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## MLC Kavitha's social media accounts hacked, She lodges complaint with police

BRS party MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha's Instagram and X social media accounts have been hacked. In a statement, she said.. **02**



## Praggnanandhaa becomes India No. 1 after beating world champ Ding Liren

Eighteen-year-old Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa surpassed Viswanathan Anand in live classical chess rankings after beating reigning world champion. **12**



## Asian Paints posts 35% rise in net profit in Oct-Dec quarter

Asian Paints, the country's largest paintmaker, on Wednesday reported a 35 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,447.72 crore for the October-December quarter .... **07**

## Komatireddy : Mega DSC to be conducted in February

**Nalgonda, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has informed that the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) examinations will be held in Telangana on the lines of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exams without any paper leaks as happened in the previous BRS government and a Mega DSC

will be conducted in February to recruit all the teacher posts. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Wednesday laid foundation station for the development of various works in Nalgonda Municipality. Stating that the people of Nalgonda have given him a big responsibility for being elected as an MLA for five times, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy promised that he would build Indiramma houses on all sides of Nalgonda town and would fulfill a dream of owning a house for the BC, SC, ST and minority people.



## Telangana welcomes 12.5 GWh cell manufacturing facility with Rs.8,000 crore investment

**Hyderabad, Jan.17 (IANS) :** Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy along with Mahesh Godi, Founder & CEO, GODI India Private Limited, announced the setting up of a 12.5 GWh cell manufacturing with an investment outlay of Rs. 8,000 crore from GODI for setting up of a Lithium and Sodium Ion and related technologies R&D and Giga scale cell manufacturing facility in Telangana, over a period of five years. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Telangana government and GODI India at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Wednesday. The proposed project has employment generation

potential of 6,000 in Phase 1. The project aims to have a 2.5 Gwh cell assembly line in Phase 1, with planned expansion to 10 Gwh in the second phase. Setup in 2020, GODI has swiftly emerged as a key player in the energy storage domain. In a short duration, GODI achieved milestones such as developing Li-ion pouch and cylindrical prototype

cells in its Li-ion pilot production line. GODI has future innovations in the pipeline, including sodium-ion and solid-state battery technologies, and establishing a cutting-edge cell manufacturing facility, catering to sectors such as defense and aerospace, solar and wind, telecommunications, electric vehicles, and electronics.

**Continued on pg 02**

## Telangana Governor's 'X' account hacked



**Hyderabad, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Telangana Governor Tamilsai Soundararajan's 'X' account was hacked by unknown people on Wednesday. Hyderabad Police registered a case on a complaint by officials of Raj Bhavan and took up investigation.

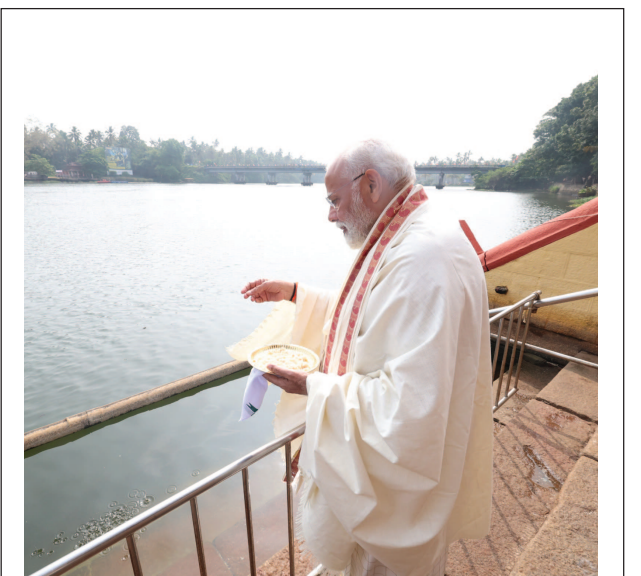
## BRS will work as per aspirations of its workers: Harish Rao

**Hyderabad, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Former minister T. Harish Rao today said the BRS party would work as per the aspirations of the party workers.

Addressing the Nagarkurnool Parliament seat Preparatory Meeting, Harish Rao thanked the party workers for attending the meeting in large numbers. Stating that it has been 45 days since the assembly election results came out, he said they recovered from the defeat and started review prepara-

tory meetings within a month while noting that it is the eleventh meeting. He said all the meetings held so far had received more valuable suggestions than expected. "What the workers want will happen in the coming days. We are working day and night for the development of Telangana. However, we failed in the assembly elections. Our party's position has changed. We have come to the Opposition from the ruling party.

**Continued on pg 02**



**PM feeds fishes at Thriprayar Shree Ramaswami Temple in Thrissur, Kerala on January 17, 2024.**



**The Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh lighting the lamp at the inaugural Ceremony of India International Science Festival 2023, in Faridabad, Haryana on January 17, 2024.**



## We have no plans to topple State government : Vinod Kumar

**Rajanna Sircilla, Jan17 (IANS) :** Former MP Boyinapalli Vinod Kumar has said the BRS party has no plans to topple the Congress government. He said if the promises made by

the Congress government are not implemented within 100 days, the people would bring down the government.

**Continued on pg 02**



## CS reviews arrangements for Republic Day celebrations

**Hyderabad, Jan.17 (NSS) :** Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari held a meeting with the officials and took stock of the arrangements being made in connection with the Republic Day celebrations to be held at Public Gar-

dens, Secunderabad. She directed all the departments to ensure inter departmental coordination and make the function a grand success.

**Continued on pg 02**

## Congress leader Adnaki Dayakar is once again disappointed

**Hyderabad, Jan 17 (IANS) :** With the party leadership making changes in the selection of candidate names at the last minute for MLC posts under the MLAs quota, Congress leader Addanki Dayakar was once again disappointed.

**Continued on pg 02**





BEFORE THE HONOURABLE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II AT Hyderabad O.A No:666 of 2023 Between: Punjab National Bank, B.O. Circle Sastra, Hyderabad. Represented by its Chief Manager and Power of Attorney Holder G. Guru Prasad ... Applicant And 1) Kambala Srinivas, S/o K. Venkaiah aged: 70 years R/o. 11-85, Nalugulakala Bhavi, Near Gandhi Park, Huzurnagar - 508204, Nalgonda. 2) M/s CGR Collateral Management Ltd 401-102, 4th Floor, KJ City Tower, Ashok Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur, Rajasthan - 302001. ... Defendants SUMMONS BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION Please take the summons in the above O.A. filed by the Applicant for Recovery of money Rs.67,32,970.40 (Rupees Sixty Seven Lakhs Thirty Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy and Paise Forty Only) against the Defendant No.2. The Hon'ble Tribunal ordered summons to you by way of paper publication in "Times of India" edition daily newspaper in "Jaipur" Edition. Rajasthan and posted the matter 22-02-2024. In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under: To show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted; To disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by. The applicant under serial number -3A of the Original application; 1) You are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties; v) You shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of assets over which security interest in created and / or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application. without the prior approval of the Tribunal. You shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets of other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are hereby required to show cause on 22-02-2024 at 10.30 a.m. at Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, 1st Floor, Triveni complex, Abids, Hyderabad - 500001, in person or by an Advocate duly instructed as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determined in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 6th day of January, 2024 (By order of the Court) Sd/- Registrar

Bank of Baroda HANAMKONDA BRANCH, Dist. Hanamkonda, Cell: 7993316630, Email: HANAMK@bankofbaroda.com DEMAND NOTICE (UNDER SUB-SECTION (2) OF SECTION 13 OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002) Whereas at their request the below mentioned Borrowers/Guarantors have been granted credit facilities by the Bank from time to time by way of financial assistance against various assets creating security interest in favour of the Bank. The particulars of properties mortgaged /charged by you by way of deposit of title deeds / hypothecation of furniture, stocks, equipments etc., creating security interest in favour of the Bank are mentioned hereunder. As you have failed to discharge the debt due to the Bank your account has been classified as Non-Performing Assets as per the guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India. As the demand notices sent to you and Guarantors by Registered post calling upon to discharge the debt due to the Bank were returned by the postal department, hence this notice is issued. Name of the Borrower: 1) M/s Tirumala Enterprises, Proprietor: Mr. Racharla Saibabu, H.No.23-6-230/2, Behind JSM High School, Near Vana Vignan, Hunter Road, Hanamkonda, Telangana, PIN: 506001. 2) Racharla Saibabu, Proprietor of M/s Tirumala Enterprises, H.No.2-9-613, NGO's Colony, Waddepalli, Hanamkonda District, Telangana, PIN: 506001. Guarantor: Mr. Gugulothu Fakedas, H.No.2-35/4-A-1, Station Ghanpur, Ghanpur Block-2, Jangaon Dist. (Old Warangal Dist.)-506144. NPA Date on: 20-11-2023 Demand Notice Date: 10-01-2024 Outstanding Aggregate Amount: Rs.16,60,482/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakhs Sixty Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty Two Only) + Interest from 03-01-2024 + other Charges, minus Recovery if any. Description of the Properties: Property-I: H.No.3-52 admeasuring 220 Sq.Yards or 183.94 Sq.Mts. with Plinth Area of 257.94 Sq.Ft. situated at Vishwanathapuram Village, Ghanpur Station Mandal, Warangal District (previously) Now Jangaon District. Boundaries: East: House of Cheruku Muthaiah, West: House of R.Chandiraiah, North: 18 Feet Way, South: Open Place of Katta Prabhakar. Property-II: Property located at H.No.3-53, Admeasuring 257.00 Sq.Yds with Plinth Area of 596 Sq.Ft. situated at Vishwanathapuram Village, Ghanpur Station, Jangaon District. Boundaries: East: House of Racharla Rama Chandram, West: 12 Ft. Wide Road, North: 18 Feet Road, South: Open Place of Katta Prabhakar. If you, the above mentioned borrowers/guarantors fail to repay the above mentioned amount due by you with future interest, incidental expenses, costs as stated above in terms of this notice under section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act within 60 days from the date of this notice the Bank will exercise all or any of the rights detailed under section 13(4) of SARFAESI Act and other applicable provisions of the said Act. This notice is without prejudice to the Bank's right to initiate such other actions or legal proceedings as it deem necessary under any other Provisions of Law. Date: 17-01-2024 Sd/- Authorised Officer Bank of Baroda Place: Hanamkonda

SHRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED Registered Office: Sri.Towers, Plot No.44A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032. Administrative office: 6th Floor(Level 2), Building No.02, Aurum Q parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Gansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710. Branch at Battala Bazar, Warangal - 506 002. SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE Where as, the undersigned being the authorised officer M/s. Shriram Finance Limited, (Shriram City Union Finance Limited, amalgamated with Shriram Transport Finance Company Limited, subsequently Shriram Transport Company Limited name Changed as Shriram Finance Limited, by its Incorporation Certificate dt.30-11-2022) a corporate body registered and incorporated as a company under the Indian companies Act 1956, is doing Non-Banking financial activities, having its Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032 and having its administrative office at 6th Floor (Level 2), Building No.Q2, Aurum Q Parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Gansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710 and branch office at Warangal-I (hereinafter referred as Company/ Lender), under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (said Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (said Rules) issued demand notices to the Borrowers details of which are mentioned in the table below to repay the amount mentioned in the said demand notices. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules, on this 12th day of January, 2024. Borrower Name and Address Amount due 1) Veera Swamy Diddi S/o Sambaiiah, Age: 62 Years, Occ: Om Sai Ram Cloth Stores, Parkal, Warangal, # 4-52/1, Block-3, Shayampeta, Warangal(Dist). And Also At: Veera Swamy Diddi S/o Sambaiiah, Age: 62 Years, # House Along With Open Place No.3-338, Parkal Village And Mandal ,Hanamkonda(Dist) Cell No. 2) Nagaraju Diddi S/o Veeraswamy, Age: 33 Years, Occ: Om Sai Ram Cloth Stores, Parkal,Warangal, # 4-52/1, Block-3, Shayampeta, Warangal(Dist). 3) Raju Dasari S/o Venkata Narsaiah, Age: 43 Years, Occ: Sai Ganesh Fashions Ladies & Gents Fancy Ready Made Show Room, Main Road, Parkal, # 3-873, Sai Nagar Colony, Parkal(Mdl), Warangal(Dist) As per Demand Notice Rs. 78,67,175/- (Seventy Eight Lakhs Sixty Seven Thousand And One Hundred And Seventy Five Rupees Only) WARRANT/131230010-DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY.: (Property holder Name Shailaja Dasari, Mortgage deed dated 30.12.2013 Registered as Document No 104052013 on the file of the office of Sub-Registrar at Warangal Fort.) RCC House along with open place bearing No.3-338, admeasuring to an extent of 179.3 Sq.yards or 149.949 Sq.Mtrs, situated at Parkal Village & Mandal, Warangal District, within the limits of Parkal Nagarpanchayat and within the Registration District: Warangal and Sub-District: Parkal, bounded as under East: Joint wall with E.Rajamouli, Sirangi Kavitha and own wall of E.Rajamouli West: G.P., C.C Road from Parkal to Hanamkonda North: PWD Road leads South: 3 feet Lane This notice is also hereby to caution the general public at large that the authorized officer of SFL is in the lawful Symbolic Possession of the immovable property mentioned herein above and the Borrowers or any person shall not after receipt of this notice transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise deal with/ alienate any of the above mentioned secured assets referred to in this notice, without prior written consent of SFL. Place: Warangal Date: 17-01-2024 Sd/- Authorised Officer Shriram Finance Limited

HANAMKONDA BRANCH, Dist. Hanamkonda, Cell: 7993316630, Email: HANAMK@bankofbaroda.com SALE OF SECURED MOVABLE ASSETS UNDER HYPOTHECATION Auction Sale under hypothecation of movable property mortgaged to Bank for recovery of the secured debts. In view of the default committed by the Borrowers mentioned below, Bank has repossessed/ seized the Hypothecated Motor Vehicle mentioned below in exercise of the powers conferred under Hypothecation Agreement executed by the parties and same is being auctioned on "AS IS WHERE IS & AS IS WHAT IS BASIS". Sr. No. Name of the Borrower Total Dues Description of the Vehicle Reserve Price EMD 1 Mr. Amarnath Nandre Rs.8,80,952/- +interest w.e.f. 09.10.2023 + other expenses etc. till date. (Less Recovery if any) Hypothecated - Vehicle i.e., Four Wheeler - Four Wheeler Vehicle (TATA PUNCH CRE 1.2P BSS AMT); Colour: CAL RED Engine No. REVTRN10GXMB3377 Chassis No. MAT634012NPGR5784 Registration No. TS24G5868 Rs. 8,00,000/- Rs. 80,000/- Minimum Bid Increase Amount: Rs.10,000/- Date/Day/Time of e-Auction: 20-02-2024, Tuesday, 11.00 AM to 2.00 P.M. Last date of submission of BID: 17-02-2024, Saturday before 4.00 P.M. Date & time of Inspection of Properties: 16-02-2024, Friday, from 10:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. 10% Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) shall be deposited through RTGS/NEFT/Fund Transfer on or before 17-02-2024, Saturday, before 4.00 P.M. to the designated account, the details of which are given as under: Account Name: NEW INTERMEDIARY ACCOUNT: Bank of Baroda A/c No.: 59909015181219, IFSC Code: BARBOHANAMK. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF E AUCTION SALE: 1. The Auction-cum-Sale shall be conducted through e-Auction mode, through the official portal of https://bob.auctiontiger.net. 2. Bank of Baroda reserves the right to accept/reject/Postpone/Cancel the E-auction without assigning any reason therefor. (FOR DETAILED TERM AND CONDITIONS PLEASE REFER TO https://bob.auctiontiger.net/). For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in - WWW.BANKOFBARODA.COM STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER HYPOTHECATION TO THE BORROWER/GUARANTOR/MORTGAGOR The above mentioned Borrower/Guarantor/are hereby notified to pay the sum as mentioned in recall notice in full before the date of auction, failing which property will be auctioned/sold and balance due if any will be recovered with interest and cost from borrower/guarantor. Date: 17-01-2024, Place: Hanamkonda Sd/- Branch Manager

Telangana welcomes 12.5 GWh cell manufacturing facility with Rs.8,000 crore investment Continued From pg 01 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy welcomed the investment and said the new government is working towards promoting the adoption of electric vehicles and establishing a comprehensive EV & ESS ecosystem in Telangana. He further added that the proposed project is aligned with the State's vision of promoting adoption of electric vehicles and GODI will be a key player in Telangana's ESS ecosystem. Mahesh GODI, thanked the State government for their support and cooperation and said that he is confident GODI will play a key role in enabling and creating an ecosystem of EV & Energy Storage companies in Telangana. "There is a groundswell of positivity and confidence in the business propensity and growth of Telangana after a Congress government under leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy took charge," he said.

CS reviews arrangements for Republic Day celebrations Continued From pg 01 The Chief Secretary informed that the Governor will unfurl the National flag at Public Gardens. The police department was instructed to make foolproof security, bandobust and traffic arrangements in this regard. The R&B department was directed to illuminate all important public buildings like Raj Bhavan, Secretariat, Legislative Assembly and High Court etc. The Energy department was asked to ensure uninterrupted power supply on all days of rehearsal and on the day of the main event. The health department was told to arrange fully equipped ambulance along with medical officers and to provide ORS packets in sufficient quantity. The Municipal department was told to take up fogging, cleaning and supply of drinking water for the contingents and to all the invitees. Similarly, other line departments have been asked to make elaborate arrangements in a befitting manner. DGP Ravi Gupta, Secretary Political Raghunandan Rao, Principal Secretary Home Jitender, DG Fire Services Nagi Reddy, Secretary to Governor Surendra Mohan, GHMC Commissioner Ronald Ross, Senior Officials from Police, defence and other officials attended the meeting.

BRS will work as per aspirations of its workers: Harish Rao Continued From pg 01 However, there is no need to be discouraged. We are the heroes of the movement and we are those who breathed life into the movement. We fought for our motherland until the intestines were opened. Let's fight as long as we have breath for the aspirations of our people of the soil even in the Opposition," he said while noting that there need not be strong reasons for changing governments in a democracy. Stating that in this period of social media misinformation, he said there was no need to have things that will help the people to change the government. "In Rajasthan, the government has changed within five years. In Chhattisgarh too, it has changed in five years. This change of governments is not new in the country. There are very rare occasions when the Congress party has ruled the States for ten consecutive years. In less than five years, Congress governments that have gone home due to the people's oppo-

We have no plans to topple State government : Vinod Kumar Continued From pg 01 Referring to the comments of Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay, he said it was strange that the MP warned that the Congress government was going to be toppled by the BRS party while asking the Congress party to work with the BJP in the upcoming MP elections Speaking to media persons along with former Manakondur MLA Rasamayi

Telangana to expedite Regional Ring Road works Hyderabad, Jan 17 (IANS) : Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has directed officials to expedite works relating to construction of Regional Ring Road (RRR) around Greater Hyderabad by completing the land acquisition within three months. The chief minister, who is currently in Davos, Switzerland to attend the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), has asked officials to remove all the hurdles in

MLC Kavitha's social media accounts hacked , She lodges complaint with police Hyderabad, Jan 17 : BRS party MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha's Instagram and X social media accounts have been hacked. In a statement, she said that Cyber criminals attempted hacking sev- eral times in a row from 10 pm on Tuesday to 11 am on Wednesday. According to her Logging in suspiciously, the miscreants posted an unrelated video on the Instagram account.

Congress leader Adnaki Dayakar is once again disappointed Continued From pg 01 The Congress high command gave a twist at the last minute and announced two names -Mahesh Kumar Goud Bomma and Venkat Narsing Rao Balmoor as the party candidates to contest the by-election to the Legislative Council of Telangana under the MLAs quota. In fact, Congress leader Addanki Dayakar has strongly aspired for the MLC seat and it has been widely publicised in the media that a party senior leader from New Delhi called him up.

PUBLIC NOTICE The General public is hereby informed that my client Sri Kandanoor Imam Saheb, S/o Late Dasthagiri Saheb, R/o H.No. 101/241-11-4, Sai Nagar, Viswanathapuram Village, CK Dinne Mandal, Y.S.R. District, is the absolute owner of all that the Plot bearing No.213, in Sy.No.59 Part, admeasuring 253 Sq.Yds, situated at Ward No.8, Block No.6, Srinivasapuram Colony, Karmanghat Village, Sarornagar Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Registered at R.O. Hyderabad, While my client is travelling from Kadapa to Hyderabad, he lost original of document No.6284/1980.The general public is hereby called upon that, if anyone found said original document or anyone, bank/ NBFC/ are having any objections, claims, right, lien, title over the above referred property, may handover / contact the undersigned within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice with relevant documents in support of their claim, otherwise my client will treat that there are no claims/objections from the general public and my client will not be bind by any claims made thereafter on this property. Sd/- T.N.Sreenivasulu, Advocate, M/s. Sree Legal Associates, # 303, RIVIERA APTS, Dwarakapuri Colony, Panjagutta, Hyderabad 500082 Cell: 9848148999 Sreelegalassociates@gmail.com

FORM NO. 14 [See Regulation 33(2)] OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - I/II DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2) 1st Floor, Triveni Complex, Abids, Hyderabad-500001. DEMAND NOTICE NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961. RC/ 143/2017 28-12-2023 Punjab National Bank ( Earlier Oriental Bank of Commerce) Versus Appanashetty Ravinder To (CD 1) Appanashetty Ravinder, R/o. 8-7-133/26, Gori Nagar, RR Nagar, Old Bowenpally, Secunderabad-500011 Hyderabad This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT2) in OA/362/2014 an amount of Rs.30,67,030.00 (Rupees Thirty Lakhs Sixty Seven Thousand and Thirty only) alongwith pendentelitte and future interest @13% Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. 11.02.2017 till realization and costs of Rs 0 (only) has become due against you (Jointly and Severally/ fully/ Limited.) 2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under. 3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of yours assets on or before the next date of hearing. 4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 25/05/2024 at 10:30 a.m. for further proceedings. 5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay: (a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate/ execution proceedings. (b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due. Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 24/02/2023 Sd/- Recovery Officer DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD(DRT 2)

FORM NO. 14 [See Regulation 33(2)] OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - I/II DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2) 1st Floor, Triveni Complex, Abids, Hyderabad-500001. DEMAND NOTICE NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961. RC/ 697/2020 04-01-2024 Punjab National Bank (e-OBC) Versus One Drop Packaged Drinking Water To (CD 1) One Drop Packaged Drinking Water, Rep. by its Prop. Sri Dasari Saidulu, S/o. Sri Yadagiri, R/o H.No.5-52, Panchavati Colony, Medipally (V) & (P), Ghatkesar Mandal, RR Dist., Hyderabad, Telangana. This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2) in OA/2973/2017 an amount of Rs 34,18,114.71 (Rupees Thirty Four Lakhs Eighteen Thousand One Hundred and Fourteen and paise Seventy One only) along with pendentelitte and future interest @ 12.50% Simple Interest yearly w.e.f. 10/02/2017 till realization and costs of Rs.26,000/(Rupees Twenty Six Thousand Only) has become due against you (Jointly and Severally/ Fully/ Limited.) 2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under. 3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of yours assets on or before the next date of hearing. 4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 07/03/2024 at 10:30a.m. for further proceedings. 5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay: (a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate/ execution proceedings. (b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due. Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date:04/01/2024 Sd/- Recovery Officer DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD(DRT 2)





## 'Headline management of PM Modi': Congress leaders on Milind Deora's exit from party

**Imphal, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Congress leaders on Wednesday downplayed the resignation of party Congress leader and former Union Minister Milind M. Deora from the party to join the Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Terming Deora's resignation as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "headline management", Congress General Secretary, Communications, Jairam Ramesh said that Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra from Manipur would have been the headline in the media

and to curb this, the resignation was conducted. "It (Deora's quitting) would have no effect on the party. One Milind Deora would go, but lakhs of other Milind Deoras would join us. It would not affect our party at all," Ramesh said here just before the launching of Rahul Gandhi led 66-day long Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra from Manipur. Congress' Media and Publicity Department Chairman Pawan Khera, asked about Deora's resignation, retorted: "Ask them (BJP) about this development.

## Extend support to Punjab Bachao Yatra : Sukhbir Badal

**Muksar Sahib (Punjab), Jan 17 (IANS) :** Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Badal on Wednesday appealed to the people to extend support to the Punjab Bachao Yatra starting from February 1 to save the future of the state and its people. Addressing a political conference at the historic Maghi Mela here, Badal said: "We have to save Punjab from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as well as its Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann who has bankrupted the state and destroyed its economy besides failing on all fronts by

betraying each and every section of society." He also appealed to Punjabis to shun the AAP-Congress alliance being formed to contest the next parliamentary elections jointly. "Both these parties have looted you and the state and now they propose to loot your vote by arriving at an unholy alliance which is detrimental to the interests of the state." Badal also appealed to all Akali leaders who had parted ways with the parent party on one pretext or another to return back to the party fold.

"Our state is under attack from the Congress and AAP, both of which are jointly responsible for our present plight. We must defeat their unholy alliance to ensure Punjab wins." He added only a regional party like SAD whose sole purpose was to protect the welfare of Punjabis and fight to secure their rights could take the state forward. "This will be a true homage to Parkash Singh Badal," he added. Badal also urged Punjabis to recognise the true character of both the Congress and AAP.



## Have started to act against terrorists in Rajouri-Poonch: Northern Army commander

**Srinagar, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Indian Army's Northern Command chief Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi on Wednesday said that the Army has started acting against terrorists in Rajouri-Poonch and the results would soon be visible. Addressing media on the sidelines of a function here today, he said: "We have started acting against terrorists in Rajouri-Poonch belt with focus on strengthening the synergy between different agencies of the security. "In the last few years, the Rajouri-Poonch area has witnessed prosperity. Our neighbouring country was not able to digest this peace and prosperity and so they are promoting terrorism in the area."

## Interstate drug smuggling attempt foiled in Assam, two arrested

**Guwahati, Jan 17 (IANS) :** In a joint operation of Assam Rifles and police in Assam's Karimganj district, an interstate drug peddling attempt was foiled, officials said on Wednesday. The police claimed that they have arrested two residents of neighbouring Tripura with at least 22,000 Yaba tablets and fake Indian currency notes were also recovered from their possession.

The police identified the accused as Pritiranjana Talukdar and Kajal Sarkar, residents of Tripura's Unakoti district.

Partha Pratim Das, the Superintendent of Police (SP) for the Karimganj district told IANS that the Assam Rifles first received the information from their intelligence sources, and that's how the combined operation was carried out on Saturday night.

"The two people who were arrested are Tripura residents who came to pick up the shipment. They were expected to deliver the Yaba tablets



to their district," Das said. The SP said that there is a possibility that the shipment originated in Mizoram and more people were involved in this case. "We are interrogating the arrested persons and by investigating the backward links, we will get more details," he said. The police said that the international market value of the seized drugs must be around Rs 2.2 crores and counterfeit currency notes were also recovered from the accused persons. "Further investigation in the matter is underway," the police officer said.

## Ayodhya gears up for 70-day celebrations

**Ayodhya (UP), Jan 17 (IANS) :** The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has made elaborate plans to welcome Ram Lalla to his original seat after a struggle of 500 years.

These largescale celebrations have started unfolding in Ayodhya where nearly 5,000 performers and artists would participate in various cultural events and rituals which would go on till March 24, the

day Holi would be celebrated. During the 70-day period prior to Holi, performers from 15 different countries and thousands of folk artists from different parts of the country have been invited.

About 100 elevated platforms would be set up across the city where cultural shows would be organised on January 22. The entire city would resonate with 'Ram dhun' and bhajans from early morning.



## NRI woman allegedly raped by company CEO in Delhi hotel, FIR lodged

**New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) :** An NRI woman was allegedly raped by a private company's CEO in a five star hotel in Delhi's Chanakyapuri area, a police official said.

The official said that an FIR under section 376 of the Indian Penal Code has been filed at Chanakyapuri police station as per a complaint received from an Indian-origin US citizen.

"She has alleged that on September 14, 2023, the incident of sexual assault happened with her by the accused in a five star hotel of New Delhi district," the senior police official said.

## Arrested Bengal minister in ration distribution case sent back to jail from hospital

**Kolkata, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Jyotipriya Mallick, the West Bengal minister arrested by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the multi-crore ration distribution case, was shifted back to correctional home from a state-run hospital where he got admitted just days after his arrest. In a surprise move on Wednesday night, Mallick was shifted back to Presidency Central Correctional Home in South Kolkata from state-run S.S.K.M. Medical College & Hospital, also in South Kolkata under the security cover of armed personnel of central armed police forces. Sources aware of the development said that with this return to the correctional home, the ED sleuths will now start questioning him after securing a court order.

## Knives out in SP for its motormouth leader Swami Prasad Maurya

**Lucknow, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Knives are out in the Samajwadi Party or senior leader Swami Prasad Maurya, who has been making a series of controversial statements on Hindu religion.

From demanding deletion of verses from Ramcharitmanas to justifying the firing on 'kar sevaks' in Ayodhya, his statements have been irking Hindu legislators, particularly those belonging to the upper castes, in Samajwadi Party (SP).

Last week, at a party meeting, legislators had raised the issue before party president Akhilesh Yadav and the latter had assured them that Swami Prasad Maurya had been asked to refrain from commenting on



religious issues. However, a day after this, Maurya made the comment on 'kar sevaks', terming them as "anti-social elements." Senior SP MLAs, Rakesh Pratap Singh and Samarpal Singh have now asked the party leadership to take action against Maurya. Rakesh Pratap Singh, in fact, went to Ayodhya to offer prayers and met the Trust office bearer Champat Rai last week.

## Odisha Police arrests fraudster for cheating by impersonating IPS officer

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Odisha Commissionerate Police has arrested one fraudster for cheating a contractor of more than Rs 7 lakh by impersonating a senior IPS officer and Superintendent of Police in the state vigilance department, said Goutam Kisan, the ACP Zone-V on Wednesday. The police have identified the accused as Manoj Kumar Majhi (34) of Krushnaprasad area in Puri district. On May 31, 2023, Manoj Kumar Choudhury, a native of Rayagada district, filed a complaint at the cyber police station in Bhubaneswar that an unknown person had duped

the complainant of Rs 7, 60,000. Based on the complaint, the Cyber Police registered a case and launched an investigation into the matter. Police later nabbed Majhi near his village and seized Rs 2.6 lakh in cash, six ATMs cards and other incriminating materials from

his possession. "The accused contacted the complainant, Choudhury, a contractor, over telephone identifying himself as a senior IPS officer and the Superintendent of Police in the Vigilance department.





OPINIONmail



INDIAN GOVERNMENT MAY CONSIDER A CONTRIBUTORY PENSION SCHEME FOR ALL

We observe a strange phenomenon every day, so strange that its strangeness goes generally unnoticed. Government spokespersons from the prime minister downwards go on repeating ad nauseam that India is the most rapidly growing major economy in the world today, that it will soon become a 5 trillion dollar economy, and that it has overtaken China in terms of the growth rate of the gross domestic product. And yet the same government spokespersons claim that the government has no money to pay for the old pension scheme for government employees, let alone for a proper universal non-contributory pension scheme for the millions who spent their working years as employees in the unorganised sector.

The world's "fastest growing economy", it appears, cannot afford pensions for its old, just as it cannot afford an adequate diet for its female population, since 57 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 49, according to the National Family Health Survey, suffered from anaemia in 2019-21 (up from 53 per cent in 2015-16). Likewise this so-called "fastest growing economy" of the world cannot provide adequate nutrition to its population in general, because of which it ranks 111th in the world hunger index among the 125 countries for whom the index is calculated; and the proportion of rural population that cannot access the minimum norm of 2200 calories per person per day that the old Planning Commission had taken as the benchmark for rural poverty has risen from 68 per cent in 2011-12 to well over 80 per cent in 2017-18 according to data made available by none other than the National Sample Survey. Let us probe matters a little further. The only argument advanced by its defenders for the new pension scheme over the old scheme for government employees is the fiscal argument; and it is taken to be almost axiomatic. The moment one mentions the old scheme, the immediate response of most media persons and economists, almost as a reflex action, is: "But the government cannot afford it". Now, under the old scheme, a government employee after retirement, received half of the last salary-cum-dearness allowance as pension, and this was adjusted subsequently for inflation (in sync with the DA of government employees in service). When adjusted for inflation, the "real" pension remained more or less constant until very occasionally updated after several years. Now, if the economy is growing in "real" terms by 6 to 7 per cent per annum as the government boasts, then, since the number of pension-earning government employees is not growing at this rate, and since any increase in real pension occurs, if at all, only after a considerable time lag, the pension amount as a proportion of GDP should be falling over time (until any real revision occurs and that can best bring it back to its original level).

In other words, far from the pension amount becoming unsustainable over time, it should be actually falling in proportionate terms over time, and hence becoming easier to accommodate, if the government's own growth figures are taken seriously. But then why is the government claiming the contrary? The reason cannot lie in the fact that while GDP growth is occurring at a rapid rate, the government's fiscal is somehow constrained from expanding at the same rate, for there is no earthly reason why this should be so. The real reason then must be that the government simply wants ever larger proportions of the GDP to go the capitalists and the rich, for which it can always advance the convenient argument that such transfers help boost investment and hence GDP growth. There is however no justification for this argument: the usual claim that if more money is given to capitalists they would invest more, is a jejune one whose vapidness was exposed almost a century ago by none other than the bourgeois economist J M Keynes, who, along with the Polish Marxist economist Michal Kalecki, showed that capitalism is generally a "demand-constrained system".

(By Prabhat Patnaik)

EDITORIAL  
the indian mail

WHO ARE BJP AND RSS TO ASK THE CONGRESS FOR LOYALTY TEST ON HINDUTVA?

Economics and culture could be mixed but certainly not the politics. It could be either centrist, liberal or rightist, but definitely not mixed. Ever since its birth in 1885, Congress has been a congregation of all shades of people, from rightists, centrists to leftists, but it steadfastly pursued the secular tenets. Nevertheless, with BJP emerging as rightist face of the Indian politics and consistently sneaking into its secular pace, the Congress will have to make an idiosyncratic decision about its identity. Propelled by RSS, the BJP is projecting itself as the flagbearer of the rightist philosophy and idea the Congress cannot hope to carry the rightists elements along. Else it would have to face indignity and blame of being opportunist. Congress leadership ought to realise that when the 24 carat Hindutva is available in the market, that is too at the cheap price, why should anyone prefer to purchase a mixed Hindutva, being sold as soft Hindutva.

(IPA Service)



IN ASSAM, CONGRESS AND AIUDF ARE ITCHING TOWARDS A SEAT SHARING FORMULA FOR LOK SABHA POLLS

With pre Lok Sabha poll campaigning yet to begin all over India, divisive religious polarisation has already reached unforeseen levels in Assam. Initially, state Chief Minister Mr Himanta Biswa Sarma set the pace in his public speeches, aggressively announcing the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Hindutva agenda. Now with the LS polls not far away, it is time for the BJP's bete noire in Assam, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) to turn the tables: AIUDF leader MP Mr Badruddin Ajmal does not usually mince his words while injecting a communal rhetoric in some of his speeches and public appeals. This time, with the election dates yet to be announced, the import of his latest message to his sizable flock of the faithful, goes

well beyond politics. The MP from Dhubri, lower Assam has enjoined Muslims to stay at home as far as possible from Jan 20 to Jan 26. He apprehends a major outbreak of communal violence in the days ahead, as GOI goes ahead with its much-hyped programme of formally inaugurating the long awaited Ram temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. His reasoning: there would be large, mainly Hindu crowds on the move all over India, heading to Ayodhya for one of the biggest mass ceremonies in recent times, on Jan 22, the day of the temple's opening. Large crowds of devotees would also be making their return journeys after the ceremony. All through this celebratory period, there could be security problems for Muslims and non-Hindus in moving around normally. Therefore it would be

advisable for Muslims to stay at home for a few days, for the sake of ensuring communal peace and harmony. In actual terms, Mr Ajmal is really appealing to Muslims to boycott the Ram temple opening celebration in its entirety, deftly presenting the spectre of yet another massive outbreak of communal violence in the state. Some observers point out that AIUDF leaders must be aware that their proposal runs counter to the sentiments of large body of Muslims in Assam and beyond, who seem to have taken the building of the Ram temple and subsequent political developments in their stride. As with the withdrawal of the special Constitutional status of Kashmir in recent times, there has not occurred any massive, angry outburst of Muslim emotions over the Ram temple anywhere in the country.

MAESTRO USTAD RASHID KHAN WAS A PHENOMENON IN INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

The legendary Kolkata based music maestro Ustad Rashid Khan's untimely departure to the way of all flesh is not only an occasion for mourning for all those who love music and life. It cuts a link between the traditional and modern space; style was the man who had also brushed the gaps between different styles of Indian classical music. There was little showmanship about the maestro though he was a part of the show biz. Such were his performances that they shine gemlike in the

collective memory of the audience. Music was in the genes of Rashid Khan being the great grandson of legendary Ustad Inayat Husain Khan, the founder of Rampur Sahaswan Gharana. While his tutelage was started under his granduncle and guru, Inayat Husain Khan, he also carried the lineage of eminent vocalists Mustaq Hussain Khan and Ghulam Mustafa Khan. He sang in the style of exploratory development reminiscent of the manner of singing handed down by the redoubtable Amir Khan. His audience was struck by his tunefulness; there was a classy style in the



way he embraced each note. The great musician died at the age of only 56. Ustad Rashid Khan became a model to aspiring singers. His style, skill and even his consistency were emulated. By other singers. It may appear to be strange and even nostalgic, Rashid Khan's excellence seemed to be a throwback to '60s and '70s. If it was not rare then, talent became increasingly in short supply as the '80s dawned marking

the emergence of this extraordinary singer who is no more. Even as the days pass, the lovers and practitioners of Hindustani classical music are being increasingly aware that something formative of their times have ended. It is very harsh to live with this reality as Ustad Rashid Khan had many more miles to go before being enveloped in the Big Sleep.



PRESIDENT BIDEN IS UNDER BIG PRESSURE FROM CONGRESSMEN TO REMOVE CUBA FROM 'TERRORIST' LIST

The Massachusetts congressional delegation was furious. The Biden administration had early on promised to remove Cuba from the U.S. list of State Sponsors of Terrorism (SSOT). Massachusetts Rep.

Jim McGovern took comfort from Congress having been told the process was underway. But at a closed-door congressional briefing in early December 2023, State Department official Eric Jacobstein told McGovern and others that, in fact, no decision had

been made. He and Reps. Ayanna Pressley, Lori Trahan, Seth Moulton, Stephen Lynch, and Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey, all Democrats, were aroused. They took further offense on learning that a six-month-long review process has to play out before Cuba's removal from the list. They wrote a letter to President Joe Biden on Dec. 14, 2023, which, unaccountably, wasn't made public until Jan. 2. The authors credited "President Obama and yourself after thorough review" for having removed Cuba from the list of SSOT nations in 2015, and for declaring "the designation is without merit." They denounced the "vindictive action taken by the Trump administration in January 2021" to restore the designation.

LOK SABHA ELECTION 2024 TO CARRY EXECUTIVE BIAS UNDER NEW LAW

Supreme Court's refusal to stay implementation of Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 has shattered the dream of the people for a free and fair Lok Sabha Election 2024, though the court has agreed to hear the pleas against the newly enacted law, but in April, when the country would already be undergoing election process under an Election Commission of India of PM Narendra Modi's choice and power.

(IPA Service)





## John Kerry to step down as US climate envoy

**Washington, Jan 17 (IANS) :** US climate envoy John Kerry is reportedly planning to step down from his role and work on President Joe Biden's re-election campaign. 80-year-old Kerry, President Biden's special envoy for climate, plans to step down by spring, ending a three-year run in a major diplomatic role that was created especially for him and which will face an uncertain future with his departure, The New York Times reported. He led the US negotiating team through three United Nations climate summits, reasserting American leadership after the country withdrew from

the Paris climate agreement during the Trump administration. Kerry championed co-operation on global warming between the US and China, the world's two largest polluters, during times of tension, the media outlet reported. As Secretary of State under former President Barack Obama, Kerry was key to brokering the crucial 2015 Paris climate agreement. That deal saw nearly the whole world for the first time support a common strategy to cut the greenhouse gas emissions which cause global warming, the BBC reported.



## Iran deploys new drone, missile units to borders: Army commander

**Tehran, Jan 17 (IANS) :** A top Iranian military commander has said that Iran's ground forces are deploying new drone and missile units to the country's borders. Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Forces Kioumars Heidari made the remarks in an interview with the official news agency IRNA published on Wednesday, elaborating on his forces' latest moves and measures to beef up the country's border security, Xinhua news agency reported. "Deployment of five drone platoons and five missile units to the borders is underway," he said, adding the positioning of the units did not mean that the country was faced with a threat, but to maintain his forces' preparedness as well as intelligence dominance and domination over the country's borders.

## Houthi official says US, UK fly spy drones over Hodeidah 'for hours'

**Aden, Jan 17 (IANS) :** A Houthi official has said that the US and UK forces flew spy drones "for hours" over the Yemeni port city of Hodeidah, where conflicting reports of a new airstrike emerged.

Ali Ahmed Kashar, the Houthi Deputy Governor of Hodeidah, told Xinhua news agency by phone that his group saw more spy drones over the city from early Wednesday morning to evening. He also denied reports from local and international media over new airstrikes on Houthi sites in Hodeidah. Earlier, local media said that a navy base near the port was hit by US-led coalition planes. Residents told the news agency they heard loud explosions and ambulance sirens. They also said the Houthis deployed heavily in Hodeidah neighbourhoods after the blast. The Houthi official made no comments on the explosions.



The Houthis have reportedly used the Ras Kutheb base to attack commercial and military ships in the vital maritime region. Hodeidah, on the Red Sea coast, is a strategic city with one of Yemen's largest ports. The Houthis have controlled Hodeidah since 2014, and the port is a lifeline for humanitarian aid and commercial supplies entering Yemen. Earlier Wednesday, UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg urged all parties to show restraint

amid a dangerous escalation in regional tensions. On Wednesday, the US and UK launched strikes on Houthi targets in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa and other areas. The strikes were in response to the Houthis' attacks in the Red Sea on what they called "Israeli-linked ships" to pressure Israel to stop its assaults in the Gaza Strip. The civil war in Yemen has raged since 2015, causing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with millions facing famine.

## William Lai wins Taiwan presidential election

**Taipei City, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Taiwanese voters have chosen William Lai as their President in a historic election, keeping the governing Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in control for a third term, despite warnings from China over his pro-sovereignty views. The move has angered Beijing, which issued a statement shortly after the results insisting that "Taiwan is part of China", the BBC reported. While Beijing has called for "peaceful reunification", it has also not ruled out the use of force. The DPP does not represent the mainstream public opinion on the island, Beijing said after Lai was named the winner of Wednesday's vote, adding that the vote "will not impede the

inevitable trend of China's reunification", Al Jazeera reported. Lai, 64, secured over 40 per cent of the vote in the three-way race, outpacing his closest rival, Hou Yu-ih of the Kuomintang, by approximately 7 percentage points, according to Taiwan's Central Election Commission. Ko Wen-je of the emerging Taiwan People's Party garnered 26 per cent of the votes. By winning an unprecedented third consecutive presidential term for his party, Lai has broken new ground. In his first remarks after his opponents conceded, he signalled that this was an irreversible trajectory, the British news broadcaster reported. "The country will continue to walk on the right path forward. We will not turn around or look backwards," Lai said during a press



conference. "I want to thank the Taiwanese people for writing a new chapter in our democracy," Lai said in a victory speech where he thanked his two opponents for conceding. "We are telling the international community that between democracy and authoritarianism, we will stand on the side of democracy," he was quoted by Al Jazeera as saying.



## 'No license to bully..' Maldives President makes fresh jab at India

**New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Amid the ongoing row, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, fresh from his China visit, made another indirect jab at India, accusing it of "bullying" his "small" nation. "We may be small but this doesn't give them the license to bully us," he said at a press conference on his return from China, according to a viral video. He also said that the Indian Ocean doesn't belong to any "specific country" and that Maldives is one of the countries with "the biggest share"

due to its large EEZ. President Muizzu's remarks follows bad blood between the two countries after three Maldivian ministers made derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi following his Lakshwadeep visit. While the three ministers were dismissed, the incident created tension with various Indian celebrities and companies asking people to avoid visiting the Maldives and taking other action to deter Indians visiting the Indian Ocean archipelago nation.



## Cockpit window crack forces ANA Boeing flight in Japan to turn back

**London, Jan 17 (IANS) :** A domestic All Nippon Airways (ANA) flight in Japan has returned to its departure airport after a crack was reported on the cockpit window during the flight, BBC reported. The crack appeared in the outermost of the four layers of window surrounding the cockpit. The incident was not serious but if left unfixed could have been "pretty dangerous", an aviation expert said. There were no injuries to anyone on board. ANA flight NH1182 was flying from the city of Sapporo in Hokkaido to Toyama, on Japan's main island, Honshu. The plane, a Boeing 737, landed back at Sapporo's New Chitose airport at around 12.10 p.m. local time, the BBC reported. A spokesperson for ANA, Japan's largest carrier, said that the crack had been found as the flight passed over Hakodate.

## Texas Governor warns of 'ultra cold temperatures' in coming days

**Houston, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Texas Governor Greg Abbott warned of "ultra cold temperatures" in the coming days as a result of a severe winter storm, while also expecting the state's electric grid will withstand. Dallas in northern Texas is to see a new record low of -10 degrees Celsius as temperatures across the region are ex-

pected to fall below freezing overnight on Wednesday and are likely to stay until January 17, according to the National Weather Service. The low on Wednesday night into Wednesday morning is expected to be around -12 degrees in Dallas-Fort Worth, reports Xinhua news agency. In Houston, the fourth largest US city located

in southeastern Texas, a hard freeze will bring the coldest weather since 2022, according to the latest forecast. "We believe that the power grid, ERCOT, is going to be able to ensure that power is available through the entirety of this winter storm," Abbott said at a news conference in Austin



## Experts denounce trips to Xinjiang as 'genocide tourism'

**New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) :** The Chinese government has thrown open the door for tourists to Xinjiang, or at least those it deems worthy of an invite, the media reported. While officials previously let in diplomats, journalists and those considered "friends of China", they are now presenting the restive far-western region as a tourist destination of sorts in a bid to remove some of the tarnish from China's image as a human rights violator in the far-western region in the eyes of the international community, Radio Free Asia reported. Nearly 400 delegations and groups consisting of more than 4,300 people from various countries and international organisations visited the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 2023, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said, the Radio Free Asia reported. The dissemination of propaganda and China's efforts to enhance the image of Xinjiang have sparked criticism from human rights groups. Claudia Bennett, a legal and program officer at Human Rights Foundation, said the orchestrated visits conceal the harsh realities of forced fam-



ily separations, arbitrary detentions of millions in concentration or forced labor camps, and thousands of Uyghurs living in exile and forcibly rendered stateless, Radio Free Asia reported. "In a strategic effort to legitimise its colonisation of the Uyghur region, the Chinese Communist Party carefully organizes propagandist visits for diplomats, journalists and religious scholars," she told Radio Free Asia. "These tours are designed to whitewash the CCP's gross human rights violations." The US-based Uyghur Human Rights Foundation, or UHRF, called the visits "genocide tourism" in a report issued last on August 30, saying that they help China conceal genocide and crimes against humanity occurring in Xinjiang. Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress, took the criticism of the junkets a step further.



## Milind Deora does the unthinkable - dumps Congress, hugs Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena

**Mumbai, Jan 17 (IANS):** Mumbai Congress was rudely jolted awake when senior leader Milind M. Deora announced that he was quitting the Congress and later on Wednesday afternoon, he officially joined Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena. The dapper, foreign-educated Deora did what many in the Congress and even the ruling MahaYuti felt was 'unimaginable' by discarding the tricoloured 'Hand' to grab the saffron 'Bow-and-Arrow' flag, and ending the Deora family's 55-year-long links with the Congress.

"I never thought I would ever leave the Congress. But the same Congress which had ushered in economic reforms in the country under the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is now abusing businessmen and industrialists and the good work of the government," said Deora in his acceptance speech as Shinde smiled broadly at the 'big catch' of the New Year, offered him party stole, a flag and flowers. On his part, Shinde mouthed a filmy dialogue to forewarn 139-year-old grand old Congress of the political poaching shows planned ahead: "This is just a trailer, the main picture is still remaining."

Till late Wednesday night, Deora and senior Congress leaders were in the denial mode with one leader terming the speculation over the upcoming defection as 'inconceivable'. However, all political kite-flying ended as Makar Sankranti dawned and Deora perched himself in the Shiv Sena's lap, almost like a Pied Piper, with a horde of Congress leaders from the faction-ridden Mumbai and Maharashtra units tagging along. For the Congress -- which had maintained a smug look when former CM Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) and senior leader Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party had also split vertically in



June 2022 and July 2023, respectively -- Deora's walkout came as the proverbial 'ill-tidings' at an inopportune time. Deora's departure -- akin to the exit of Jyotiraditya Scindi in March 2020 -- could prove damning for the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ahead of the crucial civic, parliament and

assembly elections due in 2024, when it would try to dislodge the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The immediate trigger for the exit of Deora, 47 -- a two-time MP from Mumbai South -- is said to be the uncertainty over his nomination for the same prestigious seat in 2024, after the SS-UBT unilaterally

staked claim over it. Incidentally, his father, the late Murli S. Deora was a staunch Congress veteran enjoying excellent rapport with Sonia Gandhi and former PMs Rajiv Gandhi, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Manmohan Singh, and top leaders across the political and corporate honchos in India and world over. Deora, who became MP at just 27, served as a junior minister in Manmohan Singh's cabinet for almost three years, from July 2011-May 2014, was Mumbai Congress President and had good relations with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Interestingly, Deora dumped the Congress on a critical day -- when Rahul Gandhi launched his Manipur-Maharashtra Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra (BJNY).



## Uber launches EV autos in Ayodhya, to start UberGo & intercity rides soon

**New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS):** Ride-hailing platform Uber on Wednesday flagged off its EV auto rickshaw service in Ayodhya, under its category Uber Auto, in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The company said it will also start operations of UberGo - its affordable car service -- along with Uber Intercity in Ayodhya that will support all inter-city travel needs to the holy city from popular destinations within Uttar Pradesh to connect the temple city with various destinations.

"With this expansion, we are not only providing enhanced mobility options for tourists and pilgrims but also unlocking earning opportunities for many more in the region," said Prabhjeet Singh, President Uber India and South Asia. The expansion into Ayodhya aligns with Uber's growth plans in India, said the company. Today, Uber is available across 125 cities. "We are committed to contributing to Ayodhya's tourism, promoting a seamless travel experience and fostering sustainable economic growth," said

Singh. Earlier this month, Uber started testing its flexible pricing service in several tier 2 and 3 cities in India to expand its user base, allowing commuters to bid a particular fare for their ride. Caller Uber Flex, the flexible pricing service was tested for the first time in India in October last year. The service has now been expanded to cities like Aurangabad, Ajmer, Bareilly, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Dehradun, Gwalior, Indore, Jodhpur and Surat, among other cities.



## Piyush Goyal rules out lifting export curbs on wheat, rice & sugar

**New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS):** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday ruled out the lifting of the government ban on the export of wheat, rice and sugar. "There is no proposal as of now to remove export restrictions on wheat, rice and sugar. India will not import wheat or sugar either," Goyal told media persons. The government has banned export of these essential food items to increase domestic availability and rein in prices which were adding to the inflationary spiral in the economy. As per the official figures, released on Wednesday, India's retail inflation rose to 5.69 per cent in December up from 5.55 per cent in November with higher food prices stretching household budgets. The figures show that food inflation, which accounts for close to half of the overall consumer price index (CPI).

## Akhilesh gets Ayodhya temple invite, says will visit after Jan 22

**Lucknow, Jan 17 (IANS):** Pratishta ceremony of the Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav has finally received the invitation to attend the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22. However, the former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister said that he would visit the temple, along with his family, after the inauguration event. Taking to X (formerly known as Twitter) late on Wednesday night, Akhilesh Yadav said that he received the invitation and also assured that he would come to the Ram Temple as a visitor after the Pran Pratishtha ceremony. "Thank you for the affectionate invitation to the Pran

Pratishtha ceremony of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, Ayodhya, and heartfelt wishes for the successful completion of the ceremony. We will surely visit with family as devotees after the Pran Pratishtha ceremony," the SP leader said in a letter to the temple trust. The SP leader, in the letter shared on X, also congratulated the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. Akhilesh Yadav's reply came after a political row over the attendance at the ceremony by various political parties. On Wednesday, Yadav alleged that the BJP was humiliating the opposition parties in the name of Lord Ram.



## 2023 Himachal landslides a reminder of how vulnerable Himalayan states are

**Shimla, Jan 17 (IANS):** Himachal Pradesh is still recovering from one of its worst disasters in a century, which claimed over 400 lives with a cumulative loss of over Rs 10,000 crore following torrential rains that triggered landslides, flash floods and cloud-bursts during the 2023 monsoon, leaving thousands of families homeless. Terrifying visuals of landslides sweeping away several multi-storey buildings and hundreds of people being evacuated and rescuers searching for people feared missing in the northern Himalayan state were common in the August-September calamity. Scientists say the frequent floods and devastation in the Himalayan states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are proof of the increasing climate risks to an already vulnerable

and fragile ecosystem. They attribute rising temperatures to the increased atmospheric evaporation and humidity levels for the sudden extreme rains. The constant rise in land and sea temperatures has made the Himalayas vulnerable to torrential rains and these compound disasters. The Himalayas are recognised as a global hotspot vulnerable to greenhouse gas emissions. Experts have already warned against the unprecedented rise in extreme weather events and unplanned development projects. The southwest monsoon of 2023 is a reflection of what climate change impacts would do to the Himalayas if global warming goes unchecked, remarked an expert. What does science say about the sensitive Himalayan region? The rise in extreme weather events is unprecedented, and they have been multiplying rapidly.



The monsoon of 2023 is an apt reflection of what climate change impacts would do to the Himalayas if global warming goes unchecked. Climate scientists say more heating means more extreme rainfall. The atmosphere, land and oceans are all warming at a faster rate. The warmer it becomes, the more moisture the atmosphere can hold. This has led to more water being evaporated from the Earth's surface. This increases the holding capacity of the air, which results in more droplets and heavier rainfall, sometimes in a shorter space of time and over a smaller area. Experts told IANS that humidity

is the prime factor behind the increasing likelihood of heavier rainfall and even more dangerous heatwaves. Both humidity and temperature are the twin pillars of climate change. There has been a change in the western disturbance trajectory of late. They are more prevalent during winter when they travel in lower latitudes, bringing rain and snow over northern India. During the summer, these systems tend to travel in higher latitudes and do not have much impact on the region.

## Bug-like substance in liquor bottle: Tasmac to pay Rs 5 lakh fine

**Chennai, Jan 17 (IANS):** The Tamil Nadu Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Sriviliputhur has charged a fine of Rs 5 lakh on Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (Tasmac) and a distillery over a complaint by a consumer that he found a bug like substance in a brandy bottle he purchased from the Corporation's outlet. In addition to the Rs 5 lakh fine, both the parties are directed to pay an amount of Rs 35,120 to the complainant who has filed the petition. District Consumer Redressal

Commission President SJ Chakravarthy and member M Muthulakshmy issued the orders on a petition filed by A. Marikannan who was the affected party. Marikannan had in his complaint stated that he had purchased a 180 ml bottle of brandy from the Tasmac shop in Muhavoor of Sriviliputhur for Rs 120 in May, 2021. He noticed a big like substance inside the bottle and the next day he went to the Tasmac outlet and sought for a replacement. He also told them that he had not broken the seal and not opened the bottle.







## Bank of Baroda launches bob 360 – a Short-Term Deposit Scheme

Hyderabad, Bank of Baroda (Bank), one of India's leading public sector banks, today announced the launch of the bob 360 Deposit Scheme, a special short-term retail deposit scheme offering higher interest rates up to 7.60% p.a. for 360 days, which includes 0.50% p.a. for senior citizens. The scheme opens on 15th January, 2024 and is applicable on retail deposits below Rs 2

crore. Amongst large banks, this is one of the most attractive rates being offered to depositors for fixed deposits of less than 1 year maturity. Shri Joydeep Dutta Roy, Executive Director, Bank of Baroda said, "bob 360 is an excellent opportunity for depositors who are looking for higher interest rates and assured returns for a shorter time period.

## Apple revises App Store guidelines, allows apps that offer in-app purchases

San Francisco, Jan 17 (IANS) : After a recent US Court decision, Apple has updated its App Store guidelines that allow developers to link to outside websites for in-app purchases. "Starting today, because of a recent US Court decision, App Store Review Guideline 3.1.1 has been updated to introduce the StoreKit Purchase Link Entitlement (US), which allows apps that offer in-app purchases in the iOS or iPadOS App Store on the US storefront the ability to include a link to the developer's website that informs users of other ways to purchase digital goods or services," Apple said in a blogpost.



## Bayer and Sun Pharma sign marketing and distribution agreement for second brand of Finerenone in India

Hyderabad & Ahmedabad, Jan 17 (TIM Bureau) : Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Limited (Reuters: SUN.BO, Bloomberg: SUNP IN, NSE: SUNPHARMA, BSE: 524715, "Sun Pharma" and includes its subsidiaries and/or associate companies) and Bayer today announced that both companies have signed an agreement to market and distribute a second brand of Finerenone in India. Finerenone, a patented medicine is indicated to reduce the risk of sustained eGFR decline, end-stage kidney disease, cardiovascular death, non-fatal myocardial infarction, and hospitalization for

heart failure in adult patients with chronic kidney disease associated with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Under the terms of the agreement, Bayer has granted the non-exclusive rights to Sun Pharma to market and distribute a second brand of Finerenone under the brand name Lyvelsa®. Finerenone was first launched by Bayer under the brand name Kerendia TM in 2022

Shweta Rai, Country Division Head (CDH) for Bayer's Pharmaceuticals Business in South Asia said, "With the introduction of a second brand of Finerenone in India, through our partnership with Sun Pharma, we are advancing Bayer's commitment of making healthcare



accessible to as many patients as possible. India has a high incidence of diabetes and associated renal and cardiac conditions. The true value of innovations like Finerenone can only be fully realized after they reach all deserving patients." Kirti Ganorkar, CEO - India

Business, Sun Pharma said, "We are happy to collaborate with Bayer to provide patients access to a new treatment which slows down the progression of chronic kidney disease and reduces the risk of kidney failure associated with Type-2 diabetes.



## Foxconn partners HCL Group to start chip packaging in India, invest \$37.2 mn: Report

New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) : Taiwanese contract manufacturing giant Foxconn has said that it is teaming up with HCL Group to start a chip packaging and testing venture in India, a media report said on Wednesday. According to a regulatory filing to Taiwan's stock exchange, Foxconn Hon Hai Technology India Mega Development, a division of the Taiwanese contract manufacturer, will invest \$37.2 million

for a 40 per cent ownership in the joint venture, reports Moneycontrol. The chip packaging and testing venture, called OSAT in industry lingo, comes after Foxconn abandoned a joint venture with Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta in July last year. HCL Group had earlier announced that it was in active talks to establish an OSAT facility with the state government of Karnataka, the report mentioned. This development comes after the company submit-

ted a fresh application to establish a semiconductor fabrication unit in India under the "modified scheme for setting up semiconductor facilities in India" -- a government initiative aimed at promoting the electronics manufacturing sector, including semiconductors, the report added. "Foxconn has to establish that they have the technology to manufacture semiconductors. The process of verifying the technology and so on is cur-

rently underway at the ministry," a government official was quoted as saying. Meanwhile, Foxconn has received approval to invest at least \$1 billion more in a plant in India that will manufacture Apple products, a significant step towards its aim of establishing a hub outside of China.



## Asian Paints posts 35% rise in net profit in Oct-Dec quarter

Mumbai, Jan 17 (IANS) : Asian Paints, the country's largest paintmaker, on Wednesday reported a 35 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,447.72 crore for the October-December quarter of the current financial year on the back of strong sales in the festive season. The company had recorded a Rs 1,072.67 crore net profit in the same quarter last year. A 12 per cent volume growth in the decorative segment helped the company's turnover rise more than 5 per cent to Rs 9,075 crore. "Growth was supported by the extended festive season.

## PLI schemes attract investment of over Rs 1 lakh crore, create 6.8 lakh jobs

New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) : Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes witnessed over Rs 1.03 lakh crore of investment till November 2023, which has led to sales to the tune of Rs 8.61 lakh crore, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday. These investments have generated employment (direct & indirect) of over 6.78 lakh and led to a sharp increase in exports, the ministry said. PLI schemes have witnessed exports surpassing Rs 3.20 lakh crore, with significant contributions from sectors such as

large-scale electronics manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, food processing, and telecom & networking products. As on date, 746 applications have been approved in 14 sectors with expected investment of over Rs 3 lakh crore. A total of 176 MSMEs are among the PLI beneficiaries in sectors such as bulk drugs, medical devices, pharma, telecom, white goods, food processing, textiles, and drones. Several MSMEs are also benefiting under the scheme as they are serving as investment partners or contract manufacturers for large corporates. Incentive amount of around Rs 4,415 crore has been disbursed under PLI



schemes for 8 sectors including large-scale electronics manufacturing (LSEM), IT hardware, bulk drugs, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, telecom & networking products, food processing, and drones & drone components. Manufacturing of various electronic components like battery, chargers, printed circuit boards, camera modules, passive components and certain mechan-

ics have been localised in the country. Green shoots in the component ecosystem have emerged with large companies such as Tatas entering component manufacturing. PLI beneficiaries account for only around 20 per cent of the market share, but have contributed to around 82 per cent mobile phones exports during FY 2022-23.



## Hyundai Motor sells one of its plants in China for around \$221 mn

Seoul, Jan 17 (IANS) : South Korea's top carmaker Hyundai Motor has sold one of its plants in China as part of a business reorganisation strategy in the world's biggest auto market. Beijing Hyundai Motor, Hyundai's joint venture with China's Beijing BAIC Motor, sold the Chongqing plant to an industrial park developer based in the central Chinese city for some 296 billion won (\$221 million) at the end of last year, according to Hyundai Motor.

The plant with an annual capacity of 300,000 units went online in 2017, but was put up for sale in June last year amid slowing demand, reports Yonhap News Agency. "Hyundai Motor is trying to

boost business efficiency in China and the sale is part of its efforts to improve profitability through the rationalisation of production," a company official said. Hyundai Motor, whose sales in China reached 1.14 million units in 2016, has been suffering from slumping sales since 2017 over a diplomatic dispute between Seoul and Beijing over the deployment of a US anti-missile system in South Korea. Hyundai Motor operated five plants in China at its peak but sold one of them, the number 1 Beijing plant, in 2021 in the wake of plunging demand. The company reportedly plans to sell its plant in the southern Chinese city of Changzhou in line with its business reorganisation strategy.



## Sensex plunges more than 1,600 points led by HDFC Bank

New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) : Markets have slumped further with the BSE Sensex now plunging more than 1,600 points in afternoon trade on Wednesday. Sensex is down 2.2 per cent or 1,611 points at 71,516 points. Private sector banks, metals are leading the market fall which is awash in a sea of

red. Private sector bank stocks are the biggest losers on Wednesday as the Sensex plunged 1,300 points. Index heavyweight, HDFC Bank is down more than 8 per cent, Kotak Mahindra is down more than 3 per cent, Axis Bank is down 3 per cent, ICICI Bank is down 2 per cent.





## Israel reaches deal to deliver medicine to hostages in Gaza

**Jerusalem, Jan 17 (IANS)** : Israel has reached an agreement with Qatar to allow the delivery of vital prescription drugs to Israeli hostages in Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office has said in a statement. "The medication will be delivered in the next few days," it noted. David Barnea, Israel's Mossad intelligence agency chief, led the talks with Qatar on the Israeli side, the office was quoted as saying by Xinhua news agency. The high-level negotiations included talks about increasing the quantity of

medicines that Israel allows into the besieged enclave for Gaza civilians. However, the statement did not mention whether progress has been achieved on the issue. About 132 people are still held in Gaza by Hamas and other militant groups after being kidnapped during Hamas' surprise attack on October 7. The Israeli bombardment and siege have created a severe humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, killing more than 23,000 people, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry.



## 'Fauda' star Idan Amedi released from ICU after being injured in Gaza war

**Tel Aviv, Jan 17 (IANS)** : Idan Amedi, star of the popular Netflix web series 'Fauda', has been released from the ICU after he was admitted for grievous injuries he sustained in the ongoing war in Gaza. He has now been shifted to the trauma centre at the Sheba Medical Centre in Ramat Gan city. The Fauda star was a reservist in the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) and had been serving in the Combat Engineering Corps when he was hit by sharpshooters across the body. He has documented mo-

ments from the military 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 the October 7, 2023 Hamas massacre. "May God and us avenge their blood," Amedi said. In the popular web series, Amedi portrays his role of Sagi, a member of the counter-terrorism unit headed by Doron played by actor Lior Raz.

## Trump cancels 3 out of 4 weekend rallies due to icy weather

**Washington, Jan 17 (IANS)** : Former US President Donald Trump has cancelled three out of four rallies scheduled for this week due to icy weather caused by a major winter storm that has led to heavy snowfall across large parts of the country. Trump has cancelled two rallies that he was slated to hold on Wednesday in Sioux City and Atlantic and will only attend a tele-rally featuring Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird in the evening, reports CNN. The former President is still scheduled to hold one in-person rally on Wednesday in Indianola. His campaign also

cancelled the second rally he was slated to hold in Cherokee and will instead hold a tele-rally with Iowa state Representative Bobby Kaufmann. After the cancellations were announced, Trump speculated that the extreme weather in Iowa -- where the 2024 election cycle kicks off on January 15 -- could be good for his campaign ahead of the upcoming caucuses, CNN reported. "You have the worst weather, I guess, in recorded history, but maybe that's good because our people are more committed than anybody else so maybe it's actually a good thing for us. But we have to make sure we caucus on Wednesday," Trump said in a video posted to X on Wednesday. The former President



said he would "get there sometime around Wednesday night or something -- one way or the other I'm getting there". "I'll get to see you on Sunday and Monday and maybe Saturday night late. It's going to be a little bit of a trek, nobody knows how exactly we're going to get there, but we're going to figure it out. And we wouldn't miss it for anything. "We have record cold weather, record snowfall, record everything, but

we will not miss it," he added. As a result of the Arctic blast, the National Weather Service has issued weather alerts in nearly every state, as snow is in the forecast into Wednesday from as far west as Oregon to as far east as Maine, the BBC reported. More than 70 million people are under winter weather alerts. Temperatures are expected to dip to -45 degrees Celsius in some areas.

## Taiwan goes to polls amid warnings from China

**Taipei, Jan 17 (IANS)** : Some 19.5 eligible voters in Taiwan will cast their ballots on Wednesday to elect a new President and Parliament amid growing warnings from China that Taipei's future was at "crossroads". Voters queued up outside polling stations across the country and voting will end at 4 p.m., reports CNN. Results are expected later in the evening. During the campaign period, candidates toured major cities and staged nightly rallies, featuring rock music, emotional speeches and the rhythmic chanting of slogans by large crowds. The three main contenders vying to succeed incumbent President Tsai Ing-wen -- the island's first female leader -- are Hou Yu-ih from the main opposition Kuomintang (KMT) party; Ko Wen-je from the Taiwan People's Party (TPP); and Lai Ching-te from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP). Lai, who is the incumbent Vice President, is hoping to win a third term for the ruling DPP, which has always clashed with Beijing over its defence of Taiwan's sovereignty. This would be unprecedented in the island's nearly three decades of democratic history and rejecting China's strongarm tactics, CNN reported. Meanwhile, Hou, a mayor and former police chief, is the candidate KMT, which traditionally favours closer cross-strait ties. A victory for the KMT would be welcome to Beijing and signal that voters might want to de-escalate tensions. Ko, who founded the TPP in 2019 to challenge the island's political duopoly, also favours closer ties with China but says he will be less deferential to Beijing than the KMT.



## Guterres urges adherence to UNSC resolution after US-led airstrikes on Houthis

**United Nations, Jan 17 (IANS)** : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged all parties involved to adhere to UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2722 following the US-led airstrikes on the Houthis. Through a statement on Wednesday, the top UN official expressed deep concern over attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea, stating, "Attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea area are not acceptable as they endanger the safety and security of global supply chains and negatively impact the economic and humanitarian situation worldwide." He reiterated the Security Council's demand from resolution 2722 for the Houthis to "immediately cease all such attacks", underscoring the necessity of full compliance with the resolution, Xinhua news agency reported. The UN chief called on all member states defending their vessels from attacks to ensure their actions align with international law, as outlined in the resolution. Moreover, Guterres urged all parties involved to refrain from escalating the situa-

tion, prioritizing peace and stability in the Red Sea and the broader region. He stressed the importance of avoiding actions that could further deteriorate the situation in Yemen. Guterres appealed for continued efforts towards peace, emphasizing that "the work undertaken thus far to end the conflict in Yemen should not be lost." The Security Council on Wednesday adopted resolution 2722 to condemn the attacks by the Houthi militia on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea. The resolution condemns "in the strongest terms" the Houthi attacks on Red Sea vessels since November 19, 2023, when they attacked and seized the Galaxy Leader and its crew. The US and the UK launched several airstrikes on Houthi military sites around the Yemeni capital Sanaa before dawn.

## Ukraine, UK sign security agreement

**Kiev, Jan 17 (IANS)** : Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and visiting UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak have reportedly signed a security agreement. Zelensky said on Wednesday that the guarantees prescribed in the 10-year agreement will be in place until Ukraine joins the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Xinhua news agency reported, citing the Interfax-Ukraine

news agency. "We agreed with Britain on security in all areas -- on the land, in the air, at sea and in cyberspace," Zelensky noted. According to the President, the deal covers issues related to weapons, sanctions, Ukraine's border and post-conflict recovery. For his part, Sunak said that under the deal, the UK will provide Ukraine with weapons, including naval weapons.



## WHO warns of persistent threats from Covid

**Geneva, Jan 17 (IANS)** : Public health risks resulting from the Covid-19 virus remain high globally, with the virus circulating in all countries, a senior expert from the World Health Organization (WHO) said here. According to estimates based on wastewater analysis, the actual circulation of Covid-19 is two to 19 times higher than the number of reported cases, Maria van Kerkhove, the interim director of WHO responsible for epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention,

told a special briefing in Geneva. She also expressed concerns regarding the emergence of post-Covid conditions (also called "long Covid") affecting multiple organs. While there has been a drastic reduction in Covid-related deaths since the peak, around 10,000 deaths per month are still reported from 50 countries. Van Kerkhove expressed concerns about the evolving nature of the virus, with the Covid-19 JN.1 variant representing around 57 percent of global sequences analysed by the WHO. Defined by specific criteria, including symptoms like severe fatigue, lung impairments,



neurologic issues, and cardiac impairments persisting for four to 12 months or longer after the acute phase of the disease, the post-Covid condition is a matter of concern, she said. Estimates suggest that one in ten infections could lead to post-Covid conditions, including severe cases. "No treatments are available yet because it's still so new," van Kerkhove said. "There is insufficient attention and

funding dedicated to this area," she added. She also warned of the rapid increase in the number of influenza infections in the northern hemisphere, with influenza positivity standing at around 20-21 per cent in week 51 of 2023. The expert also emphasized the need for simultaneous flu and Covid-19 vaccination to mitigate the burden on healthcare systems.





## Not believing in Lord Ram is an insult to Constitution : Dhankhar

**Jaipur, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday said that not believing in Lord Ram is an insult to the Constitution as there is mention of Ram Temple in the Constitution as well. "Those who do not believe in Lord Ram are insulting the Constitution. Ram Temple is mentioned in the Constitution. If we look at the Constitution, the photos of Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman are hidden," the Vice President said while addressing a gathering on occasion of World Electropathy Day in Rajasthan's International Center Auditorium. On newly elected Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, the Vice President said that the future of Rajasthan is in safe hands today.

## Amid allegations of Jaichand and Vibhishan's presence within party, 'divided' BJP eyes 25-seat victory in Lok Sabha

**Jaipur, Jan 17 (IANS) :** The successive meetings of Rajasthan BJP for Lok Sabha elections on Wednesday and Thursday has exposed the deepening rift within the saffron party. As the party leaders keep discussing strategies to win all 25 seats in Lok Sabha, the absence of senior leader and former CM Vasundhara Raje in significant meetings has raised many eyebrows. Party leaders confirmed to IANS that there is a serious

issue of protocol among party leaders. The first timer MLAs have been made the CM and ministers in large numbers. Eventually, the senior party leaders are shying away from attending meetings with them. They consider it in low esteem to attend meetings being called by their so-called juniors, party leaders told IANS. The issue of factionalism, in fact, was brought forth soon after assembly polls when former leader of opposition Rajendra Rathore brought in the reference of

'Jaichand' as the reason for his defeat. Rathore raised the issue of factionalism soon after the elections when he lost from Taranagar seat. He openly brought in the reference of 'Jaichand' for the reason of his defeat.



## TM Krishna & the sound of speaking out

**Kozhikode, Jan 17 (IANS) :** He says growing up in an environment at home where questioning and debating was encouraged, where one had the space to put forth his thoughts, no matter how radical, have been instrumental in shaping him the person he is. Ramon Magsaysay Award winner TM Krishna, who is not just a musician and author, stresses, "And then I went to a Krishnamurti School that further cemented the resolve that you cannot remain quiet, that you are part of the question..." "The duet of the outside and inside, and that is what pushes me to constantly engage with what we encounter politically and socially," he tells IANS on the sidelines of the ongoing Kerala Literature Festival (KLF), Asia's largest literature festival.

For someone, whose performing career began at the age of 12, he has multiple books to his credit including 'Sebastin And Sons', where he talks about the integrity of the Mridangam on the Karnatik stage and the Dalit Christian communities involved in the making of percussion instrument, and 'Reshaping Art', where he raises questions about how art is made, performed and disseminated, and addressing issues as caste, class, and gender within society while exploring the contours of democracy, culture, and learning.



## Cancer patient dies in Rajasthan after oxygen supply stops due to power cut

**Jaipur, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Rajasthan Medical and Health Minister Gajendra Singh Khinvsar on Wednesday issued Awaited Posting Orders (APO) to three health officials following the death of a cancer patient after a disruption in oxygen supply due to the power cuts. The minister issued the APO orders against senior medical officer Dr. Kuldeep and two nurses Omaram and Manisha. The deceased cancer patient is a 24-year old youth who died on Friday morning after the oxygen supply was disrupted due

to power cuts at Mathuradas Mathur Hospital in Jodhpur. The minister said that a proper investigation regarding the case has been ordered. Relatives of the deceased said that the oxygen supply stopped after there were power cuts which led to the death of the patient. They said that the deceased was the only son in the family. After the incident, angry family members created a ruckus outside the hospital and accused the management of negligence. A video of the dying patient has also surfaced on social media.

## Warming oceans behind extreme rainfall that lashed southern TN in Dec 2023

**Chennai, Jan 17 (IANS) :** In December 2023, to be precise on December 17 and 18, in the course of the north east monsoon, Tirunelveli, a coastal district in south Tamil Nadu, witnessed a record breaking rainfall of 123.9 cm. Data from the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) states that this was 146% higher than the seasonal average of 50.3 cm. On December 18, 2023, a weather station in Kayalpattinam in Thoothukudi district (again in South Tamil Nadu) recorded 94.6 cm, the highest rainfall ever witnessed in 24 hours during the north east monsoon (NEM) in Tamil Nadu. This new observation is equivalent to 90% of the usual rainfall received by the entire district in a year. Such extreme rainfall is usual during severe cyclones but the record break-

ing rainfall in South Tamil Nadu that created havoc in the districts of Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi and Kanniyakumari was due to an upper air circulation as per the Regional Meteorological Centre deputy director, S. Balachandran. Weather forecasting models can accurately predict up to and above 20 cm rainfall in a day and RMC predicts rainfall in three categories: heavy (6 to 11 cm); very heavy (12 to 19 cm) and extreme (20 cm and above). "The closest comparison to the extreme rainfall event at Kayalpattinam in recent years is from May 6, 2004, when Aminidivi at Lakshadweep recorded 116.8 cm and July 27, 2005, when Vihar lake in Mumbai received 104.9 cm. While the Lakshadweep event happened when a cyclone passed near the islands, the Mumbai rains happened during the southwest monsoon which is generally a much larger phenomenon compared to NEM in India, according to Thoothukudi based weather expert and blogger Rajeev Nath. According to climatologists it was the bare minimum system that caused such intense rainfall in southern Tamil Nadu. A bare minimum system is an event that is classified as a weak disturbance and extreme rainfall is not usually predicted at that time. Rajeev Nath said that the heavy rainfall that was witnessed in Tamil Nadu was upper air circulation and that the rains came in isolated locations such as Kayalpattinam which could be attributed to climate change.



## CPI(M) planning for youthful leadership at all levels in Bengal

**Kolkata, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Inspired by the success and huge crowd turnout at Insaaf Samavesh (Gathering of Justice) organised by CPI(M)'s youth wing, Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), in Kolkata on January 7, the party leadership is now stressing on inducting fresh blood at all levels of leadership. Sources from the party's state committee said that besides giving the charge of important assignments at all levels of the leadership to youths, special membership drives are being undertaken to include individuals below the age of 30 as party members.

## AI to monitor traffic violations in B'luru : Shivakumar

**Bengaluru, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Wednesday said that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be used to monitor traffic violations in the city. "More than 6,000 driving licences have been cancelled in the last three years. As per NCRB data, two-wheelers are involved in most of the accidents. It is important that two-wheeler riders compulsorily wear helmets," the Deputy Chief Minister said during his speech on the occasion of National Road Safety Month-24 at Kanteerava Stadium. He said that one should have confidence but not over-confidence while driving. "Life is precious, follow traffic rules. Don't indulge in footpath riding and signal jumping," the Deputy Chief

Minister urged youth, while emphasising the need to impart education about road safety. The government has also released a handbook called 'Molakeyalle Thiddiri' (correct them in formative years) to create awareness among children about traffic rules, discipline, tolerance, etc. The Deputy Chief Minister said that during the previous Con-

gress government, they had introduced 'CM Santwana Harish' scheme to provide immediate treatment to accident victims. "Population of Bengaluru is increasing rapidly and so is the vehicular population. We are formulating a plan to ease traffic in the city in collaboration with BBMP, Police Department and Transport Department.



## 8 lakh laddoos from Kashi Vishwanath, Mahakal temples to be distributed on Jan 22

**Varanasi, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Soon after the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of the Ram temple is completed on January 22, nearly eight lakh laddoos from the courts of Lord Vishwanath in Varanasi and Mahakal in Madhya Pradesh will be distributed in and around Varanasi. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple is set to produce 3 lakh laddoos while the Mahakal temple is ex-

pected to dispatch approximately 5 lakh laddoos for distribution in Varanasi. Kaushal Raj Sharma, director of the religious affairs department and divisional commissioner, said: "A total of 3 lakh laddoos are being prepared for distribution through the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. The plan is to distribute 1.5 lakh laddoos among the devotees visiting KV Dham on January 22.





## Delhi-NCR air quality plunges to 'severe' levels, CAQM implements GRAP-III for immediate action

**New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) :** The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Wednesday invoked Graded Action Response Plan (GRAP)-III in the Delhi-NCR after the air quality dipped to severe levels, owing to unfavourable meteorological and climate conditions. "CAQM Sub-Committee for operationalization of GRAP called on an emergency meeting today morning in view of

sudden deterioration of air quality of Delhi-NCR from last evening," said the CAQM on X. It said that the sub-committee decides to invoke eight point action plan as per Stage-III of revised GRAP in the entire NCR with immediate effect. In GRAP-III, restrictions on plying of BS III petrol and BS IV diesel LMVs (4 wheelers) in Delhi and in the districts of Gurugram.



## Stalin dismisses rumours of Udayanidhi Stalin being elevated to Deputy CM

**Chennai, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Wednesday dismissed rumours that his son and state Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Udayanidhi Stalin was being elevated as Deputy Chief Minister. In a statement, he said that Udayanidhi Stalin has himself dispelled the rumours by stating that all the ministers under the Chief Minister were his deputies and thus scotched all the speculations.

## UP Police focuses on data to start predictive policing

**Lucknow, Jan 17 (IANS) :** The UP Police will now map crime patterns, analyse and research co-relations in crime patterns to formulate better precautionary strategies through an in-house portal 'Big Data Analysis' created for crime analytics and predictive policing. According to state director general of police (DGP) Vijay Kumar, "The investigative police brains have gone creative to be more focused and yield better results. The portal has been created by officers of UP Police Technical Services led by additional director general (ADG) Naveen Arora and superintendent of police (SP) Shahab Rashid Khan after analysing the field difficulties and requirements."

He said the officials concerned had been provided restricted access to the portal. Police station in-charge can access details of its limited jurisdiction while district police chiefs could access the details of the entire districts. Similarly, the officials supervising at range, zone and state levels could have different access of their regions, he added.

ADG, technical services, Naveen Arora, said this application would fetch details from all FIRs registered at Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System



(CCTNS) -- the central government-funded mission mode project since 2017.

He said the in-charge of a particular police station could access this application through one click and go through the entire crime pattern, its frequency, its hotspots and clusters year wise, month wise, fortnight wise, week wise, day wise and hour wise. "We have charted a crime mapping that indicates frequency, area, timing and trend," he added. The official further said the application could be accessed at different levels to analyse and improve policing by changing patrolling routes, fixed picked duties and mobile duties.

## PM Modi to flag off BJP's mega push to reach out to first-time voters on Jan 25

**New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) :** The BJP -- which is currently focusing on the country's poor, youth, farmers, and women -- is gearing up to make a significant impact on the youth aged between 18 and 23 years.

In the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections, those voters who were not eligible to vote in the previous 2019 Lok Sabha elections due to being under 18 years old will now cast their votes for the first time. The BJP believes that not only youth aged 18-19 but also those up to 23 years old will cast their votes for the first time in 2024 to elect the MP and the Prime Minister.

The party also believes that when Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister for the first time in 2014, the average age of these youth was around 8-13 years. In other words, these youths have not witnessed Congress governments and have not experienced the governance of the Congress era. The BJP emphasises that it is crucial to make these youths

understand the difference between the Congress and Modi governments. For this purpose, the party is running continuous campaigns not only in schools, colleges, and various educational institutions but also on popular social networking sites among the youth.

At a time when opposition parties are consistently attempting to corner the BJP government through schemes like unemployment and Agniveer, the BJP aims to preemptively convey its message directly to the youth of the country before the official announcement of the election through an aggressive turnaround campaign.

The BJP has set a target to secure 50 per cent of the votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. To achieve this, the party needs to increase its voter base, creating a new category of voters dedicated to supporting the BJP and casting their votes.

Looking at the numbers, there are more than 80 million new voters across the country, and an even larger increase is expected. If these new voters come out of their homes to vote on election day,



they will play a crucial role in the electoral outcome. Therefore, the BJP has taken a bold step by targeting youth aged 18 to 23.

While the responsibility of enticing and connecting with these new voters has been assigned to the Youth Morcha, but PM Modi and BJP President Nadda are playing a crucial role in the campaign to attract first-time voters.

Before the important campaign led by the Youth Morcha, Nadda made a significant change by appointing Sunil Bansal as the new head of the Youth Morcha.

Having won several elections in UP through his organisational ca-

pabilities, Sunil is favoured by both PM Modi and Amit Shah.

The BJP aims to connect one crore new voters out of more than 80 million across the country. On Wednesday, Nadda also inaugurated the 'Namto Navmatdata Abhiyan' at the party headquarters.

To attract first-time voters, the party has launched a digital campaign under this initiative, launched T-shirts, unveiled the 'Namto Navmatdata Registration Portal,' and even issued a toll-free number for the registration of new voters.

The Youth Morcha will run a campaign to connect new voters with the party, ranging from educational institutions to households and coaching centers, aiming to unite more than one crore new voters with the party.

## Partisan debate erupts over Kolkata figuring near bottom of 'clean cities' list

**Kolkata, Jan 17 (IANS) :** In terms of political awareness the people of West Bengal are always rated a step ahead of their counterparts in other states, as often even minor issues spark off heated debates here. The latest report by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry on the "cleanest" and "dirtiest" cities in India has led to an intense discourse in West Bengal.

The cause of the brouhaha is the fact that in both the categories of 'Cities with population over a lakh' and 'Cities with population below a lakh,' in the cleanliness report, cities in West Bengal including the state capital Kolkata have been ranked among the worst performers.

The discourse on the report was sparked off by West Bengal Municipal Affairs & Urban Development Minister and Kolkata Municipal Corporation Mayor Firhad Hakim's statement that in the central report Kolkata and other cities in the state have been wrongfully portrayed in a bad light.

"This report is meant to malign the image of the state in this perspective," he said.



## NE India's largest freshwater body in Manipur hit by illegal fishing, hunting

**Imphal, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Even as Manipur is battling with protracted ethnic violence, the Loktak Development Authority (LDA) and the fishing community that is facing the impact of indiscriminate hunting of waterfowl and the illegal use of the electric shock method for fishing, has made an appeal to the public to emerge as responsible guardians of this invaluable natural resource. Famous for its floating islands and picturesque landscape, Loktak Lake in Manipur's Bishnupur District is one of the largest freshwater bodies in northeast India.

Three of northeast India's most important ecosystems - Rudrasagar Lake in Tripura, Deepor Beel in Assam and Loktak Lake in Manipur are categorised as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.



## Could have treated 90,000 Pak soldiers in any way, but we gave respect : Rajnath

**New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said that the surrendered 90,000 Pakistan Prisoners of War (POWs) of 1971 war were given respect while in captivity in India.

"We could have treated Pakistani POWs in any way we wanted. However, such our culture and tradition, that we adopted completely humanitarian attitude and sent them back to their country with full respect," Defence Minister said during his speech at 8th Armed Forces Veterans' Day: Wreath Laying ceremonies & Ex-Servicemen Rallies -- which was held at multiple locations across the country on Sunday.

During the 1971 war, the Pakistan Army surrendered to the Indian Army in Dhaka.

## Magh Mela's lost-and-found camp goes hi-tech this year

**Prayagraj, Jan 17 (IANS) :** With the Magh Mela all set to begin on Wednesday, the quintessential 'bhoole bhatke shivir' that is an undeniable part of the 53-day long religious fair, will undergo a major change. For the first time, the lost-and-found camp will

have computer sets with web-cameras and Internet services for volunteers of the camp so that they can stay in constant touch with police authorities to help missing persons reunite with their kin," said Umesh Tiwari, organiser of the camp.

The camp is an important part of

the fair that attracts millions of devotees -- most of them elderly and uneducated -- from all parts of the country. A large number of devotees tend to lose their way in the township and the camp has reunited 15.32 lakh people with their families since 1946.







### Hezbollah conducted 692 attacks against Israel since beginning of Gaza war

**Beirut, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Since the ongoing Gaza war erupted in October 2023, the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militant group has launched a total of 692 attacks against Israel. In a statement, the Iran-backed group said it had targetted 48 Israeli border sites, 12 rear sites, and 50 new military points since the war erupted as a result of the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack against the Jewish nation, reports Xinhua news agency.

The Lebanon-Israel border has witnessed increased tension since the next day of the Hamas attack, prompting Israel to respond by firing heavy artillery toward southeastern Lebanon. Confrontations continued on the Lebanon-Israel border on Wednesday, with Israeli forces firing from the Motella settlement at a Lebanese civilian, injuring him seriously, a Lebanese military source told Xinhua. The source, said the injured Lebanese had been transferred to the Marjeyoun Governmental Hospital in southern Lebanon.

## UK's sacked Home Secretary warns voting against Rwanda Bill

**London, Jan 17 (IANS) :** With the Rwanda asylum bill set to return to the UK Parliament next week, sacked Home Secretary Suella Braverman said she will vote against the legislation if there were "no improvements" in it. One of the toughest immigration legislation ever introduced to Parliament, the bill which aims to deport asylum seekers arriving in the UK to Rwanda, will face its third reading vote after MPs debate and vote on amendments to it on January 17-18. "I'm only going to support a bill that works. As currently drafted, this bill does not work. And if there are no improvements to it, I will have to vote against it, I'm afraid," Braverman said in an interview with GB News.

"I'm sent to parliament to vote for things, to be for things or to be against them, not to sit on the fence..." The third reading vote is the final chance for the Commons to debate the contents of a bill before it is sent to the House of Lords for further scrutiny. Right wing Conservative MPs have been warning Prime Minister Rishi Sunak -- who narrowly won the immigration de-

bate in Parliament last month -- that his Rwanda bill will not work unless it is significantly beefed up. Braverman said that the third piece of legislation, which the government has put through to stop the boats, will not work as it is "fundamentally fatally flawed", and "pretending otherwise betrays British people". Citing reasons, the Indian-origin former cabinet minister said that it doesn't stop the scenario, as seen in June 2022, when the first deportation flight was blocked by a last-minute injunction from the European Court of Human Rights. According to her, the bill has to "preclude individual claimants" -- that is, illegal migrants who have come to the UK on boats -- from legally challenging the government's powers to detain or to remove them. "So what we'll see is wide scale and repetitive individual claims being made through the courts



time and time again only having the effect of delaying their removal to Rwanda," Braverman told the GB News. Echoing her views, Robert Jenrick, who resigned as immigration minister over the bill, told the BBC: "It's my strong view that this bill doesn't work, it doesn't create that deterrent effect and so we need to improve it." Sunak, who has said he would welcome "bright ideas" to improve the bill, stated earlier that the "endless scourge" of illegal migration is costing the UK billions of pounds and costing innocent lives. "Through this new landmark emergency legislation,

we will control our borders, deter people taking perilous journeys across the channel and end the continuous legal challenges filling our courts," Sunak had said in a statement released by the Home Office last month. Once the bill receives Royal Assent, it will pave the way for the UK to begin next steps in processing people for relocation and starting removal flights to Rwanda. According to the Home Office, the British government intends to fast-track the emergency legislation through the House as soon as possible.

## Asian-Americans fastest-growing group of eligible voters in US: Pew Research

**New York, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Asian-Americans have been the fastest-growing group of eligible voters in the US over roughly the past two decades and since 2020, says a new study as the country goes to polls to elect a new president this year.

Their number has grown by 15 per cent, or about 2 million eligible voters, in the past four years -- faster than the three per cent growth rate for all eligible voters during that span and the 12 per cent for Hispanic eli-

gible voters, says a Pew Research Center study. This November, a projected 15.0 million Asian Americans will be eligible to vote, making up just 6.1 per cent of all eligible voters, according to the Washington-based think-tank's projections.

Overall, more than half of all Asian Americans in the US (58 per cent) are eligible to vote. By comparison, 72 per cent of the total US population is eligible.

"Asian Americans are less likely than Americans overall to be eligible to vote because a significant

share are immigrants who are not US citizens," the study said.

Asian immigrants who are not eligible to vote include permanent residents (green card holders) and those in the process of becoming permanent residents; those in the US on temporary visas; and unauthorised immigrants.

"Asian Americans are the only major racial or ethnic group where more of its eligible voters are naturalised citizens than US-born citizens (56 per cent vs 44 per cent)," the study noted. About four in ten Asian eligible



voters (41 per cent) are ages 50 and older, and they have relatively high levels of educational attainment. They are also more likely than the general eligible voter

population to have a postgraduate degree of some kind, such as a master's degree or law degree. The study also found that as of 2022, more than half of Asian-

American eligible voters (55 per cent) live in only five states, and they typically lean Democratic. California has the highest number of Asian-American eligible voters by far (4.4 million). The state is home to nearly a third (31 per cent) of the entire US Asian electorate. The states with the next-most Asian-American eligible voters are New York (1.2 million), Texas (1.1 million), Hawaii (580,000) and New Jersey (575,000). They make up 55 per cent of the electorate in Hawaii, the only state where a racial or ethnic group other than single-race White, non-Hispanic eligible voters are the majority.

### Egypt denies reports of suspending navigation in Suez Canal

**Cairo, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Egypt had denied reports of a temporary suspension of navigation in the Suez Canal as a result of the ongoing tension in the Red Sea's strategic Bab-el-Mandeb area. Chairman of Egypt's Suez Canal Authority (SCA), Osama Rabie said on Wednesday that navigation traffic in the canal is regular in both directions, reports Xinhua news agency.

He noted that navigational services are commencing normally at the Suez Canal, revealing that 44 ships with a combined net tonnage of 2.3 million will cross from both directions on Saturday. Rabie stressed the SCA's keenness to open direct channels of communication and coordinate with companies and shipping lines to better serve the shipping community and ensure the sustainability of global supply chains.



### Texas blocks US border patrol, Biden govt asks Supreme Court to intervene

**Houston, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Texas has blocked US Border Patrol agents from a section of the US-Mexico border, according to a court filing by the Department of Justice (DOJ), which is seeking the US Supreme Court to intervene.

In the filing to the Supreme Court, the DOJ said that Texas, which borders Mexico, denied Border Patrol agents entry to a park which includes a 2.5-mile stretch of the Rio Grande border river and a boat ramp in Eagle Pass, western Texas, Xinhua news agency reported.

The federal agents routinely use a boat ramp and a staging area at the park to launch their boats to patrol the Rio Grande and inspect migrants entering this part of the border respec-

tively, according to the document released on Wednesday. "Texas's new actions since the government's filing demonstrate an escalation of the state's measures to block Border Patrol's ability to patrol or even to surveil the border and be in a position to respond to emergencies," Elizabeth B. Prelogar, the DOJ's solicitor general, wrote in the filing. The DOJ is asking the Supreme Court to intervene in an ongoing legal battle between the state and the federal government and overrule a 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that prevents Border Patrol agents from cutting the concertina wire Texas has strung along the Rio Grande.

### Migrant apprehensions significantly drop at US-Mexico border

**Washington, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Migrant apprehensions at Eagle Pass, Texas, on the US-Mexico border has significantly dropped from thousands in a day to about only 500 this week, according to officials. Overall migrant encounters on the US southern border topped 10,000 per day in mid-December, then dropped to about 3,000 per day in January, CNN reported. The dip came after high-level talks between Mexico and the US in Mexico City. Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security has attributed the dip to enhanced enforcement actions by Mexico, including on trains and buses; Mexico moving migrants along the country's northern border to the southern border; and Mexico reinstating deportations of Venezuelans.



### Wind-whipped snow sweeps Chicago area

**Chicago, Jan 17 (IANS) :** Wind-whipped snow blanketed Chicago, leaving thousands without power and cancellation of nearly 1,000 flights. As of Wednesday night, the western and southwestern suburbs of Chicago, the third most populous city in the US, had received 4 to 7 inches of snow, reports Xinhua news agency. Northern areas closer to Chicago had received 2 to 3.5 inches. With as much as 2 inches of snow falling per hour on Friday and winds up to 35 miles per hour (mph), up to 4 to 7 inches of snow could pile up on the ground, the Chicago Tribune reported, citing the National Weather Service

(NWS). It is expected to be the most severe storm so far this season. Snow will lash the Chicago until Wednesday morning, the NWS predicted. Gusts could reach up to 45 mph, with almost zero visibility. There were 2,268 power outages reported across the city, affecting more than 96,000 customers, according to ComEd's outage map. The Federal Aviation Administration issued ground stops for Chicago O'Hare International Airport on Friday because of the weather. More than 700 flights at the airport have been cancelled. At Midway International Airport, 257 flights were cancelled. In downtown Chicago.







## Australian Open: Djokovic propels over Popyrin to enter third round

Melbourne, Jan 16 (IANS) In a roller coaster of a match, Novak Djokovic, a 10-time champion on Wednesday showcased his resilience, holding off home favourite, Alexei Popyrin with a 6-3, 4-6, 7-6(4), 6-3 victory in the second round of Australian Open 2024, here at the Rod Laver Arena. The 36-year-old Serbian maestro, grappling with a wrist issue, found himself in peril mid-match, teetering on the edge at 4-5 in the third set. However, in a testament to his championship mentality, Djokovic conjured magic, saving four set points from 0/40 and seizing control of the match. As he navigated through the challenges, Djokovic extended his remarkable

Australian Open winning streak to an impressive 30 matches. The pursuit of a record-extending 25th Grand Slam title remained firmly within his grasp, but it wasn't just history on the line. The coveted No. 1 spot in the Pepperstone ATP Rankings hung in the balance, with young guns Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev eager to dethrone the Serbian titan. With the clock ticking past three hours and eleven minutes, Djokovic's journey at Melbourne Park took another intriguing turn. His next adversary, Tomas Martin Etcheverry, emerged victorious in a straight-sets triumph against Gael Monfils.



## Sikandar Raza join Northamptonshire for Vitality Blast 2024

Northamptonshire on Wednesday announced the signing of Sikandar Raza, Zimbabwe's cricketing maestro, for the 2024 Vitality Blast. At 37, Raza was not just a seasoned campaigner but also the linchpin of Zimbabwe's cricketing fortunes. Captain of the Zimbabwean National Side in T20 cricket, Raza brings the experience of more than 200 T20 appearances to the squad. "I'm delighted to be coming to Northamptonshire," said Raza. Currently ranked 5th in the ICC Men's T20I All-rounder world rankings, Raza has scored more than 4,000 runs and claimed more than 100 wickets since his debut in 2010.



## India Open: Ashwini-Tanisha bow out after loss to Thai duo in first round

New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) : Indian women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponappa and Tanisha Crasto faced an early exit from the India Open, a BWF Super 750 badminton tournament. The duo succumbed to a 5-21, 21-18, 11-21 defeat against the Thai pair of Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai, here at KD Jadhav Indoor Hall on Wednesday. The world no. 20 Indian pair failed to secure a

great start, and their Thai counterparts asserted complete dominance since the beginning, swiftly establishing a commanding 8-0 lead. Although Ashwini-Tanisha managed to secure a few points in between, it proved insufficient for the Indians, as the Thai duo sustained their dominance and convincingly secured the opening game with a score of 21-5. Following the change of sides, the Indian duo staged a comeback, as both the teams engaged in a

tight contest with scores reeling 7-all. The momentum of the game continued to oscillate before Ashwini-Tanisha seized a slender 11-9 lead, keeping the audience on the edge of their seats at the mid-game break. Maintaining a steadfast grip on the momentum in a closely contested game, the Indians clinched the second game 21-18, forcing a match into a decider.



## Praggnanandhaa becomes India No. 1 after beating world champ Ding Liren

New Delhi, Jan 17 (IANS) : Eighteen-year-old Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa surpassed Viswanathan Anand in live classical chess rankings after beating reigning world champion Ding Liren at the Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands. Praggnanandhaa jumped two spots to 11th overall with 2748.3 rating points, 0.3 more than Anand. He entered the fourth round of the prestigious tournament with a sensational win. He is only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand to beat a reigning world champion in classical chess. Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar took to social media to shower praise on the young chess prodigy.

## Hockey Olympic Qualifiers: Back from the brink, India quietly confident for key clash against Germany

Ranchi, Jan 17 (IANS) : Pushed to the brink by their defeat to the United States in their opening match, the Indian women's hockey team goes into the semifinal against Germany with a lot of confidence in the Women's FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers here on Thursday. The next league match against New Zealand was a real pressure cooker situation for India and a do-or-die clash as defeat would have ended their hopes in the tournament and could

have made heads toll. The team survived that as it came up with a brilliant comeback to beat the Black Sticks 3-1. They capitalised on that second breath to outplay Italy 5-1 and sealed a place in the semifinals. Victory against Germany in the semifinal will confirm a berth in the Paris Olympic Games to be played later this year, defeat would not end India's chances, and they will have one more opportunity in the third-fourth match to clinch their ticket to Paris.



## Axar, Yashasvi achieve career-best positions in T20I rankings

Bengaluru, Jan 17 (IANS) : Following strong performances in the two T20Is against Afghanistan so far, India's left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel and young left-handed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal have achieved career-best positions in the recent update of the ICC men's T20I rankings on Wednesday. Patel has advanced 12 places to a career-best fifth position among rankings for bowlers in the shortest format. His hauls of 2-23 and 2-16 in India's identical six-wicket wins over Af-

ghanistan in the first two T20Is of their three-match series have also lifted him two places to 16th position among all-rounders. Jaiswal's 34-ball 68 in the second T20I in Indore after missing series opener in Mohali due to a groin strain has lifted him seven places to a career-best sixth position while seam-bowling all-rounder Shivam Dube's successive unbeaten knocks of 60 and 63 have helped him shoot up from 265th to 58th place in the rankings for the batters.



Debutant West Indies fast-bowler Shamar Joseph has become the 23rd player to take a wicket on the opening delivery in men's Test cricket with the scalp of newly-promoted Australia opener Steve Smith on day one of first Test at the Adelaide Oval. In the ninth over of Australia's innings, Joseph bowled a good length delivery just outside off-stump, drawing Smith into playing at it and the outside edge flew to fellow debutant Justin Greaves, who took a low and sharp catch at third slip. The dismissal sent Joseph, Greaves, and the West Indies team into a frenzy as Smith fell for 12 in his first innings as Test opener after David Warner's retirement. Joseph had previously hit 36 in a last-wicket stand of 55 with Kemar Roach to push the West Indies to 188 in their first innings. Dismissing Smith on his very first ball in Test cricket made Joseph the 23rd bowler to take a wicket with his first ball in men's Tests, and just the second from the West Indies to do so after Tyrell Johnson against England at The Oval in 1939. Australia's veteran off-spinner Nathan Lyon, playing this Test match at Adelaide, himself struck with his first delivery on debut against Sri Lanka in 2011.

## Joseph becomes 23rd men's player to claim wicket on opening delivery in Tests with Smith's dismissal