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India pips China in creating ultra-high net worth individuals in 2024

The country's ultra-high net worth individual (UHNI) count reached 13,600 in 2024, marking a 6 per cent annual growth, and is projected....

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Unexpected Issue For Ram Charan!

Mega Hero Ram Charan is currently awaiting the theatrical release of Game Changer, which happens to be his first solo outing after three long years...

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SBI, Hyderabad Circle in association with Commercial Clients Group (CCG) has conducted an Exporters Meet

State Bank of India, Hyderabad Circle in association with Commercial Clients Group (CCG) has conducted an Exporters' Meet for high value clients...

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CM Revanth assures all support to farmers

Hyderabad, Dec.21 (NSS): Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has reiterated that the State government is committed to implement the Rythu Bharosa and extend all support to the farming community. Taking part in a short discussion on the Rythu Bharosa scheme in the Assembly on Saturday, the

Chief Minister said the government is considering the 'Rythu Bharosa' as an ambitious scheme and it is seeking suggestions from the main opposition party to finalise modalities for the implementation of scheme. He alleged that the previous government had spent Rs.72,817 crore in the form of Rythu Bandhu in 10 years and

misused the scheme, giving money to uncultivated lands, layouts, and national highways. "Out of Rs.72,817 crore, almost Rs.22,000 crores have been given to the undeserving. Shall we continue extending the Rythu Bharosa to mountains, stones and roads," he questioned. The Chief Minister further stated that the Rythu

Bandhu was also given to Rajiv Road in Gajwel constituency, Srisailam roads in Amangal area, crusher units and mining lands. Moreover, some of the followers of the previous rulers also got Rythu Bandhu through fake title deeds. About 70 to 80 per cent of the land within a 50 km radius of Hyderabad is not being farmed.



No question of allowing benefit shows in Telangana : Komatireddy

Hyderabad, Dec 21 (NSS): Minister for Cinematography Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has once again clarified that there is no question of allowing benefit shows, no matter how big the budget of the film. The Minister on Saturday visited Sritej, a boy who was injured in the stampede at Sandhya Theatre, and is undergoing treatment at KIMS Hospital in the city. On the occasion, a cheque of Rs. 25 lakh was presented to Sritej's father Bhaskar on behalf of the Prathik Foundation.

Continued on pg 02

SpaDeX mission to help India ace space docking technology : ISRO

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The SpaDeX mission, expected to launch this year aboard the PSLV-C60 rocket, will propel India to the elite club of nations with space docking capabilities, said Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday. ISRO aims to launch PSLV-C60 on December 30. However, the launch

window is open till January 13.

The space agency informed that the mission has completed "all tests and clearances". The integration of the SpaDeX spacecraft is complete, and the spacecraft has been moved to Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. It is currently "undergoing preparations for launch".

Continued on pg 02



We will resign if congress provided 24 hour long power: KTR

Hyderabad, Dec.21 (NSS): BRS party working President KT Rama Rao today said that rythu bandhu scheme was given by their government with the intention of increasing the agriculture area under cultivation. He was speaking in the assembly on the issue. "In 2019-20, the area under cul-

tivation was 141 lakh acres. In 2020-21, the area under cultivation was 204 lakh acres," he said. He also that the area under cultivation had increased considerably due to the grant of the rythu bandhu scheme and added that the note given by the government on the issue makes this clear. "We have given podu land pattas to 4.50 lakh tribals. The

government intends to cut the rythu bandhu benefits. The minister would not have said anything about the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. In Telangana, 20 per cent of the PM Kisan Samman is coming to the farmers. If the rythu bharosa scheme is given, the farmers will benefit," he said.

Continued on pg 02



Rythu Bharosa scheme to be implemented from Sankranti : Tummala

Hyderabad, Dec.21 (NSS): Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageswara Rao has declared that the Rythu Bharosa program will commence from the upcoming Sankranti festival. However, he mentioned that the final modalities regarding the implementation of the 'Rythu Bharosa' scheme have yet to be finalised. While participating in a

brief discussion on the program in the Assembly on Saturday, Tummala Nageswara Rao indicated that the guidelines would be established only after considering input from all stakeholders, and he affirmed that his government has no intention of decreasing the number of beneficiaries enrolled in the scheme.

Funds devolved to states under 15th Finance Commission higher : FM Sitharaman

Jaipur, Dec 21 (IANS) : Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday chaired the pre-budget consultations with Finance Ministers of States and Union Territories (with Legislature) at Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

The participants gave several valuable suggestions to the Union Finance Minister for consideration in the Union Budget for FY 2025-26. Sitharaman remarked that because of the healthy macroeconomic environment, buoyancy and efficiency in the tax collections. Continued on pg 02



Harish Rao slams CM's speech in assembly

Hyderabad, Dec 21 (NSS): Former minister and BRS leader Harish Rao has come down heavily on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for his speech in the assembly today. "Revanth Reddy's speech is as if he had run away from the mic by putting the rods on the mic," he alleged. Speaking to media persons organised at the BRSLP office on Saturday, Harish Rao said there was no one to stop the CM from lying on the floor

of the House. He said the CM didn't do anything for the people. Harish Rao said Revanth Reddy's advantage was to get a mic as Chief Minister. "The Chief Minister himself told the assembly Speaker not to give them the same mic.

ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH #249/3RT, 1st floor, Main Road, S.R. Nagar, Hyderabad - 500038. POSESION NOTICE [Rule - 8 (1)] (For immovable property) Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Union Bank of India, Asset Recovery Branch, Hyderabad under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002...



SBI, Hyderabad Circle in association with Commercial Clients Group (CCG) has conducted an Exports Meet

Hyderabad, Dec 21 (TIM Bureau) : State Bank of India, Hyderabad Circle in association with Commercial Clients Group (CCG) has conducted an Exports' Meet for high value clients on 20th December 2024 at ITC Kakatiya, Begumpet, Hyderabad.

tor, Global Markets and top executives from Corporate Office of SBI. Chief General Manager, Hyderabad Circle Shri Rajesh Kumar welcomed the Customers, dignitaries & top executives. In his welcome address, he stressed on the importance of exports for growth of our economy and high-

lighted the contribution of Telangana State to economy particularly in export sector in key areas like Pharmaceuticals, IT & ITES, Food processing. He also emphasized that this Meet is synergy between high value corporates and MSME clients.



CAN FIN HOMES LTD REGD. OFFICE: 29/1, 1st Floor, Sir M.N. Krishna Rao Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004. POSESION NOTICE [Rule 8(1)] (for immovable property) The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002...

THORRUR BRANCH, H.No.3-32/11, Near Old Water Tank Area, Thorur, Mahabubabad Dist-506163. NOTICE FOR PUBLIC AUCTION OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS/ARTICLES It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, persons engaged in business of gold ornaments/articles and general public that in spite of repeated reminders/notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues to the Bank.

Table with 6 columns: S. No., Account No., Name of the Borrower, Gross weight of Gold Ornaments in Gms., Net Weight of Gold Ornaments in Gms., Amount O/S in Rs., Reserve Price of Gold Ornaments. Includes details for Mr. Arpula Ramulu, Mr. Mannuru Srinivasu, and S/o Sathiah.

SHIRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED (Formerly Known as Shiriram Transport Finance Company Limited) REGISTERED OFFICE: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032. (Rule-8(3)) POSESION NOTICE "It is informed that 'SHIRIRAM CITY UNION FINANCE LIMITED' has been amalgamated with 'SHIRIRAM TRANSPORT FINANCE LIMITED' as per order of NCLT, Chennai. Subsequently the name of 'SHIRIRAM TRANSPORT FINANCE LIMITED' was changed as 'SHIRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED' with effect from 31.11.2022...

SHIRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED (Formerly Known as Shiriram Transport Finance Company Limited) REGISTERED OFFICE: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032. (Rule-8(3)) POSESION NOTICE "It is informed that 'SHIRIRAM CITY UNION FINANCE LIMITED' has been amalgamated with 'SHIRIRAM TRANSPORT FINANCE LIMITED' as per order of NCLT, Chennai. Subsequently the name of 'SHIRIRAM TRANSPORT FINANCE LIMITED' was changed as 'SHIRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED' with effect from 30.11.2022...

We will resign if congress provided 24 hour long power: KTR

Continued From pg 01 He said that the government has to say whether the benefit will be given for two crops? He said that the assembly session should be extended by ten days and added that There should be a discussion on electricity, irrigation and Mission Bhagiratha schemes. He also said that There should also be a one-day discussion on the development of Nalgonda district. You will find it difficult to point out mistakes that have happened in the past. Is it okay to hit the box for projects undertaken in the past? We are being misled that 24-hour power supply was not provided during BRS party's tenure. The deputy chief minister said an average of 19.2 hours of electricity was given during the BRS regime. During the Congress rule, there are announcements that it is being given 24 hours a day. Let's adjourn the House and go to Nalgonda district to take stock of the situation and if it is shown that 24-hour electricity is being provided, the entire BRS legislative party will resign," he said.

SpaDeX mission to help India ace space docking technology : ISRO

Continued From pg 01 While only a few countries have aced the space docking technology, it is key for India for its impending space missions including the Moon mission, and setting up the Indian space station. "The launch vehicle has been integrated and now moved to the First Launch Pad, for further integration of satellites and launch preparations," ISRO said in a post on X. "ISRO's SpaDeX mission, launching with PSLV-C60, will demonstrate in-space docking using two small spacecraft. This groundbreaking technology is key to future lunar missions, building Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), and more. India aims to join the elite club of nations with space docking capabilities," it added. The PSLV will lift off two small spacecraft -- SDX01, which is the Chaser, and SDX02, the Target -- weighing about 220 kg each. The mission will showcase the docking of the two spacecraft in a low-Earth circular orbit. "In-space docking technology is essential when multiple rocket launches are required to achieve common mission objectives. Through this mission, India is marching towards becoming the fourth country in the world to have space docking technology," ISRO said. It will also demonstrate "the transfer of electric power between the docked spacecraft, which is essential for future applications such as in-space robotics -- composite spacecraft control, and payload operations after undocking". ISRO has also developed indigenous technologies to enable this docking mission. This includes a docking mechanism, a suite of four rendezvous and docking sensors, power transfer technology, indigenous novel autonomous rendezvous and docking strategy, inter-satellite communication link (ISL) for autonomous communication between spacecraft.

CM's prejudiced rhetoric in Assembly undermines judiciary

Hyderabad, Dec.21 (NSS): BRS party leader Dr Sravan Dasoju today excoriated Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for his prejudiced rhetoric in the Assembly regarding the tragic death of Revathi at Sandhya Theatre during the screening of Pushpa-2. Dr Dasoju expressed grave concern over the Chief Minister's conclusive accusations solely against actor Allu Arjun, labeling him as directly responsible for the mishap while covering up the failures of the police and administration, despite the matter remaining sub judice in the High Court. "This is nothing short of an attempt to influence judicial proceedings—a deliberate act of undermining judicial independence and the rule of law," stated Dr Sravan Dasoju. "Revanth Reddy's remarks not only prejudiced the pending case against Allu Arjun, but also deflect attention from the failures of the police and administration. These comments amount to contempt of court, especially considering the interim relief granted by the High Court." Dr Dasoju pointed out that the Chief Minister's statements violate the spirit of Articles 121 and 211 of the Constitution, which prohibit discussions in the Legislature on matters pending in courts.

Allu Arjun visited theatre despite denial of police permission : Telangana CM

Hyderabad, Dec 21 (IANS) : resulting in the stampede that killed a woman and injured her son. Speaking in the State Assembly, the Chief Minister stressed the police had told the actor not to visit the theatre but he still went there. He said the police did not give permission since there was only one entry and exit for the theatre and they anticipated a problem if a celebrity visited it. Revanth Reddy made a statement in the Assembly when AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi raised the issue relating to the December 4 incident at Sandhya Theatre. The Chief Minister also stated that there would have been no problem if Allu Arjun had only visited the theatre, watched the movie, and left.

Funds devolved to states under 15th Finance Commission higher : FM Sitharaman

Continued From pg 01 the funds devolved to the states in the last 45 months (April 2021 to December 2024) under the 15th Finance Commission is more than what was devolved in 60 months under the 14th Finance Commission (2015-20). The Union Finance Minister also referred to the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI), which was first announced in the Union Budget 2020-21, and acknowledged that it had received a very good response from the states. The states have been requesting the Central Government to enhance the outlay under the scheme as it is leading to the construction of crucial capital assets in the states. Sitharaman stated that the Centre has allocated an additional amount of approximately Rs 30,000 crore as 'Untied Funds' under the SASCI-2024-25.

No question of allowing benefit shows in Telangana : Komatireddy

Continued From pg 01 Speaking on the occasion, he said the entire cost of the boy's treatment will be borne by the State government and the hospital management has been informed not to take a single penny from the victim's family. "We will review the issue of which films should be allowed to increase ticket rates. We will reconsider the issue of films made in the context of message, patriotism, Telangana history and culture," Komatireddy disclosed. He further stated that the State government is also deeply saddened by the incident at Sandhya Theater and it is wishing Sreetej to recover as early as possible.

BANK OF BARODA ROSAR Branch, # 3-5-822/5, 1st Floor, Hyderabadga Main Road, Hyderabadga, Hyderabad-500029. DEMAND NOTICE (UNDER SUB-SECTION (2) OF SECTION 13 OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002) We Bank of Baroda had issued Demand Notice dated herein under Sec.13(2) of SARFAESI Act to the addressees furnished by you. Since you are not found in the addresses furnished by you/notice returned/not acknowledged property, this paper publication is being made.



MP: Cold wave intensifies in most parts; school timings rescheduled in several districts

Bhopal, Dec 21 (IANS) : Bone-chilling cold with icy winds continues in Madhya Pradesh as night temperatures in several districts dropped below 5 degrees Celsius on Saturday.

Bengal school job case: SC orders Partha Chatterjee's release on bail by Feb 1

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Supreme Court on Saturday said that former West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee should be released on bail on or before February 1 next year in connection with the money laundering case linked to the alleged cash-for-school-job scam matter.



General (ASG) S.V. Raju, representing the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Rohtagi contended that the former minister had been under custody for over two years and there was no likelihood of early completion of the trial.

leased. In an earlier hearing, the top court had hinted at granting relief to Partha Chatterjee and expressed concern over the delay in the commencement of the trial.



2 held, over 5 kg drugs seized in Bihar's Purnea

Patna, Dec 21 (IANS) : Two individuals were arrested and a significant quantity of drugs was seized during a vehicle inspection drive conducted by Mufassil police in Bihar's Purnea district on Saturday, police said.

'Rail connectivity to Kashmir': Omar Abdullah highlights potential of J&K's flowers in global markets

Jammu, Dec 21 (IANS) : J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday chaired a meeting of the Department of Floriculture, Parks, and Gardens to review its function-

ing and discuss strategies to enhance the sector's potential, an official statement said. Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister highlighted the immense opportunities in the floriculture

sector, especially with Kashmir Valley soon to be connected with the rest of the country through rail-ways. He emphasised the need to leverage this connectivity to market

Kashmir's flowers across India and globally. "We must engage progressive growers and other stakeholders to fully realise the sector's potential," the Chief Minister said.



'Ladli Behna Yojana' to continue despite financial burden on MP gov't: CM Yadav

Bhopal, Dec 21 (IANS) : Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said on Saturday that the BJP-led state government will continue the 'Ladli Behna Yojana' in the state despite claiming that the women-centric flagship has created a 'financial burden' on the state's budget.

Bank of Maharashtra KACHIGUDA BRANCH: Kulkarni, V.S Road, 3-2-843, Kachiguda Station Rd, Mahalakshmi Nilayam, Kachiguda, Hyderabad-500027. POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule - 8 (1)] (For immovable property)

SBI STATE BANK OF INDIA, Nanakramguda Branch, Rukmajee Towers, Gowildoddi, Hyderabad. PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

FORM NO. 14 [See Regulation 33(2)] OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - I/II DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 1) 3rd Floor, Triveni Complex Abids, Hyderabad-500001. DEMAND NOTICE

CSB Bank PUBLIC NOTICE ON AUCTION OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS. Stop hounding Dalits, suspend police chief: Congress on Parbhani violence. Ravindrasingh Pardeshi should be suspended immediately here on Saturday.

LOST OF PASSPORT Mudidana Prudhvi S/o. Seetharamulu, residing at Siri Hospital Sircilla lost my original Passport bearing number U8588326 on date 14-12-2024 morning while returning from a Xerox shop in Old Bus-stand to Siri hospital. Kindly contact me if anyone finds it 8247771560.

OPINIONmail

NO CLEAR INDICATION ABOUT THE
NOMINATION OF NEXT BJP
PRESIDENT REPLACING J P NADDA

The BJP is in hurry to appoint a new national president by December end. Electoral process for the election of the new president is underway. But the contentious issue whose candidate, either of the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat or of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will eventually occupy the office is still shrouded in the mystery. October meeting of the RSS national executive and later interaction of Bhagwat with some senior BJP leaders and also chief minister of UP, Yogi Adityanath had certainly turned the saffron ecosystem optimist of an agreement between the two before the year is out. Barely a fortnight is left for month to end, the name of the final incumbent still awaits announcement. It is still a mystery whether the leaders of warring factions have converged on a single name. Neither RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has dropped any hint about the new face, nor Narendra Modi has proposed the name of successor of current BJP president J P Nadda. Nevertheless senior BJP leaders are unanimous in their view that it is not a major issue haunting either RSS or BJP and a common candidate, acceptable to both, Bhagwat and Modi would be announced soon.. They point out Modi is known for not opening his mind before the final days.. Modi selected two completely unknown as the chief ministers of Haryana and MP. Rest of the BJP leaders came to know only after he dropped their names in public.

These leaders are sure that Modi will not do anything which would hurt the RSS or goes against its mission and philosophy. He is simply buying time. But this strategy of Modi has turned the RSS cadres suspicious of his intentions. There is wide perception in the saffron circle that the conflict of supremacy and desire to control the saffron ecosystem has entered into a new phase. Insiders nurse that the latest development underlines that the electoral outcome would now be decided among others by Adani factor. The aggressive attitude of US against the BJP for its allegation that the U.S. State Department was behind targeted attacks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indian businessman Gautam Adani has been taken note by the saffron leadership. The US posture has turned the political situation vulnerable for Modi. Obviously in this backdrop Modi would have to focus more on improving and cementing his relation with US administration. For this he needs a strong BJP organisation and a very cordial relation with RSS. Selecting a face which would will be friendly with him as also acceptable to Mohan Bhagwat is the crucial issue. The recent discord amongst the INDIA bloc members, especially opposition from TMC and Samajwadi Party, to consistently raising the issue in Parliament has come as a major respite to BJP, especially to Modi. Opposition of TMC and SP to Rahul's stand on Adani has in fact forced Congress to stay from all out attack on Adani directly during their morning demonstration on Parliament premises in the last two days. The tone is a bit diluted though the thrust continues. Adani is a favourite of RSS, but the manner in which Modi has put at stake his prestige to protect him and his business is not liked by Bhagwat. The RSS expects more tactical approach on Adani from Modi rather than giving the impression that the BJP government will go all out to protect Adani's interests. The fact is that Bhagwat has been approached by other non-Gujarati business houses who are aggrieved that the present government at the centre is granting too many facilities to the Adani group ignoring the interests of others. The RSS has to look after this as these houses are also pro-Hindutva and funds the BJP-RSS. In 2019 well before Amit Shah stepped down from the office of president, everyone had come to know about replacement by J P Nadda as the next president. But this time no one has any inkling of the new incumbent. With the RSS chief exercising his power and authority, to keep the image and prestige of the RSS intact, the situation has undergone a major change.

(By Arun Srivastava)



EDITORIAL
the indian mail



SC imposes Rs 5 lakh costs on employer for taking wage and termination dispute to arbitration

The Supreme Court has imposed Rs 5 lakh costs on an employer for dragging a wage dispute and legality of termination of an employee to arbitral proceedings. A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan said the application filed under Section 11 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1961 was a clear abuse of the remedial process. The appellant,

Dushyant Janbandhu, contended that the dispute with the respondent-employer is governed by statute under the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 and the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The appellant was appointed as an Assistant Manager in March 2019. After the Covid-19 pandemic, when Hyundai AutoEver India directed the employee to resume physical attendance, he refused to comply. He was issued a charge memo for violation of certain contractual

clauses, including non-cooperation and absenteeism and ultimately, an order of termination was passed in January 2021. During the pendency of disciplinary action, as the appellant was not paid his salary, he issued a legal notice for payment of wages under the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 and filed a petition before the concerned authority. As a counterblast, the employer issued a notice alleging that the disputes must be settled through arbitration and proceeded to unilaterally appoint an arbitrator.

When the unilaterally appointed arbitrator commenced the arbitral proceedings, the employee filed an application calling upon the arbitrator to rule on his competence.

The arbitrator himself held that the constitution of the arbitral tribunal was not in accordance with or in consonance with the provisions of Section 11 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act and closed the arbitral proceedings.

AFTER TECHIE SUICIDE, TOP COURT SETS EIGHT POINTS FOR CORRECT ALIMONY

Finally, the cat is out of the bag and hopping mad on the hot tin roof! Techie Atul Subhash, 34, strung himself up like a ceiling fan and left a placard with the three words 'Justice Is Due'. Atul Subhash also left a 24-page suicide note and an audio-video explanation on why he killed himself and who abetted the suicide, bringing into focus the female-male divide into sharp focus? Nobody assisted Subhash in placing the noose around his neck, but he did affirm that his estranged wife and her relatives drove him to suicide.

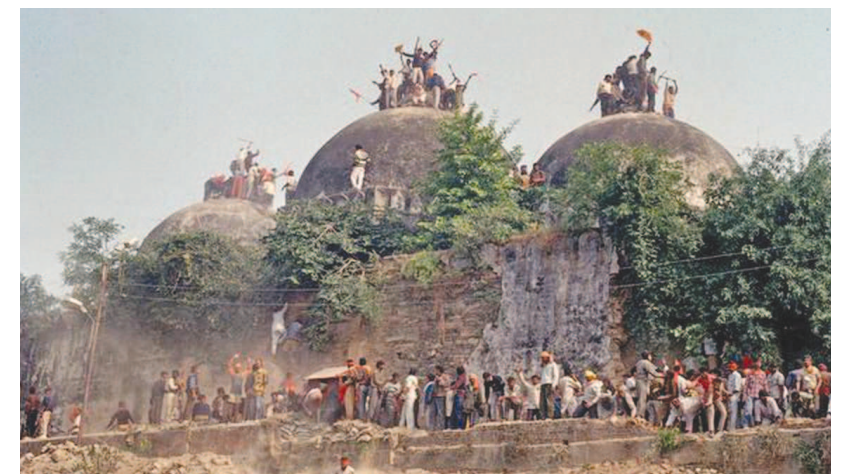


FROM BABRI MASJID DEMOLITION IN 1992 TO SAMBHAL IN 2024 - THE SAGA CONTINUING

It was a huge pile of debris left on the ground where Babri Masjid, with its undeniable grandeur, stood. Space was slowly emptied, leaving behind a vast loneliness, desolate and wet. Nothing remained the same. It was not only an attack on a mosque, it injured our inheritance, inclusivity. Almost half of us lost the expanse that we had built up since centuries. Those responsible stand today merged with state, with majoritarian support. Whosoever stood up in search of justice, got lost in a crowd. Their defence became spontaneously defiance as once Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had said when he was falsely accused of sedition by British imperialism and was taken to the dock. He had told the court that it was only in battlefields and in court rooms, that greatest acts of injustice in the history generally have taken

place. Demolition was complete, entire structure was wiped out. Outcome that followed was horrific. Communal riots in Bombay started in December, 1992, soon after the demolition of Babri mosque. There was no interruption. Follow up was destruction of more Mosques. People living there were left homeless and also lost their dear ones. That was the time that divisive politics started taking its roots in the country. And a wedge was sought to be created between majority and the minorities.

The Supreme Court conceded that the installation of the idol of Lord Rama under the main dome of the structure of the Mosque in 1949 and years later, its demolition in December, 1992 were both criminal acts. After a bizarre Supreme court decision in November 2019, the Mosque had indeed become a relic of the past and in 2020, those responsible for the demolition



were acquitted by a special court in Lucknow, further burying justice. On the thirty second anniversary of the shameful demolition of the Babri Masjid, we see that the Pandora's box has been opened. There are several litigations by plaintiffs belonging to the majority community about alleged temples that are believed to have existed and lands occupied by mosques and Dargahs. Sambhal and Ajmer Sharif are latest in-

stances. The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act 1991, which put an end to all litigations concerning places of worship other than in Ayodhya, has been reduced to a scrap of paper. The oral observations of the Supreme court in the Gyanvapi case that the Act did not prohibit ascertainment of the character of a place of worship has created a new curiosity in the jurisdiction.

(IPA Service)



AAP SUPREMO ARVIND KEJRIWAL IS OPTING FOR A GAMBLE BY GOING SOLO IN DELHI ASSEMBLY POLLS

Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal has refused an alliance with Congress in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. It assumes significance on two counts. It marks a turning point in the political landscape of the national Capital. It underscores AAP's confidence in its political dominance. But it reveals a challenge to the unity in the Opposition against the BJP-led NDA dispensation.

The BJP will always like to be faced with a fractured Opposition than a united one. Kejriwal shunning Congress has implications which goes beyond the dynamics of both the parties. It risks splintering the Opposition vote which is to BJP's benefit. The BJP gets an advantage in constituencies which are to witness a triangular contest. In so many words, such electoral battle will take place in constituencies where the Congress still has a foothold. Rise of AAP has marked systematic dismantling of Congress's longstanding dominance.

BPSC Prelims Exam in Bihar today; 4.80 lakh candidates to appear

The Bihar Public Service Commission 70th Preliminary Combined Examination will be conducted at 912 centres in the state on Saturday. With these examinations, 2,031 posts in various government departments will be filled. A total of 4.80 lakh candidates have applied for the examinations, scheduled to start at noon and end at 2.00 p.m.

The commission has issued guidelines for the candidates appearing for the examinations. The guidelines are: "Candidates are asked to bring two printed copies of their admit card, of which, the invigilator will keep one, proof of original ID is mandatory, electronic devices, including smartwatches, and items like whiteners or pencils are prohibited. Only blue/black pens are allowed."



Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III honoured with Russia's esteemed Order of Friendship

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Russian Embassy in India hosted a distinguished reception to honour Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, with Russia's esteemed Order of Friendship. The event, held on Saturday evening in New Delhi, celebrated the Catholicos' ex-

ceptional contributions to fostering ties between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, alongside his significant humanitarian efforts. Denis Alipov, Ambassador of Russia to India, presented the honour on behalf of the President of Russia, emphasising the Catholicos' unwavering dedication to promoting dialogue between the two sister

Churches. The accolade also acknowledged his role in facilitating groundbreaking partnerships, such as the collaboration between Moscow's Central Clinical Hospital of St. Alexis and Kerala's St. George's Hospital. This recognition, presented by the President of Russia, honours individuals who have significantly fostered friendship and understanding between nations.

Youhanon Mar Demetrios, Metropolitan of the Delhi Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, also addressed the gathering, highlighting the shared values and mutual respect that underpin the relationship between the Churches. The ceremony was attended by prominent diplomats, including ambassadors from Belarus, Uzbekistan, Egypt, and Mongolia,

as well as representatives from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and other nations. Members of the business, social, and religious communities, along with Russian expatriates, graced the occasion. A performance of Antonio Vivaldi's Gloria by the Delhi Chamber Choir, adds a touch of cultural grandeur to the solemn event and was a special highlight of the evening.



South Korea: National Assembly to question PM, ministers over imposition of martial law

Seoul, Dec 21 (IANS) : South Korean National Assembly is set to hold a parliamentary session Saturday to question the Prime Minister and other officials who attended a controversial Cabinet meeting shortly before President Yoon Suk Yeol's botched martial law declaration. The main opposition Democratic Party (DP) will also report a new impeachment motion against Yoon over his failed bid to impose martial law, days after he survived impeachment due to a lack of quorum, Yonhap news agency reported. During Friday's interpellation session, opposition lawmakers are expected to question the Cabinet members about Yoon's public address the previous day, which

largely centred on defending his martial law declaration and denying it was an act of insurrection.

The opposition has requested the attendance of Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok, Education Minister Lee Ju-ho and Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul, among others.

At another interpellation session Wednesday, Han apologised over the martial law turmoil and said no one agreed with Yoon's plan at the brief Cabinet meeting held just minutes before the declaration. The DP plans to put Yoon's new impeachment motion up for a vote at a parliamentary plenary session on Saturday.

South Africa reopens border crossing with Mozambique

Cape Town, Dec 21 (IANS) : Traveller movement at South Africa's main border crossing point with Mozambique is now open "until further notice," the country's Border Management Authority (BMA) announced. This came after the BMA temporarily suspended operations at the Lebombo Port of Entry on Saturday due to election-related protests in Mozambique near the border area. These protests have repeatedly forced the closure of the crossing since the results of the southeast African country's disputed elections were released on October 24, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The Acting Commissioner of the BMA, Jane Thupana, has provided the latest update on the Lebombo Port of Entry, that traveller movement is now open until further notice," the authority said in a statement. According to the statement, pedestrians and small vehicles are being processed, with statistics reflecting that 7,471 travellers were processed on Wednesday.



Belarusian President approves defence plan for 2026-2030

Minsk, Dec 21 (IANS) : Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko approved the country's defence plan for 2026-2030. The military-political situation around Belarus has changed in recent years, Lukashenko said at the Security Council meeting on Saturday. Individual states continue to escalate the situation around Belarus, he added.

Lukashenko said that destructive rhetoric from European countries toward Belarus is growing, indicating ongoing attempts to destabilise the domestic political situation in the country, Xinhua news agency reported. The president stressed the Belarusian army does not threaten anyone and is an instrument for preventing war, and in the event of aggression, the army must be able to repel it. Belarusian Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin

said the approved defence plan was developed on the basis of a deep analysis of the events of 2020 in Belarus and the Russian special military operation in Ukraine. Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Belarus Pavel Muraveiko said one of the main directions of the plan for the next five years is reducing the level of military danger and preventing military conflicts. "Also among the main directions of the plan is the preparation of the state for defence which covers all areas from the economy to the military sphere.



Estonian parliament approves security tax

Tallinn, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Estonian parliament, Riigikogu, has passed a government-proposed bill to introduce a security tax aimed at bolstering the country's defence capabilities. The security tax includes three key components: first, the value-added tax, or VAT, will increase by 2 percentage points starting in the middle of 2025; second, the personal income tax rate will also rise by 2 percentage points, with the change taking effect at the beginning of 2026; finally, a new corporate profit tax, set at 2 percent, will also be implemented starting at the same time as the personal income tax increase. Under the new law, the VAT rate will increase to 24 per cent from July 2025, and the personal income tax rate will also rise to 24 per cent starting in 2026, Xinhua news agency reported. The Ministry of Finance estimates that the new tax will generate additional budget revenue of 113 million euros (119 million US dollars) in 2025 and 751 million euros in 2026. Details regarding the allocation and use of these funds will be outlined in the 2025 state budget and the 2025-2028 budget strategy.

27 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks in Gaza

Gaza, Dec 21 (IANS) : At least 27 Palestinians were killed and dozens of others injured in Israeli attacks at residential houses in the refugee camp of al-Nuseirat in central Gaza Strip, Palestinian sources said. Palestinian Civil Defence spokesman Mahmoud Basal told Xinhua that the Israeli bombing targeted a residential block that contains the

government post office building, which was sheltering displaced people. Rescue operations are still ongoing amid a lack of equipment and heavy overflight by Israeli warplanes, Basal said, adding that the death toll could rise as many of the injured are seriously wounded, Xinhua news agency reported. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the attacks.

Earlier on Wednesday at least 10 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli drone attack on a gathering in central Gaza City, said the Palestinian civil defence in the Gaza Strip. Civil defence spokesperson Mahmoud Basal said in a press statement that the victims include children and women, Xinhua news agency reported. The Israeli army has not commented on this incident yet.

The Israel Defense Forces said in a statement on Sunday that its troops recently completed a targeted operation to dismantle underground militant infrastructure in the Jabalia area in the northern Gaza Strip. Israel has been conducting a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on October 7, 2023, during which about



1,200 people were killed and about 250 taken hostage. The Palestinian death toll from ongoing Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip has risen to 44,835, Gaza-based health authorities said in a statement on Saturday.

Thai PM pledges more economic stimulus, debt relief measures

Bangkok, Dec 21 (IANS) : Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra pledged additional stimulus and debt relief measures on Saturday in a bid to shore up the Southeast Asian country's sluggish economy amid weak consumption and high household debt. The government will continue the second phase of its cash handout program, providing around 4 million senior citizens with 10,000 baht (about 295 US dollars) each by the end of January, Paetongtarn said in a televised address on her administration's performance during the first three months in office. In September, authorities distributed a cash stimulus of 145.5 billion baht (about 4.3 billion dollars) to around 14.55 million underprivileged individuals and people with disabilities. This initiative has helped spur private consumption and is expected to boost the kingdom's



economy, leading to growth exceeding 3 per cent in the final quarter of 2024, the prime minister said. Some 36 million Thais had registered for the handout scheme, a key campaign promise of Paetongtarn's ruling Pheu Thai Party. A third phase of the program is set to roll out later next year, she said, Xinhua news agency reported. Paetongtarn noted that the government will prioritize debt relief measures to aid struggling small businesses and retail borrowers, aiming to address rising household debt that has been weighing on the Thai economy.

Houthi infiltration attempts foiled in Yemen: Govt forces

Aden, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Yemeni government forces said that they have repelled three infiltration attempts by the Houthi group in the country's southwestern province of Taiz, killing two militants and wounding several others. The Taiz Military Axis, representing government forces, issued a statement condemning

the continued Houthi escalation of hostilities, which includes targeting civilians and military installations of the government in Taiz, Xinhua news agency reported. According to the statement, government forces thwarted three separate infiltration attempts by the Houthi group during the past hours.



Odisha: Vigilance Dept arrests three including govt official in Rs 4 crore misappropriation case

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Odisha Vigilance Department on Saturday arrested three persons including a senior government official on the charges of misappropriation of public funds to the tune of over Rs 4 crore by producing forged documents. The sleuths arrested two businessmen-Satyaki Pattanaik and Deeptikanta Choudhury- and a government official, Abinash Pradhan, currently posted as As-

sistant Commercial Tax Officer (ACTO), Jeypore in Koraput district. Sources said that the Commissionerate of CT & GST, Bhubaneswar during the audit came to know about the fraud and informed the Vigilance Department. The vigilance subsequently initiated a probe into the allegations of misappropriation of government money by the officials of CT & GST, Bhubaneswar by abusing their of-

ficial power for refund of VAT and disbursement of over Rs 4.03 crore in favour of the suspicious private persons impersonated as the authorised person of the dealer M/s G.E Verona T&D Ltd (formerly known as GE T&D India Ltd) by tampering financial instruments and entertaining statutory forms containing forged signatures and seals submitted by them. "During enquiry, it was revealed that the accused Satyaki

Pattanaik and Deeptikanta Choudhury in connivance with the officials of CT & GST, Bhubaneswar have siphoned off Rs 4,03,09,723 by filing forged and fabricated appeal on behalf of the original Firm M/s G.E Verona T&D Ltd (formerly known as GE T&D India Ltd)," said a senior Vigilance official. The vigilance later registered a criminal case under various sections of the IPC and PC Act



against Satyaki, Deeptikanta, Abinash, other public servants and private persons involved in misappropriating the government funds. The anti-corruption sleuths arrested the accused persons from

different places in Bhubaneswar and Dhenkanal districts on Thursday. They were presented before the Court of Special Judge, Vigilance, Bhubaneswar that sent him to judicial custody.



Rajasthan records increase in voter gender ratio, Chhittorgarh leads with 994

Jaipur, Dec 21 (IANS) : Rajasthan has made significant strides in promoting women's participation in democracy by achieving a remarkable seven-point increase in the male-female voter gender ratio within just a few months. The ratio has improved from 923 in February 2024 to 930 in December 2024, surpassing the target set for the Special Summary Revision (SSR) Program-2025. This progress reflects the proactive measures taken by the Election Department to address disparities and implement corrective actions. The ongoing Special Summary Revision (SSR) Programme-2025 has been instrumental in updating and refining voter lists across the state. As per the data as of December 12, the male-female voter sex ratio now stands at 930 women per 1,000 men, exceeding the SSR-2025 target of 926.

India's maritime history was neglected for decades: Sarbananda Sonowal

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday said that India's maritime history was neglected for decades under the previous governments. The two-day-long India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC) drew a successful closure in the national capital today as the maiden conclave attempt to revive the academic focus on India's maritime history. "India has a rich legacy of maritime history. But, unfortunately, for decades, it remained neglected. With the successful hosting of the

maiden India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC), the Central government is making an earnest attempt to revive the academic focus on India's maritime legacy. The engaging brainstorming among maritime experts from leading maritime nations of the world is a testament to how we can revive, recite and repurpose our maritime history for attempting to find sustainable solutions for contemporary challenges," the minister said. The conclave was attended by global experts and academicians from 11 nations to present, deliberate and attempt to find sustainable solutions to the contemporary challenges in the maritime sector of



the world. While India remained in focus, the global historians and maritime experts put an onus on the country's more than 5,000-year-old history for shared growth at the conclave. Sonowal said that India's maritime rise is a testament to the nation's progress and resurgence as a major global power. "From enhanced port operations and logistics to mega-infrastructure development, India is earning

global recognition as it aims to become a major maritime nation by 2030," the minister said. He added that the exploration of our rich maritime history, especially with the upcoming National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, is reshaping the world's perspective on India's shipping sector.



Over 2.2 crore women-owned MSMEs registered under govt scheme in last 4 years: Minister

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : As many as 2.21 crore women-owned MSMEs have registered on Udyam Registration Portal (URP) and Udyam Assist Platform (UAP) between July 1, 2020 and November 30, 2024 in the country, the Lok Sabha was informed on Saturday. Union Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Shobha Karandlaje said.

Indore: Beggar claims Rs 75,000 found in her possession during rescue earned in a month

Bhopal, Dec 21 (IANS) : Madhya Pradesh's Women and Child Development Department on Saturday claimed to have rescued a woman beggar near a temple in Indore with cash amount more than Rs 75,000. The administration claimed, that the woman,

who has been shifted to a rescue centre run by the Women and Child Development Department, has confessed to earning the money within one month from begging in the area. Project Officer of the Child Development Department in Indore city, Dinesh Mishra said, "During

the interrogation woman said she had earned this money in the past month. She has been involved in begging for the last several years." The state government has revived the beggar-free campaign which was initially planned in September 2023 by the then Indore District Collector Ilayaraja T.



Kejriwal misleading women just like he did in Punjab: Delhi BJP

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : Hitting out at the AAP government over its new announcement of giving financial assistance to women, Delhi BJP Chief Virendra Sachdeva said on Saturday that before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, former Delhi Chief Minister and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal collected forms from women in the national capital and promised a grant of Rs 1,000 but no funds have been distributed till now. Sachdeva asked why the AAP government in Punjab, which promised Mahila Samman Rashi before the Assembly elections,

had failed to deliver even after being in power for two years. The State BJP Chief accused Kejriwal of repeating the same misleading tactics with yet another election approaching, calling it a ploy to mislead women with false assurances. Sachdeva questioned why the former Delhi Chief Minister delayed Cabinet approval for 10 months after initially announcing the grant for women in February this year. Highlighting the BJP's achievements, the State BJP Chief emphasised that the public trusts only Prime Minister Narendra

Modi's guarantees. "We have successfully implemented the Women's Honour Grant in Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Haryana, even starting disbursements in Maharashtra before elections," he said. Sachdeva also accused Kejriwal of being a "mastermind" in corruption, alleging that he prioritises building lavish residences and increasing electricity bills while neglecting infrastructure and public services like roads, sewage systems, and clean drinking water.

AIMPLB welcomes SC's curbs on fresh suits against mosques

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Saturday welcomed the Supreme Court's interim order on the Places of Worship Act, 1991 that imposed restrictions on registering new suits, delivering effective or final judgments, or ordering surveys in ongoing cases concerning mosques and shrines. AIMPLB Spokesperson S.Q.R. Ilyas welcomed the apex court's interim order, emphasising that local courts were undermining the spirit of the Places of Worship Act by entertaining petitions and issuing orders concerning mosques, said a statement. "The manner in which local courts declared appeals admissible and issued orders on mosques and dargahs had made this act ineffective.



RG Kar tragedy : Karuna Nundy to represent victim's parents now as counsel

Kolkata, Dec 21 (IANS) : Karuna Nundy and her team will be representing the parents of the woman junior doctor of the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital who was raped and murdered within the hospital premises in August this year. Nundy and her team will be representing the victim's parents at the Supreme Court, Calcutta High Court, and the trial court in Kolkata. The information surfaced just a day after Vrinda Grover, the earlier counsel of the victim's parents, announced her decision to withdraw from appearing in the case further. In a statement issued from the Chambers of Vrinda Grover, certain "intervening factors and circumstances" have been termed as the reasons for the decision. This is the second time that the counsel of the victim's family has been changed. Initially, senior advocate of the Calcutta High Court and CPI-M Rajya Sabha member

Bikas Ranjan Bhattacharya had been representing the victim's family. Nundy and Sabyasachi Chattopadhyay are already representing the Joint Platform of Doctors, West Bengal, an association of senior doctors in the state who had been extending support to the protest movement by the junior doctors in connection with the rape and murder case. Earlier in September this year, the counsel for the junior doctors spearheading the movement on the rape and murder case was also changed, with acclaimed lawyer and social activist Indira Jaising replacing senior advocate Geeta Luthra.



Auto PLI achieves Rs 20,715 crore investment, Rs 10,472 crore incremental sales : Centre

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for automobile and auto components industry has achieved Rs 20,715 crore investment and Rs 10,472 crore incremental sales have been achieved (as of September), with the first incentive disbursement planned for FY2024-25, the government said on Saturday. According to the Ministry of Heavy Industries, out of 115 applications received, 82 were approved, with an estimated investment of Rs 42,500 crore, incremental sales of Rs 2,31,500 crore, and 1.4 lakh jobs over five years.

The PLI scheme for automobile and auto components industry, with a budgetary outlay of Rs 25,938 crore, aims to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities for advanced automotive technology (AAT) products, overcome cost disabilities, and build a robust supply chain. The scheme covers the period FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28, with incentive disbursements from FY 2024-25 to FY 2028-29. The scheme offers incentives of 13-18 per cent for electric vehicle and hydrogen fuel cell components and 8-13 per cent for other AAT

components. The FAME-II Scheme, launched in 2019 with an outlay of Rs 11,500 crore, aims to promote electric mobility in India through demand incentives for e-2Ws, e-3Ws, e-4Ws, e-buses, and EV public charging stations. As of October 31, 2024, Rs 8,844 crore has been spent, including Rs 6,577 crore for subsidies.



India pips China in creating ultra-high net worth individuals in 2024

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The country's ultra-high net worth individual (UHNI) count reached 13,600 in 2024, marking a 6 per cent annual growth, and is projected to soar by 50 per cent by 2028, far outpacing the global growth average of 30 per cent, a report showed on Saturday. While India's UHNI population grew by 6 per cent in 2024, China's grew by just 2 per cent, signalling India's rising economic prominence, according to the report by Anarock Group. India ranks sixth globally in UHNI population and third in Asia, trailing only China and Japan. About 10 per cent of UHNIs secured alternate citizenships in 2024,

favouring Portugal, Malta and the UAE for their global mobility and tax benefits. "Approximately 14 per cent of UHNIs own properties abroad, with Dubai, London and Singapore as the primary hotspots. The average international property investment exceeded Rs 12 crore (\$1.44 million) in 2024," said Prashant Thakur, Regional Director and Head, Research, Anarock Group. Also, nearly 25 per cent of Indian UHNIs are diversifying abroad.



India's job market projected to grow by 9 pc in 2025: Report

Bengaluru, Dec 21 (IANS) : India is expected to see a 9 per cent growth in hiring in 2025, according to a report on Saturday. The report by foundit (formerly Monster APAC & ME), showed that IT, retail, telecommunications, and Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sectors are the primary drivers of this growth in the country. With a 10 per cent growth in 2024 and a 3 per cent month-on-month growth in November, the forecast indicates that hiring is set to retain its momentum, with a predictable hiring environment. Emerging technologies and evolving business priorities will further shape India's job market in 2025.

Rupee falls to all-time low of 85.12 against US dollar over hawkish Fed outlook

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Indian rupee fell 18 paise to all-time low of 85.12 against the US dollar on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) over Federal Reserve's hawkish commentary on rate cut outlook. The U.S. Fed meeting which

was held on Saturday, shifted its focus towards maximum employment and price stability, the FOMC halved the number of rate cuts expected for 2025. After the US Fed's decision, there was a strong rally in the dollar and the dollar index crossed the 108 level. Apart from the Indian cur-

rency, its effect was also seen in other foreign currencies. The Indian currency opened on a weak note at Rs 85.06 against the dollar. Investors' sentiment was affected by the soft trend of domestic stock markets, demand for dollars from importers, and foreign capital withdrawal.



The Indian rupee closed at a record low of 84.94 against the US currency on the previous trading day. "The dollar index rising above 108 and the 10-year bond yield spiking to 4.52 per cent are negatives from the perspective of FII fund flows. But this is likely to be only temporary," said experts. After the US Fed's decision, the Dow Jones declined 2.58 per cent and closed at 42,326.87.



India's solar equipment manufacturing capacity set to surge in next 2-3 years: Report

Mumbai, Dec 21 (IANS) : India's solar equipment manufacturing capacity is poised for robust growth over the next 2-3 years, with module and cell manufacturing capacity of around 80 GW and 50 GW respectively in the pipeline, according to a report. This will

entail a capex of nearly Rs 1 lakh crore with an estimated debt funding of nearly Rs 70,000 crore over the medium term, including investments in polysilicon and wafer capacities, it said. India's module and cell capacity stood at around 70 GW and 8 GW respectively as of March 2024, although

high-efficiency module capacity is only 50 GW. The capacity enlisted under the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers for Modules (ALMM-I) reached 60 GW as of September 2024, although a large section is in the ramp-up phase, thus barely sufficing to meet the domestic module requirement. The accelerated growth over the last 12 months has been an outcome of the growing ESG focus of corporates, buoyant investor interest, proactive policy support, and enhanced availability of financing avenues, the report said. CareEdge Ratings says that capacity addition plans of around 80 GW by leading module manufacturers will entail a capex of nearly Rs 12,000 crore over the next 2-3 years. Domestic cell capacity is expected to witness commensurate growth to reach 60 GW by FY27 with about Rs 30,000 crore worth of investments by major players over the next 2-3 years on the back of strong policy support for progressive backward integration. The resultant capacity growth will make India a surplus market, given the annual module requirement of 40-50 GW, necessitating that the domestic players tap the export markets. CareEdge Ratings believes that the solar segment will significantly help in India's renewable capacity growth.

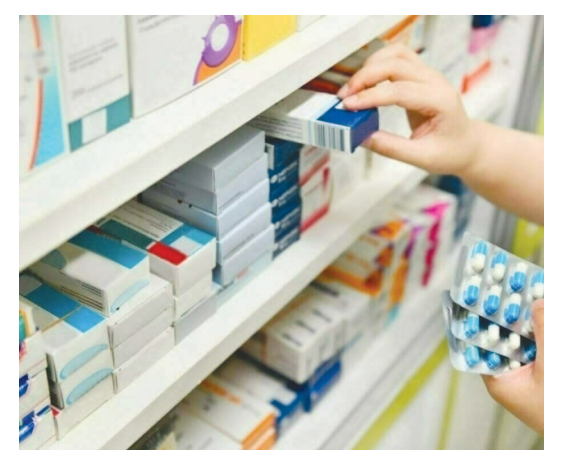


India tops list of recipient countries for remittances with \$129 bn inflow in 2024

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : India tops the list of recipient countries for remittances in 2024 with an estimated inflow of \$129 billion, followed by Mexico (\$68 billion), China (\$48 billion), the Philippines (\$40 billion), and Pakistan (\$33 billion), according to the latest figures compiled by World Bank economists. The growth rate of remittances this year is estimated to be 5.8 per cent, compared to 1.2 per cent registered in 2023, according to a World Bank blog post. "The recovery of the job markets in the high-income countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been the key driver of remittances. This is especially true for the United States where the employment of foreign-born workers has recovered steadily and is 11 per cent higher than the pre-pandemic level seen in February 2020."

Indian pharma sector 3rd largest globally, valued at \$50 bn in FY 2023-24

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : India's pharma industry is considered to be the world's third largest by volume, and in FY 2023-24 the pharmaceutical market has been valued at \$50 billion, said Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers Anupriya Patel. In a written reply to Rajya Sabha Patel said that in FY 2023-24, the pharmaceutical market's domestic consumption value was at \$23.5 billion, and exports were valued at \$26.5 billion. The Indian pharmaceutical industry has a strong presence at the global level. It is also the 14th in terms of value of production with an extremely diversified product base covering generic drugs, bulk drugs, over-the-counter drugs, vaccines, biosimilars, and biologics. "According to National Accounts Statistics 2024, published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, total output for industry that is, pharmaceuticals, medicinal and botanical products is Rs. 4,56,246 crores for FY 2022-23 at constant prices, of which value added is Rs. 1,75,583 crores. 9,25,811 number of persons are engaged in Pharmaceuticals, medicinal and botanical products industry during FY 2022-23," Patel said.



PE investments in Indian real estate sector surge over 30 pc in 2024

Mumbai, Dec 21 (IANS) : Private equity (PE) investments in the Indian real estate sector reached \$4.2 billion in 2024, marking a 32 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth amid high demand in the warehousing segment, according to a report on Saturday.

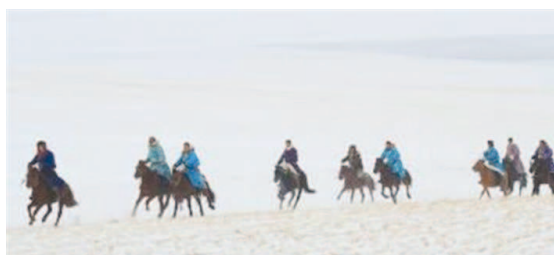
Knight Frank India, an international property consultancy firm, said in a report that the warehousing sector is leading the sector, which accounts for 45 per cent of total investments, followed by the residential sector at 28 per cent and the office sector at 26 per cent.





Brazil's Lula to seek reelection in 2026

Brasilia, Dec 21 (IANS) : Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will seek reelection in 2026, the presidency's Secretary of Social Communication Paulo Pimenta has confirmed. In an interview with CNN Brasil, Pimenta assured that the president was in good health following medical interventions to treat a brain bleed, adding he was "the most qualified and prepared person" to continue leading the country. Lula underwent emergency surgery on Saturday to drain a hematoma in his head and an embolization procedure on Saturday to prevent a recurrence. According to his medical team, the president will not suffer any aftereffects and should be discharged early next week, either Monday or Tuesday. "President Lula is doing very well. This is a simple procedure. President Lula is a person who takes care of himself, who has demonstrated that constantly, with discipline. A person who knows Brazil and who is extremely prepared," said Pimenta.



Overnight temperature plunges to minus 42 degrees Celsius in western Mongolia

Ulan Bator, Dec 21 (IANS) : Overnight temperatures dropped to a bone-chilling minus 42 degrees Celsius in Otgon soum, an administrative subdivision of Zavkhan province in western Mongolia, according to the country's weather monitoring agency. This marks the coldest temperature recorded in Mongolia so far this winter, the National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring announced in a statement on Saturday.

New Zealand's overseas visitor arrivals continue to rise

Wellington, Dec 21 (IANS) : New Zealand's overseas visitor arrivals were 240,200 in October 2024, an increase of 14,200 from October 2023, with the biggest changes in arrivals from Australia, the United States, Singapore, and Britain, the statistics department Stats NZ said on Saturday. The total number of overseas visitor arrivals in October 2024 was 85 per cent of the 283,800 in October 2019, which was before the Covid-19 pandemic, Stats NZ said. Of the 240,200 overseas visitor arrivals in October 2024, 46 per cent were from Australia, 9 per cent from the United States, 7 per cent from China, 5 per cent from Britain, 3 per cent from India, and 3 per cent from Germany, statistics show.



In terms of annual arrivals, New Zealand's overseas visitor arrivals were 3.25 million in the October 2024 year, an increase of 413,000 from the October 2023 year, with the biggest changes in arrivals from China, Australia, the United States, South Korea and Japan, Stats NZ said, Xinhua news agency reported. New Zealand-resident traveller arrivals were 2.97 million in the October 2024 year, an increase of 383,000 from the October 2023 year, it said. Regarding border crossings, there were 1.07 million border crossings in October 2024, made up of 569,900 arrivals and 504,400 departures. In October 2023, 1.02 million border crossings were recorded, Stats NZ said, adding New Zealand's October 2024 border crossings were 92 per cent of the 1.17 million in October 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic. New Zealand has seen a strong boost in international student enrolments, according to the latest statistics. New Zealand's international education sector was rebounding strongly, Tertiary Education and Skills Minister Penny Simmonds said earlier this month.



Russia hopes to keep military bases in Syria, Guterres urges deescalation

Damascus, Dec 21 (IANS) : Russia hopes to keep its military bases in Syria as they are important in the fight against terrorism, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said late Friday. "I think there is general agreement that the fight against terrorism and the IS is not over, it requires collective efforts. In this regard, our presence played an important role in the fight against international terrorism," state-run RIA news agency reported, citing Bogdanov. The Russian diplomat added that Moscow has established contacts with the political committee of Syria's Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group and discussed issues of ensuring the security of the Russian diplomatic mission and citizens in the country, Xinhua news agency reported.

Former Agricultural Bank of China VP arrested for suspected bribery

Beijing, Dec 21 (IANS) : Lou Wenlong, a former Vice President of the Agricultural Bank of China, has been arrested on suspicion of bribery, the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) said on Saturday. The Fujian Provincial People's Procuratorate ordered the arrest of Lou, who was also a former member of the bank's Party committee, according to a statement by the SPP. The case was handed over to the prosecutors for examination and prosecution following the conclusion of an investigation carried out by the National Commission of Supervision, the SPP said, Xinhua news agency reported. Lou was expelled from the Party, according to an official statement released last month. In another case, on December 11, a public prosecution was initiated against Li Pengxin, former Deputy Secretary of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Regional Committee of the Communist Party of China, on charges of taking bribe, the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) had revealed. The Baoji Municipal People's Procuratorate in northwest China's Shaanxi Province had filed the case with the city's intermediate



people's court following an investigation by the National Commission of Supervision. Prosecutors alleged that Li abused his positions in Qinghai, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang to secure benefits for others in exchange for an extremely large amount of bribes, according to the SPP. Tang Shuangning, former chairman of China Everbright Group, was also sentenced to 12 years in prison for embezzlement and accepting bribes, according to a verdict issued in north China's Hebei Province on December 10. Tang was fined 1.3 million yuan (about 181,000 US dollars), with the money he embezzled and his illegal gains to be returned to the victims or turned over to the state treasury, according to the verdict of the Intermediate People's Court of Tangshan, Hebei. An investigation into Tang revealed that in April 2003, he used his position at the People's Bank of China to take public property worth about 3 million yuan into his own possession. He was also found to have taken advantage of his various positions between 2000 and 2017 to benefit others, illegally receiving more than 11 million yuan in cash and valuables in return. In light of the fact that Tang had turned himself in and remained cooperative during proceedings, he was granted leniency by the court.

Philippines evacuates over 45,000 people after Mount Kanlaon eruption

Manila, Dec 21 (IANS) : Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos said on Saturday that the government has evacuated over 45,000 residents from villages around the active Kanlaon Volcano, which erupted on Saturday. Marcos said the government

targets evacuating around 84,000 villagers within the six-km danger zone from the volcano. He said the government is ready to assist residents impacted by the eruption, which blanketed several villages with ashes and contaminated drinking water sources in the community, reports Xinhua news agency.

"We will step up. Any escalation in damages and destruction will be met with a stronger government response," Marcos said. Kanlaon, which straddles the provinces of Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental on the island of Negros in the central Philippines, spewed a "voluminous plume" that rose more than 4,000

meters into the sky on Monday afternoon. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology raised the alert level to three on a scale of five, warning that a "magmatic eruption has begun that may progress to further explosive eruptions," urging residents within the danger zone and beyond to move to safety.



Japan puts new evidence of historical germ-warfare unit on display

Tokyo, Dec 21 (IANS) : The former site of the headquarters of Unit 731, a notorious Japanese germ-warfare unit during World War II (WWII), reopened to the public on Saturday, featuring a special exhibition showcasing evidence of its germ-warfare activities. Nearly 2,100 items, including archives, historical materials, relics and publications collected by the Exhibition Hall of Evidences of Crime Commit-



ted by Unit 731 of the Japanese Imperial Army in recent years, were unveiled at the exhibition, according to Zhang Yang, deputy director of the facility, reports Xinhua news agency.

Australian opposition leader reveals \$210 billion price tag for nuclear plan

Sydney, Dec 21 (IANS) : The leader of Australia's federal opposition party, Peter Dutton, has revealed his nuclear energy plan would cost hundreds of billions of dollars. Dutton, the leader of the Coalition, on Saturday, released the long-awaited costing of his plan to build seven nuclear reactors on the sites of retiring coal plants if he is

elected Prime Minister (PM) at the 2025 general election, reports Xinhua news agency. According to the independent costing, the plan would cost 331 billion Australian dollars (\$210.7 billion). Under Dutton's proposal, the first two publicly-owned reactors would begin operation by the mid-2030s, with coal-fired power plants to fill the generation gap in the meantime. In 2050 -- by which the remain-

ing five reactors would be operational -- Dutton said that nuclear power would account for 38 per cent of Australia's electricity generation, with renewables covering 54 per cent and the remaining eight per cent coming from a combination of storage and gas. The governing Labor Party has committed to pursuing a renewables-only future, which the Coalition has claimed would cost over 600 billion AUD (\$381.9 bil-



lion). "This is a plan which will underpin the economic success of our country for the next century," Dutton told reporters on Saturday. "This will make electricity reliable. It will make it more consistent.

Govt inks Rs 13,500 crore deal for 12 Sukhoi fighter jets with HAL in big boost to self-reliance

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Ministry of Defence on Saturday placed a Rs 13,500 crore order to buy 12 Su-30MKI fighter jets with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in a major boost to the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative of the government. "The aircraft would have an indigenous content of 62.6 per cent, enhanced due to indigenisation of many components to be manufactured by the Indian defence industry," according to a Defence Ministry statement. An official said that these aircraft will be manufactured at Nasik division of HAL. The supply of these aircraft would enhance the operational capability of the Indian Air Force and strengthen the defence preparedness of the country.

The Sukhoi Su-30MKI is a two-seater, twinjet, multirole air superiority fighter developed by Russian manufacturer Sukhoi and built under license by HAL for the Indian Air Force. A variant of the Sukhoi Su-30, the MKI is a heavy, all-weather, long-range fighter. The announcement comes close on the heels of Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh's visit to Moscow, where he met Russian President Vladimir Putin and other top officials to further strengthen defence ties between the two countries. In September, the defence ministry signed a Rs 26,000-crore contract with HAL for advanced engines for Su-30MKI planes.



Nitish Kumar lays foundation of country's first child cancer hospital in Patna

Patna, Dec 21 (IANS) : Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday laid the foundation stone for the country's first child cancer hospital, Mahavir Child Cancer Hospital, in Phulwari Sharif town of Patna. This ambitious project is being spearheaded by the Mahavir Cancer Institute, which already operates two cancer hospitals,

and is set to provide free cancer treatment for children up to 18 years. The child cancer hospital will have the capacity of 100 beds. It will be an ultramodern, six-storey facility and will be built in an expected time period of 18 months. The new facility will provide free cancer treatment for children. The project was launched during a

programme commemorating the anniversary of the Mahavir Cancer Institute. Acharya Kishore Kunal, the Secretary of Mahavir Mandir Nyas Samiti, Building Construction Minister Ashok Chaudhary, and Medical Superintendent L.B. Singh were present, along with religious leaders and officials, to mark the occasion.

Odisha BJP to appoint new state chief in January 2025

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Odisha unit is likely to get a new President in January next year, said the party's state in-charge, Vijaypal Singh Tomar on Saturday. "The elections to the booth committees have been completed while the formation of mandal committees will be concluded by December 15. Later, the committees at the district and state levels will be formed. The election for the selection of State President will be held in the first week of January," Tomar added. "Ours is a democratic party. A normal party worker can even become the National President," added Tomar. The current Odisha BJP Chief Manmohan Samal became President of the state unit of the party in 2023. He took over the charge from former President and senior leader Sameer Mohanty. Samal as the party President played a crucial role in the stellar performance of BJP in the 2024 general elections.



Strict action to be taken against officers not providing public services : Haryana CM

Gurugram, Dec 21 (IANS) : Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday gave strict instructions to the concerned officials regarding providing public services, including cleanliness, in Gurugram that must be ensured in the city as per the cleanliness standards. "The public should not face any kind of problem. Special attention should be paid to cleanliness in the city so that Gurugram can be made clean and beautiful. He will inspect cleanliness during next month's meeting," CM Saini said. The Chief Minister was chairing a meeting of the District Public Relations and Grievance Redressal Committee in Gurugram on Saturday. A total of 23 complaints were placed in the meeting, of which 19 were settled on the spot. The remaining complaints were reserved for the next meeting and the officers

were directed to bring the status report with them. CM Saini said that the Haryana government is serious about public services. Officers of all departments should stay in the field and ensure that the services of their department are provided to the public, he added. "The lax attitude of the officers towards public facilities will not be tolerated. If any kind of complaint is received from the common citizens, strict action will be taken against the concerned officer," he said.

Forwarded CAG reports to L-G : Atishi-led city govt tells Delhi HC

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The city government on Saturday told the Delhi High Court that Chief Minister Atishi has forwarded reports prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to the Lieutenant Governor (L-G). A bench of Justice Sanjeev Narula was hearing a plea filed by BJP legislators seeking a direction to the Delhi government to forward 12 CAG reports to L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena. Justice Narula-led Bench posted the matter for hearing on December 16 after the counsel appearing for L-G said that the Raj Bhavan had received some of the reports late on Wednesday. In its affidavit, the Fi-

nance Department said that the reports under reference were not pending before it but were with the office of Chief Minister Atishi, who also holds the portfolio of Finance Minister. Earlier on October 29, the Delhi High Court agreed to examine the matter and issued notice to the Delhi government, the office of the Legislative Assembly Speaker, the L-G, CAG, and the Accountant General (Audit), Delhi. The petition claimed that CAG reports relating to pollution and rules and regulations related to alcohol were not placed before the L-G by the Finance Ministry and remain pending with Chief Minister Atishi, who also holds the portfolio of Finance Minister.



ED seizes gold bars in Mumbai & Delhi in Rs 137 crore embezzlement case

Mumbai, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) seized gold bars worth Rs 3.4 crore and Rs 46 lakh during searches at 19 locations in Mumbai, Delhi and Gurgaon as part of an ongoing probe in Summaya-Dentsu case involving embezzlement of Rs 137 crore, an official said on Saturday. During the course of search operations by the Mumbai Zonal Office

on Saturday, movable assets including Rs 46 Lakh, foreign currency equivalent to Rs 4 Lakh and gold bars amounting to Rs 3.4 crore have been seized. Other incriminating documents related to immovable property transactions, and digital devices

have been found and seized during the search proceedings, the official said. ED initiated an investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 on the basis of an FIR registered by Worli Police Station against

Dentsu Communications India Private Limited, Suumaya Industries Ltd and its promoters including others for allegedly embezzling Rs 137 crore under the guise of promising future 'Need to Feed program' advantages.

Manipur: Three top cadres of militant outfit held with arms

Imphal, Dec 21 (IANS) : Three top cadres of the banned militant outfit People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Prepak-Pro) were arrested by the security forces in Manipur's Thoubal district, officials said on Saturday. A police official said that the arrested militants have been involved in extortion of money from the people and traders and illegal possession of arms. The official said that a combined team of Manipur police Commando and a column of Assam Rifles led by senior officials acting on a tip-off rushed to Thoubal Athokpam and arrested three active cadres of the unlawful organisation on Wednesday

night. They have been identified as Nambam Indrajit Singh (22), Rajkumar Mohan Sana (21) and Warepam Albert Meitei (21).



Efforts towards TB elimination showing significant progress: Rajasthan BJP

Jaipur, Dec 21 (IANS) : Rajasthan BJP chief and Rajya Sabha MP Madan Rathore on Saturday highlighted the commendable progress made under the Union Health Ministry's TB Disease Eradication Programme. Rathore said that in 2015, the

country reported 237 TB cases per 1 lakh population, which reduced to 195 cases in 2023—a decline of 17.7 per cent over eight years. The TB-related deaths dropped by 21 per cent during the same period, according to Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel's response to a parliamentary question.





NDMC: No property tax hike in Rs 450 cr surplus Budget for 2025-26

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : Popularising solar power, tablets for students, smart parking and mist spray kits on poles for clean air are NDMC's new plans, said Chairman Keshav Chandra while presenting a Rs 463.40-crore surplus Budget for 2025-26 on Saturday, highlighting that there will be no hike in property tax rates. The Chairman presented the Annual Budget 2025-26 with Financial Projections which said that total receipts of the Budget Estimates 2025-26 are Rs 5,770.60 crore against Rs 5,319.75 crore provided in Revised Estimate 2024-25. The total actual receipts in 2023-24 were Rs 5,005.05 crore. NDMC is expecting to collect property tax of Rs 1,150

crore in Revised Estimates 2024-25 and Rs 1,290 crore in BE 2025-26. The Chairman said that NDMC proposes not to enhance property tax rates for the year 2025-26. "NDMC needs to strengthen its revenue collection system so that long-term goals of expenditure on various civic amenities are achieved," he said. As part of our commitment to transparency, efficiency, and modern governance, he proposed transitioning to a 100 digital payment system in NDMC and Streamlined Digital Platforms by expanding NDMC's existing digital payment channels, including NDMC's mobile app, online portals, and QR code systems at counters. "NDMC also proposes to develop a single source software to integrate various standalone software applications, this will enhance speedy delivery of services to its citizens," he said. The total revenue Receipts from the Electricity Distribution Strategic Business Unit (EDSBU).

After 'love jihad', 'land jihad' started in K'taka: BJP on Waqf row

Bengaluru, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Karnataka BJP said on Saturday that after 'land jihad', 'love jihad' has been started in the state as part of appeasement for the Muslims regarding the Waqf Board. "Land jihad has started in the state similar to love jihad which involves fencing off farmers' lands, evicting them, and including Wakf entries in records. The state government is using the Waqf Board to encroach the Hindu lands, temples, and cemeteries, thereby creating divisions between Hindus and Muslims," said Karnataka Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka while addressing the Legislative Assembly. He further alleged that Congress is following the British policy of "divide and rule".



Punjab AAP flays BJP MP Jangra's remarks against farmers

Chandigarh, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday condemned remarks by BJP MP (Rajya Sabha) Ram Chander Jangra against farmers and the people of Punjab. The AAP unit of Punjab said the MP's statement alleging the disappearance of 700 women during the farmers' movement and accusing Punjabis of spreading drugs, reflects a deeply prejudiced and malicious mindset. AAP spokesperson Neel Garg said here, "Such vile statements are not isolated incidents but part of a calculated attempt by BJP leaders to malign the image of Punjabis and farmers."

Health budget allocation increased by 85 pc in 2024-25: Anupriya Patel

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : The government increased health budget allocation by 85 per cent in 2024-25, said Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel on Saturday. "The budget allocation for the Department of Health & Family Welfare increased by 85 per cent from Rs 47,353 crore in 2017-18 (Budget Estimates) to Rs 87,657 crore in 2024-25 (BE)," said Patel, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday. She further also informed a steady decline in the out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) in



the country in the last five years -- "from 48.8 per cent in 2017-18 to 39.4 per cent in 2021-22." "The OOPE on health as a percentage of Total Health Expenditure (THE) in the country for the year 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 are 48.8 per cent, 48.2 per cent, 47.1 per cent, 44.4 per cent, and 39.4 per cent respectively".

Maha govt takes slew of initiatives to attract investments

Mumbai, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Maharashtra government in a serious bid to maintain its pre-eminence in attracting domestic and foreign investments on Saturday announced a slew of initiatives including setting up a "country desk" to advise and assist investors in their proposals.

The government said that the emphasis will be placed on creating policies consistent with global and regional investment trends for new investments. Efforts will be made to increase coordination between the state government and major industry groups. The state government has already sent communication with potential investors for preferential investments in Maharashtra. The government will provide continuous support to investors. The MoUs signed to date will be implemented on a fast-track basis and the state government will make all efforts to create awareness regarding investment opportunities in Maharashtra.

According to the Chief Minister's Office, the government will increase cooperation with multilateral organisations and development banks, step up coordination with embassies and trade associations, and encourage the Marathi migrant community in Maharashtra to invest.

In addition, the government will focus on attracting investments on a priority basis in various sectors such as electronics, textiles, automobiles and pharmaceuticals. Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), Maharashtra Industry, Trade and Investment Facilitation Cell and Directorate of Industries will play an active role in the implementation of these new initiatives to attract more investments in the state. Further, the government will craft new investment strategies in line with global and regional trends and encourage Maharashtrian entrepreneurs from abroad to invest

in the state. The state government's move is crucial especially when Maharashtra has topped in getting FDI in two consecutive years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The state topped the country in foreign direct investment with Rs 1,25,101 crore in 2023-24 and it again topped the country in the first two quarters, from April to September of this year 2024-25 with FDI of Rs.1,13,236 crore, which is more than 90 per cent of last year's total FDI. The state is a preferred destination for FDI.



J&K: Police attach house where four terrorists were killed in Kulgam

Srinagar, Dec 21 (IANS) : J&K Police on Saturday attached the single-storey house and 10 Marlas of land belonging to Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat in Chenigam Frisal village of Kulgam district. The property was attached in the presence of an executive magistrate under section 25 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). "The action pertains to case FIR number 53/2024 registered in Yaripora police station. Four terrorists were killed in an encounter with the security forces in this house on July 6, 2024, where they had

been harboured," police said adding that more actions like this will follow against those who harbour terrorists. J&K Police have launched an aggressive campaign against terrorists, their over-ground workers (OGWs) and their sympathisers.

Rajasthan leading in mineral blocks auction, claims official

Jaipur, Dec 21 (IANS) : Rajasthan has emerged as the top state in India in the auction of major mineral blocks, with 87 blocks successfully auctioned so far, including 33 in the current financial year, said Principal Secretary for Mines and Petroleum T. Ravikant on Saturday. He further instructed officials to gear up for the e-auction of over 100 major mineral blocks in the upcoming financial year.

While addressing a meeting with senior officials from the Mineral Department in Udaipur, he emphasised Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma's vision to enhance mineral exploration and expedite the preparation of mineral blocks for e-auction.

He also called for a comprehensive roadmap to streamline the process for both major and minor mineral blocks. Reviewing the progress of minor mineral block auctions.



Stop fighting, discuss welfare issue: NCP MP Kolhe's message to colleagues

New Delhi, Dec 21 (IANS) : Discussions in Parliament over farmers, youth and the common man are far more important than issues related to alleged links between a politician with top businessmen or which politician is flying in which tycoon's aircraft or which politician has received funds from which foreigner, said NCP MP Amol Ramsing Kolhe in Lok Sabha on Saturday. Speaking during the Constitution debate, Kolhe said personal comments in the House often turn it into a ring for political bouts. "Political sloganeering often disrupts proceedings, overshadowing issues of national interests," he said, in a passionate speech which also raised concerns over the alleged wrongdoings in Maharashtra Assembly elections. The 14-minute speech by a 44-year-old MP

JGU is number one in Times Higher Education online learning rankings

Sonapat, Dec 21 (IANS) : India's O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) is ranked No.1 in the world and awarded "Gold" in the inaugural Times Higher Education (THE) Online Learning Rankings 2024, scoring highest overall among all universities in the world in the four key areas considered for the rankings -- resources, engagement, outcomes and environment.

The rankings reflect the teaching excellence of JGU's online programmes and JGU's efforts to deliver world-class higher education.



G20 meeting : South Korea stresses tech innovation, zero-carbon energy

Seoul, Dec 21 (IANS) : South Korea has called on major nations to seek ways of actively using zero-carbon energy resources and joining hands to achieve technology innovation in an effort to address various global economic challenges, the finance ministry said on Saturday. The Seoul government made the point during the Group of 20 (G20) meeting for finance and central bank deputies, which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, on Wednesday and Thursday (local time), according to the Ministry of Economy and Finance. It was the first meeting

in the financial track for this year's G20 gatherings under South Africa's presidency, reports Yonhap news agency. During the meeting, Deputy Finance Minister Choi Ji-young said the participating nations need to implement measures to ensure the stable global financial system and plans to reform multilateral development banks. Choi also stressed the need to come up with guidance on the efficient use of financing to respond to downside risks for the global economy, maximize zero-carbon energy resources and push for technology innovation centering on artificial intelligence so as to boost productivity and



achieve sustainable development, the ministry said. The G20 finance ministers' meeting is scheduled to take place in Cape Town in February to discuss economic and financial issues of mutual concern, it added. Meanwhile, the three major global credit appraisers shared a common view on Friday that South Korea's credit rating remains stable despite the recent political turmoil, the finance ministry said. The three credit appraisers -- Moody's Ratings, Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's Global Ratings (S&P) -- made the assessment during separate virtual meetings with Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok on the day, according to the Ministry of Economy and Finance.



Ceasefire monitors wary of deteriorating security in South Sudan's restive region

Juba, Dec 21 (IANS): South Sudan's ceasefire monitors expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in Tambura County of Western Equatoria State, located southwest of Juba, the national capital. Yitayal Gelaw Bitew, chairperson of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM), said the security situation in the restive Tambura County remains concerning following the attempted assassination of the county commissioner on November 28, Xinhua news agency reported. "CTSAMVM is concerned about the deteriorating security situation in Tambura

County. One man was killed in what was assessed to be an attempt on the life of the Tambura county commissioner," Gelaw said during the meeting of CTSAMVM members in Juba. Armed people shelled the residence of Tambura County Commissioner Matthew Mabenge with a rocket-propelled grenade, leaving one person dead. "This represents a concerted attempt to remove an official from office and undermine peace and security in Western Equatoria," Gelaw said.



Turkey, US discuss Syria's stability, Gaza ceasefire

Ankara, Dec 21 (IANS) : Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken held a meeting on Saturday on combating terrorism and achieving stability in Syria, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. "Our priorities include ensuring stability in Syria and preventing the dominance of terrorist organisations such as IS (Islamic State) and the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party)," Fidan said at a joint press con-

ference with Blinken in the capital, Ankara. Fidan stressed the alignment between the two nations in addressing key challenges in the region and said their talks focused on exploring solutions to Syria's ongoing crisis and broader regional issues, reports Xinhua news agency. "We agreed that a ceasefire in Gaza should be reached as soon as possible," Fidan said. Blinken, for his part, acknowledged Turkey's role in influencing Hamas to reach a hostage ceasefire agreement, adding that there's broad agreement on expectations for the interim government in Syria -- one that is inclusive.



US, Canada exchange tariff warnings, sparking trade war concerns

Ottawa, Dec 21 (IANS) : A senior official in the government of Ontario, Canada, recently warned that the province might ban US-made alcohol and restrict electricity exports to several American states if President-elect Donald Trump imposes tariffs on all Canadian products, according to media reports. This warning, along with others issued by Canadian officials, has heightened concerns about a potential trade war between the United States and one of its most important trading partners. Additionally, according to a senior official, Canada's most populous province is considering imposing export bans on critical minerals essential for electric vehicle batteries and barring US-based companies from participating in Ontario's government procurement processes.



Brazil expects agricultural output to increase seven per cent

Rio De Janeiro, Dec 21 (IANS) : Brazil, one of the world's top food producers, expects its cereal, legume and oilseed production to increase by 7 per cent to 314.8 million tonnes in 2025, the state-run Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) has said.

Senior Iranian diplomat slams IAEA chief's remarks about Tehran's nuclear program

Tehran, Dec 21 (IANS) : A senior Iranian diplomat took a swipe at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi for his "political" remarks about the "potential of nuclear proliferation" by Tehran. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi made the remarks.



FM Cho says martial law chaos caused 'serious damage' to South Korea's diplomacy

Seoul, Dec 21 (IANS): The martial law turmoil has caused "serious damage" to South Korea's diplomacy, its top diplomat said on Saturday, amid concerns over a foreign policy vacuum as President Yoon Suk Yeol faces another impeachment vote in parliament. Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul made the remark as he appeared at a parliamentary hearing to answer lawmakers' questions regarding the controversial Cabinet meeting held shortly before Yoon declared martial law on December 3, reports Yonhap news agency. "I think there has been serious damage," Cho said in the interpellation session of the National Assembly when asked by Rep. Cho Jung-sik of the main opposition Democratic Party whether he thinks the current situation amounts to a diplomatic emergency. "We will maintain a firm South Korea-US alliance and focus on restoring the trust of the international community," Cho said. Yoon has been banned from



leaving the country since law enforcement agencies launched investigations into his short-lived martial law imposition. The political turmoil has effectively put all top-level and other key diplomatic engagements with other countries at a halt, including the cancelled trips to Seoul by US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and a Swedish delegation led by its prime minister. Cho said he believes diplomacy will be back on track once "constitutional order is restored." "What matters most is to restore constitutional order through democratic procedures and re-

specting the will of the people to recover and stabilize state affairs," Cho said. Asked why he avoided phone calls from US Ambassador Philip Goldberg on the night of the martial law, Cho said he didn't want to "mislead" the ally about the situation. "I felt it was more important to consider what to communicate to the US," Cho said. Cho was one of the Cabinet members who strongly opposed Yoon's martial law. Cho said he told Yoon many times to rethink his decision.

Survey shows mixed sentiment among Japan's large companies

Tokyo, Dec 21 (IANS) : The Bank of Japan (BOJ) survey released on Saturday revealed mixed business sentiment among Japan's large companies, with manufacturers showing signs of recovery and non-manufacturers facing notable challenges. The business index for large manufacturers improved for the first time in two quarters, rising by 1 point to plus 14 for the October-December period, according to the quarterly Tankan survey by the Bank of Japan. A positive number indicates that more companies are optimistic about business conditions than those pessimistic, reports Xinhua news agency.



Ukraine's energy infrastructure under massive missile attacks

Kyiv, Dec 21 (IANS) : Explosions were heard all over Ukraine on Saturday morning as Russia launched a large-scale missile attack on its energy infrastructure, Ukrainian media reported. President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Telegram that preliminary reports showed 93 missiles and almost 200 drones were launched against Ukraine in "one of the largest strikes on our energy sector." Explosions sounded in the northern Kyiv region, the southern Odesa region, and the western regions of Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk, reported Xinhua, quoting the Interfax-

Ukraine news agency. Ukraine's state-run energy company, Ukrenergo, announced plans to toughen power supply restrictions in the wake of the attack. Russia's defence ministry said the massive strike, which involved high-precision long-range air- and sea-based weapons and drones, was in response to Ukraine's attack on its territory with US-made missiles. Earlier on Saturday, the ministry said Ukrainian forces used six US-made ATACMS ballistic missiles to attack the Taganrog military airfield in Russia's Rostov region. Moscow had vowed to respond with "appropriate measures."





Pushpa 2 Nears KGF2 Record!

The battle for ticket sales is heating up, and the numbers are soaring higher than ever. Just like a race car speeding ahead, these movies are breaking records and setting new benchmarks on platforms like BookMyShow. Here's the list of the top performers that are rewriting the history of ticket sales: With the massive success of KGF2 leading the pack, Pushpa 2 is already creating waves, closing in on the top spots. As audiences continue to flock to theaters, Pushpa 2 may very well

surpass Baahubali 2, proving that the new wave of South Indian cinema is here to stay. Pushpa 2 brings back Allu Arjun as the charismatic Pushpa Raj, with Rashmika Mandanna reprising her role as Srivalli.

The film also stars Fahadh Faasil as the ruthless SP Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat, continuing the high-stakes drama. With its stellar cast and gripping storyline, Pushpa 2 is expected to keep breaking records at the box office in the coming days.

Dream Icon

Vijay At Keerthy Suresh's Wedding

Keerthy Suresh is one of the star heroines in South cinema. She made her debut long back in Telugu and then went on to be seen as a big star. She also did the film Mahanati with which she gained a huge name and fame. The actress got married recently in Goa. The wedding ceremony took place a week ago in both Hindi and Christian traditions. Thalapaty

Vijay was one of the guests at the wedding. He flew down to Goa in a special flight to attend the wedding along with Keerthy Suresh and others. The actor met the newly wed couple and conveyed his special greetings to them. From the wedding, the actress posted a picture where the couple posed with Vijay. "When our dream icon blessed us at our dream weddingggg! @actorvijay sir With love, Your Nanbi and Nanban #ForTheLoveOfNyke" wrote Keerthy Suresh on her Instagram page. On the work front, Keerthy Suresh will next be seen in the Hindi film Baby John, marking her debut in Bollywood cinema. The film is releasing on the 25th of December.



Vijay Deverakonda Teases Fans with Love Secret!

Like a fragile bloom that blossoms at the proper minute, Vijay Deverakonda is keeping the world holding up on a point that has started unending interest – his relationship with rumoured Rashmika

Mandanna. In a later meeting, when inquired almost the continuous rumours with respect to their relationship, Vijay reacted with characteristic calmness, saying, "I will react to this when the time comes."



Mahesh Babu's SSMB29

Update on Pooja Ceremony and More

Like an ace planner creating an epic landmark, Chief SS Rajamouli is building another magnum creation, SSMB29, with genius Mahesh Babu as the foundation. The film, one of the foremost expected wanders in Indian cinema, guarantees to be a display of terrific extents. With an amazing budget of 1000 crore, this two-part cinematic experience is balanced to rethink the

boundaries of narrating and visual magnificence. The film's production is set to start with a pooja ceremony in January, stamping the official kickoff of this driven extend. Fans can anticipate the primary portion of SSMB29 to be discharged in 2027, with the moment instalment taking after in 2029. The scale and timeline of the extension reflect Rajamouli's vision of making an extraordinary adventure, much like his all-inclusive celebrated Baahubali arrangement. With Mahesh Babu at the steerage, depicting a character that's anticipated to be both courageous and profoundly layered, expectation is at an all-time tall.

Rishab Shetty's Secrets Uncovered on Rana's Show!

Like a wave crashing onto the shores, Rana Daggubati's show on Prime is creating a tidal wave of excitement. With its stunning guest lineup, including stars like Sreeleela and Naga Chaitanya, the show has been a thrilling ride so far. And now, the latest promo featuring Kantara sensation Rishab Shetty has set the stage for an even bigger spectacle. The promo kicks off with Rana's commanding voice, "If you want to work in cinema... you have to come to the city!" He then introduces his guest, Rishab Shetty, calling him the man who has busted this myth with his massive success in Kantara.



What Shankar said about Game Changer and Indian 3?

Maverick director Shankar was once one of the most celebrated filmmakers in Indian cinema before he started to lose his sheen of late. He is now coming up with Game Changer which is most anticipated work of his in recent years. On the occasion, he spoke about Game Changer and Indian 3. Here's what he had to say about the same. "Ram Charan's decision to do Game Chanher was decided even before the release of 'RRR'. Dil Raju felt that it would be good if Ram Charan was in this film. It seemed appropriate to me too. Some of my stories are universal themes that can be applied to any hero, so they would be perfect for a big hero." Shankar said



Balakrishna With Venky Via Anil Ravipudi!

Nandamuri Balakrishna's super successful talk show, Unstoppable is going great guns for Aha Video. This buzzing talk show has

quickly become a principal host for film promotions and related activities in the recent past. Coming to the topic now we are hearing about a very interesting collaboration on this

Balakrishna's talk show as reports are suggesting that Venkatesh Daggubati will be the next guest on the show. As per social media reports, Venkatesh Daggubati will be coming on Balakrishna's Unstoppable on the 22nd of this month. There is another special addition to this already, super exciting episode.



Rashmika Bags Bollywood's Next Big Romance with Shahid Kapoor!

Like a phoenix reinventing itself, Rashmika Mandanna is poised to transform her image from a South Indian masala queen to a chic, modern diva with her upcoming role in Cocktail 2. A sequel

to the 2012 Bollywood blockbuster Cocktail, which starred Saif Ali Khan, Deepika Padukone, and Diana Penty, the film promises to bring a fresh, glamorous twist to the iconic characters. Rashmika will star opposite Shahid Kapoor, and while the second female lead is yet

to be finalized, fans are already buzzing with speculation about whether Rashmika will step into a role reminiscent of Deepika's bold and vibrant Veronica. This collaboration marks Rashmika's third project with Maddock Films.

Unexpected Issue For Ram Charan!

Mega Hero Ram Charan is currently awaiting the theatrical release of Game Changer, which happens to be his first solo outing after three long years since RRR, which released back in March 2022.

The discussion now is about Charan's upcoming film under Buchi Babu direction, which had commenced the shoot, just a couple of weeks back. It is known that Kannada superstar Shiva Rajkumar is on board to play a crucial role in the film.

