly-worded statement accusing the state police of diluting the seriousness of the charges in the case related to the attack on its officials. Source said that Governor C.V. Ananda Bose -- who is currently studying the joint report submitted by ED and CAPF -- is also expected to send his own report to the President Droupadi Murmu.



## Hanuman Garhi laddoos set to get GI tag

**Ayodhya, Jan 11 (IANS) :** The famous Hanuman Garhi laddoos are likely to get the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag soon.

The application for the grant of GI tag to the famous Ayodhya Hanuman Garhi laddoo was accepted by the GI Registry, Chennai on Thursday. "Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is working with a mission to get international recognition for local products of all Uttar Pradesh districts," said a state government spokesperson.

The handmade laddoos of locally produced besan (gram flour) and desi ghee are prepared for the bhog of Lord Hanuman at the Hanuman Garhi temple. About 200 Ayodhya residents are engaged in making these laddus of uniform shape and size. On an average, 20-25 quintals of laddoos are prepared every day. "It is our luck and the merit of



our ancestors that we have got the opportunity to get the acceptance of GI registration of Ayodhya's Hanuman Garhi laddoos in this historical month when the time of Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Lord Shri Ram is approaching," said GI expert, Rajni Kant. "We had resolved in our mind that before going to Ayodhya for this sacred ceremony, the GI application for Hanuman Garhi laddoo should be submitted and accepted by GI Registry Chennai. Today we

received the authorized information about its acceptance," said Rajni Kant. The coveted GI certification is likely to be finalised in a few months. The application was filed by the Halwai Kalyan Samiti of Ayodhya under the category of food stuffs. "The team had been working for months for the documentation of these goods for GI registration," said Padma Shri awardee Rajni Kant, who is also known as the GI Man of India.

### Two ex-AMU students arrested by UP ATS for IS links

**Lucknow, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Two former Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) students, carrying a reward of Rs 25,000 each, were arrested by the UP ATS for their alleged links with IS, said officials on Thursday. The two were arrested on Thursday. "The duo was iden-

tified as Amas a.k.a. Faraz Ahmed, 22, resident of Aligarh, and Abdul Samad Malik, 25, resident of Sambhal," said the UP ATS spokesman. Amas was arrested from Aligarh while Malik was nabbed in Sambhal earlier.

### 500 women students of Haryana university accuse professor of sexual harassment

**Chandigarh, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Nearly 500 women students of Chaudhary Devi Lal University in Haryana's Sirsa have written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, accusing a professor there of sexual harassment.

They demanded his suspension and an inquiry led by a retired High Court judge. Copies of the letter have also been sent to Vice Chancellor Ajmer Singh Malik, Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, state Home Minister Anil Vij, and National Commission for Women Chairperson Rekha Sharma, among others.





## Son holds vigil seeking justice for Sikh parents slain in Canada

**Toronto, Jan 11 (IANS) :** A Sikh man held a candlelight vigil seeking justice for his parents from India who were killed in a shooting spree in Canada's Ontario province in November last year. Jagtar Singh Sidhu and Harbhajan Kaur, both in their 50s, were shot more than 20 times just before midnight on November 20 at their rental property along the Caledon-Brampton border. While Sidhu died on the spot, Harbhajan Kaur succumbed to injuries in the hospital where she was rushed to along with their daughter who was shot 13 times and continues to battle for her life. "I'm feeling very sad because my whole family has been shot... (They) were just at the wrong place at the wrong time," Gurdit Singh Sidhu, the couple's son, told CP24 news channel.

rival of their parents who were supposed to return to India this month. At the vigil, held on Thursday at Brampton, attendees carried placards that read: "Innocent visitors brutally killed", "Is Canada safe to live?", "Stop illegal weapons," and "Complete failure of law & order". Gurdit Singh's cousin, Paramvir Bhatti, said they want concrete actions from all levels of government to ensure that communities are safe and violent incidents like this could be avoided.

"Once (the suspects) are caught, they should be always behind bars for their life without parole. That's what we want," he told CP24.

Remembering his parents as "nice" and "good" people who were helpful to others and always cooked for the family, Gurdit Singh rued that so far police have made no arrests in the case.

The heartbroken son is seeking answers to several questions, which include a visit by an officer from Peel Regional Police's Homicide and Missing Persons Bureau to meet his parents just four days before their murder. "They must have known something was going to happen," he said, adding that the shooting and the death of his parents could have been avoided in the first place. A spokesperson for Peel police confirmed on Saturday that the homicide bureau did connect with the family on November 16 in relation to an undisclosed investigation.



## US Navy officer jailed for transmitting sensitive military info to China

**Washington, Jan 11 (IANS) :** A US Navy officer has been jailed for 27 months and ordered to pay a \$5,500 fine for transmitting sensitive military information to an intelligence officer from China in exchange for bribery payments, the Justice Department said in a statement. Petty Officer Wenheng Zhao (26) of Monterey Park, California, was sentenced on Thursday.

Citing court documents, the Department said in an official statement that he pleaded guilty in October 2023 to one count of conspiring with the intelligence officer and one count of receiving a bribe.



## Israeli delegation in Cairo for hostage release negotiations

**Tel Aviv, Jan 11 (IANS) :** An Israeli delegation has reached Cairo for negotiations on a possible deal for the release of hostages currently under Hamas captivity in Gaza. Israeli government sources told IANS the arrival of the delegation to the Egyptian capital on Thursday came amid growing pressure from the Jewish nation's traditional allies -- the US, UK, France and Germany -- to end the ongoing war in the besieged enclave.

Within Israel as well, the demand for the release of the hostages is escalating by the day.

The negotiations between the two warring sides at the behest of Qatar, Egypt and the US, had been suspended after the assassination of Saleh al-Aroui -- deputy head of Hamas's political wing -- in Beirut, a week ago.

## Indian-origin man jailed in Singapore for cheating to get medical treatment

**Singapore, Jan 11 (IANS) :** A 42-year-old Indian-origin man has been sentenced to six weeks jail in Singapore for impersonation multiple times to get medical treatment in hospitals and polyclinics across the city state.

On Thursday, Logeswaran Mohandas pleaded guilty to six charges, including five for cheating by personation, The Straits Times reported.

Instead of registering as himself, Mohandas pretended to be his brother and an acquaintance, who ended up being charged for his medical bills 17 times.

Mohandas, who was getting treatment for back pain, had another 19 charges, most of them for similar offences, taken into consideration in his



sentencing. The court heard that Mohandas impersonated his brother on nine occasions at the National University Hospital (NUH) between May 1, 2018, and September 16, 2019, and incurred bills totalling SG\$945.35, including an SG\$430 bill for an MRI scan. After receiving bills from NUH, his brother made a police report on February 10, 2020.

## Pannun calls for shutdown of airports from Amritsar to Ayodhya ahead of Jan 22

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Khalistan leader Gurbatwant Singh Pannun continued his incendiary provocation of violence against India on Thursday, calling for shutdown of airports from Amritsar to Ayodhya ahead of the January 22 Ram temple Pran Pratishtha ceremony. The legal counsel of the outlawed Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) group also exhorted Muslims in the country to "oppose" the ceremony, and urged them to carve out 'Urduistan' from India. "From Amritsar to Ayodhya, shut down airports. Now is the time, Muslims, you carve out a country Urduistan from India," Pannun said in a fresh video message released on Thursday. Threatening that the ceremony is going to have a "global consequence", Pannun said, "every Muslim must protest". Pannun's threats come as preparations for the Ram Mandir's Pran Pratishtha' in Ayodhya are in full swing with over one lakh devotees expected to be in the city for the event, which will be attended by



Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The newly-inaugurated Maharishi Valmiki International Airport in Ayodhya has already received more than 40 requests for landing of chartered flights for the mega religious event. Last week, the Sikh separatist had issued another video calling for India's "economic destruction" by targeting the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) from March 12, coinciding with the 31st anniversary of serial blasts in Mumbai in 1993. Pannun was declared a designated terrorist in 2020 by India under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). While the US claims to have shielded him from a purported assassination by Indian

agents, he is wanted in nearly two dozen cases, including some of terrorism and sedition in India. In September 2023, his properties in Amritsar and Chandigarh cities were seized by the NIA, which also charged him and his separatist organisation under several sections of the Indian Penal Code and the UAPA on November 20. Following the NIA charges, the radical Sikh and his secessionist group gave a call to pro-Khalistan elements to "picket" Air India's out-bound flights from the airports in the Canadian cities of Toronto and Vancouver on December 1, 2023.

## Vehicle crashes into White House exterior gate

**Washington, Jan 11 (IANS) :** A vehicle crashed into an exterior gate of the White House complex in Washington, the US Secret Service said. "Shortly before 6 p.m. ET (2300 GMT), a vehicle collided with an exterior gate on the White House complex," said US Secret Service spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi on Thursday evening as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. A driver has been taken into custody as "the cause and manner" of the collision is being investigated, the spokesperson added.



## UAE president, Blinken stress need for avoiding Gaza conflict's expansion

**Abu Dhabi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** President of the UAE, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed here the importance of avoiding the expansion of conflict in the region and finding a clear solution to achieve regional stability.

During their meeting in UAE's capital Abu Dhabi on Thursday, they discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance them to serve their shared interests, Xinhua news agency reported. They also touched on several regional and international issues of mutual concern and the events in the Middle East.



## UN experts demand accountability for sexual violence during Hamas assault

**Tel Aviv, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Two UN-appointed independent experts have demanded full accountability for the multitude of crimes, including sexual violence, committed against Israeli civilians during the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023.

In December last year, the Israeli police launched a probe into cases of sexual violence after officers collected more than 1,000 statements and over 60,000 video clips related to the attacks of sexual violence that included accounts from people who reported seeing women raped and brutalised.

According to the experts Alice Jill Edwards and Morris Tidball-Binz, the alleged crimes

include grave violations of international law, including killings, hostage-taking and sexual torture. "As armed Palestinian groups rampaged through communities in Israel bordering the Gaza Strip, thousands of people were subjected to targeted and brutal attacks, the vast majority of whom were civilians," the experts said in a statement published by the UN on Thursday. "The growing body of evidence about reported sexual violence is particularly harrowing."

The UN experts said individuals were allegedly burnt alive in their homes or bomb shelters, while bodies were found decapitated or mutilated or both.

Many bodies had signs of trauma consistent with executions and several others had injuries consistent with beatings at or near the time of death. Allegations of sexual torture include rapes and gang rapes, sexual assaults, mutilations and gunshots to genital areas.



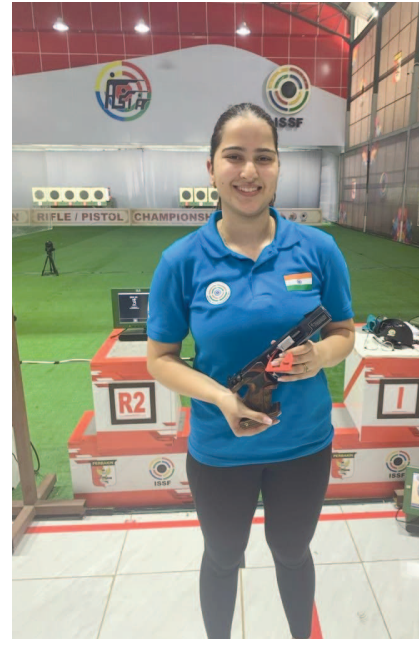
**Asian Games medallist Kishore Kumar Jena to train in Australia for Paris Olympics, Mirabai to head to the US**

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Asian Games medallist Kishore Kumar Jena is all set to train in Australia for the upcoming Paris Olympics as Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) in their latest meeting approved the proposal. The Asian Games silver medalist Jena will be training in Gold Coast, Australia for 78 days. MYAS, under its Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) will fund Jena, his coach and physiotherapist's airfare, boarding & lodging expenditures, along with cost for availing training and massage facilities, medical and local travel expenses and Medical Insurance cost among other expenditures. Meanwhile Tokyo Olympic medallist Mirabai Chanu will head to the US for a month-long rehab training at St. Louis. She will be having regular sessions with Aron Horschig.

**Rhythm Sangwan secures record 16th Olympic quota in Shooting**

**Jakarta, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Rhythm Sangwan nailed a record 16th Paris 2024 Olympics quota place for Indian in Shooting, winning bronze in the women's 25m pistol, at the on-going Asia Olympic Qualification Rifle/Pistol here on Thursday. The qualification world record holder, shot two rapid-fire series of 100 early in the morning at the Senayan Shooting range, to qualify for the final with a top score of 588. She then had 28 hits out of her first 35 targets, finishing behind a pair of Koreans, who were ineligible for quotas in the event. That gave the world cup bronze medallist the first of the two available Paris quotas, with Chinese Taipei vet-

eran Wu Chia Ying bagging the other with a fifth-place finish, behind a third Korean. It also ensured India, would be sending their largest-ever Shooting squad to the Paris Games, overtaking the highest-ever 15-quota places won ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. "It was really tough to miss out specially after making two world championship finals. But that's the sport and guess it was waiting to be a special one, a historic one. I am very happy, especially with the medals we have won and I want to thank my entire team for the support," the 20-year-old shooter said. Rhythm began the day placed fifth after the first precision round on Wednesday and if there were any doubts on her final qualification, she erased all with near perfection in the second rapid-fire round. Her 298 out of 300 propelled her to 588, three clear of Yeji Kim, the first of three Koreans to make the top eight. Simranpreet shot 577 to miss out in 11th place. South Korea had already secured two quotas in the women's 25m pistol from previous qualifying events. That



meant that Rhythm would have to finish better than at least three of the four remaining finalists, discounting the three Koreans to ensure the quota. The eight series of five rapid-fire shots began with Rhythm finding it tough yet again in the initial stages lying between fifth and sixth with two Singaporeans, besides Wu giving her a run for her money. That changed with two consecutive hits of four in the fourth and fifth series, giving her a cushion over Wu and the Singaporeans, as Filipino Shayne Quiroz became the first to exit.



**Ben Shelton beats Carballes Baena, reaches Auckland semifinal**

**Auckland, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Ben Shelton advanced to semifinal at the ASB Classic with a win over Roberto Carballes Baena on Thursday. The top-seeded American, who also reached the semis at the 2023 US Open, registered a 6-4, 6-3 win to back into an ATP Tour semi-final for the first time since he won his maiden tour-level title in Tokyo late last season. Shelton will play Japan's Taro Daniel in the semi-finals. Daniel booked his semi-final place opposite Shelton by opening Thursday's play with a 6-4, 6-7(3), 6-3 win against qualifier Alexandre Muller. The 21-year-old Shelton remains at No. 16 in the ATP Live Rankings and is guaranteed to remain in that spot regardless of his results the rest of the week. He is one place of his career-high of World No. 15, achieved last October, ATP reports.

**Australian Open: Sumit Nagal one match away from entering main draw**

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** India's Sumit Nagal has reached the final round of the qualifying tournament and is just a match away from making it to the main draw of the Australian Open. According to information received here, Nagal, the 26-year-old Indian, defeated Australian Edward Winter, a wild card, in the second qualifying match, 6-3, 6-2, that lasted one hour and four minutes at the KIA Arena. He will now take on Alex Molcan of Slovakia in the final round on Friday for a place in the season-opening Grand Slam proper.



**Steady Nishna keeps 2-shot lead going into final round of opening leg of 2024 WPGT**

**Pune, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Nishna Patel stayed a step ahead with a very steady even par 71 in the second round of the opening leg of the 2024 Women's Pro Golf Tour at the Poona Club Golf Course. Nishna thus remains at 5-under 137 for two rounds and is two shots clear of Hitaashee Bakshi. Hitaashee shot 1-under 70 which allowed her to narrow the gap between herself and Nishna to two shots. Nishna had one birdie on the front nine but surrendered that on the back nine on the Par-4 15th. With the Hero WPGT having produced at least one amateur winner each year since 2017, Nishna could keep that trend going if she holds on to her lead on Friday. Hitaashee Bakshi had four birdies against three bogeys. Three of those birdies came on the front nine. She is now 3-under 139 for two rounds. Sneha Singh (69) and Seher Atwal (68), who had the day's best round, moved up the leaderboard.



**I've got no intention of retiring from international cricket: Marcus Stoinis after getting snubbed from Australia ODI squad**

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** Australia all-rounder Marcus Stoinis has signed to play in the SA20 for Durban's SuperGiants, affiliated with his IPL club Lucknow and has made it clear that he is not retiring from ODI cricket and remains hopeful of a T20 World Cup campaign despite being left out of Australia's ODI squad for the series against West Indies. The decision to omit Stoinis from the ODI squad was not a surprise, as discussions with coach Andrew McDonald and selector George Bailey had been ongoing for months even prior to missing out on selection in the XI for the ODI World Cup final in Ahmedabad. Stoinis, displaying a commendable sportsmanship spirit, supported the inclusion of Aaron Hardie, recognising the need for a balance between retaining a core and introducing new talent after the World Cup. "I had a few conversations with Andrew McDonald over the last sort of four to six months," he was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "Spoke to George as well. In terms of selections, in terms of the fact that Hardie's coming in, I think that's brilliant. I think it makes complete sense after a World Cup. There needs to be a balance between keeping a core, and bringing new guys in."

**Women's hockey Olympic qualifiers: India get ready for key battles with a lot on the line**

**Ranchi (Jharkhand), Jan 11 (IANS) :** With the huge reputation they gained by finishing fourth in the Tokyo Olympics on the line, the Indian women's hockey team goes into battle mode here in tournament 1 of the Women's FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers hoping to make it to their third Olympics in a row. The Indian team had finished fourth in the 1980 Olympics at Moscow when women's hockey made its debut at the Olympics. They missed the action in the next three decades before finally qualifying for the 2016 edition in Rio de Janeiro. A brilliant display in the rescheduled Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in which they defeated Australia in the quarterfinals before going down to Argentina in the semis and eventually finished fourth enhanced their reputation as a team to be taken seriously. That was followed by a third-place finish in the FIH Pro League 2021-22 when a few higher-ranked teams pulled out due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



**I'd prefer Virat to bat at no.3 as Rohit, Yashasvi form good opening combination: Suresh Raina**

**New Delhi, Jan 11 (IANS) :** With India head coach Rahul Dravid confirming that Yashasvi Jaiswal will open the batting with captain Rohit Sharma for the T20Is against Afghanistan, former left-handed batter Suresh Raina backed the move, adding that Virat Kohli should bat at number three when he joins the team after the series opener in Mohali. Though Dravid hasn't ruled out the possibility of Rohit and Kohli opening the batting on the eve of the T20I series opener, having an attacking left-handed opener in Jaiswal is an asset for the side looking to embrace an aggressive style of batting. In recent times, Jaiswal has set the agenda in the power-play by attacking from the word

go and putting the opposition bowlers under pressure. Since his T20I debut against West Indies in August 2023, Jaiswal's power-play strike-rate stands at 158.69 in 14 innings. Shubman Gill's strike rate in power-plays of T20I stands at a pale 114.63, while that of Rohit and Virat stands at 134.24 and 116.75 respectively, which tells the tremendous impact Jaiswal can have as an opener for India, especially in the first six overs. "I think Yashasvi should open the innings, as the left-right batting combination at the top becomes very crucial. He plays with a lot of fearlessness and the quality he's having in his shots is something which we all have seen in the recent times. So, he should be opening the innings as it also becomes challenging for the bowlers too." "Bowling to a left-right opening pair means bowlers will be changing their lines and lengths constantly."

