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### MHCVs, tractor sales in India to report better volumes post-festive period: Report

New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) : The medium and heavy commercial vehicles (MHCVs) and tractor sales are likely to report better volumes in India this month as the festive season buying.... **07**



### Bumrah nominated for ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year award

India's fast-bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been nominated for 2024 ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year award. Apart from him, Sri Lanka all-rounder Kamindu Mendis and England... **12**



### Encroached 2 acres of land handed over to the government : District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha

In Rajanna Siricilla district, former Sarpanch of Lakshmiuram Mittapalli Padma has handed over two acres of government land to the... **02**

## CM knows there is no strength in ACB case against me : KTR

Hyderabad, Dec 30: BRS party leader KT Rama Rao today said CM Revanth Reddy knew there was no strength in the case registered against him by the State ACB. He held a chit chat with the media at Telangana Bhavan. Speaking on the occasion, he said there was confidence and self-confidence in the BRS cadre. He

made it clear that they were not afraid of petty cases. "I haven't changed my mind about e-car racing case. I stand by what I have said," he said. He made it clear that he had asked officials to pay for the e-car race in his capacity as a State minister. "If it is not done as per the rules, then why didn't the government go to the EC and the RBI? Why were no cases registered against those who touched the money? The government is trying to scare me with cases.



## Telangana Assembly passes resolution for Bharat Ratna to Manmohan Singh

Hyderabad, Dec 30 (IANS) : The Telangana Assembly on Monday unanimously resolved to recommend Bharat Ratna for former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh who passed away recently. A resolution moved by Chief Minister A. Revant Reddy was unanimously adopted by the Assembly to confer India's highest civilian honour on Dr. Manmohan Singh. The special session of the Assembly paid tributes to the former Prime Minister, expressing condolences over his demise and acknowledging his invaluable contributions to the nation's progress and the formation of the state of Telangana. The Assembly approved a proposal to install a statue of Dr. Manmohan Singh in Hyderabad to commemorate him as a great leader who fulfilled the 60-year aspirations of the Telangana people. The Assembly expressed deep condolences to Dr. Manmohan Singh's family, recognizing him as an internationally acclaimed economist who served the country in various capacities,



including Chief Economic Advisor, RBI Governor, Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission, Finance Minister, and Prime Minister. It noted that his tenure as Finance Minister (1991-1996) marked a turning point in India's economic history, with key reforms in liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation. As Prime Minister (2004-2014), he initiated transformative social programs such as the Mahatma

Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Right to Information Act, the National Rural Health Mission, and the Aadhaar program. He introduced significant amendments to the Land Acquisition Act in 2013 to protect displaced individuals and revised the Forest Rights Act in 2006 to support tribal communities.

Continued on pg 02

### Law is equal for all, says Pawan Kalyan on Allu Arjun's arrest

Amaravati, Dec 30 : Law is equal for all, said Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Monday in his first reaction to the stampede at Hyderabad's Sandhya Theatre which claimed the life of a woman during the premier show of 'Pushpa 2: The Rule', and the subsequent arrest of actor Allu Arjun. The actor-politician feels that police can't be blamed as they act keeping safety.



## Andhra Pradesh to attract Rs 1.82 lakh crore investment

Amaravati, Dec 30 (IANS) : Andhra Pradesh State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) on Monday cleared nine projects to come up in the state with an investment of over Rs 1.82 lakh crore. The SIPB meeting chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu gave its clearance for the projects which are expected to create 2.64 lakh jobs. CM Naidu on Monday directed the officials to see to it that all the necessary permissions, including allocation of land, are granted on time to those who are coming forward to invest in the State on a massive scale.

Officials informed the Chief Minister that at least nine projects are being established in the State now with an investment of Rs 1,82,162 crore creating employment for 2,63,411 people. The Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) is setting up a major refinery in an extent of 6,000 acres at Ramayapatnam in Nellore dis-

trict with an investment of Rs 96,862 crore creating 2,400 jobs. The BPCL is planning a township with five blocks comprising a learning centre, refinery, petrochemical unit and an administrative block, the officials told the Chief Minister. **Continued on pg 02**

### Mastering frontier technologies is need of the hour : Rajnath Singh

New Delhi, Dec 30: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that mastering frontier technologies in today's constantly-evolving times is the need of the hour, and the military training centres are playing a "crucial role in equipping and readying our soldiers to deal with future challenges".

Continued on pg 02



### Satya Nadella assures Microsoft to be partner of Telangana govt in all initiatives

Hyderabad, Dec.30 (NSS): Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has reiterated the commitment of his company to partner with the Telangana government in all its initiatives. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, along with IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu, Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies Uttam Kumar Reddy, Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari, Special Chief Secretary IT and Industries Jayesh Ranjan.

## Public grievances should be addressed on priority : GHMC commissioner Ilambarthi

Hyderabad, Dec.30 (NSS): GHMC Commissioner Ilambarthi has instructed the officials concerned to give priority to the complaints received from the public and take special initiative to resolve the issues expeditiously. As part of the Prajavani programme held at the GHMC head office on Monday, the Commissioner along with Deputy Mayor Mote Srilatha Sobhan Reddy received the petitions from the people who have come from various parts of greater Hyderabad seeking a solution to various issues. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner said directed the town planning officials to inspect the complaints received by the town planning department in Prajavani within their field limits and issue notices on illegal

constructions. The town planning department has been asked to submit a report on the action taken so far on the complaints received by the commissioner. He directed the CCP to appoint a special additional CCP and take steps to ensure that the issues were resolved under his supervision.



### Bharata Ratna should be given to Manmohan Singh : Harish Rao

Hyderabad, Dec 30 : BRS party MLA Harish Rao said former PM Manmohan Singh was the person who showed the stage and direction to the country's economy. "Former PM PV Narasimha Rao's trust in him has not been undermined. Manmohan Singh has put an end to the policies of license raj, permission raj and quota raj," he recalled.

## Telangana Assembly passes resolution for Bharat Ratna to Manmohan Singh

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The Assembly also took note of the fact that Dr. Manmohan Singh was instrumental in the creation of Telangana state.

## Encroached 2 acres of land handed over to the government : District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha

**Rajanna Siricilla, Dec 30 (TIM Bureau) :** In Rajanna Siricilla district, former Sarpanch of Lakshmiapuram Mittapalli Padma has handed over two acres of government land to the government, said District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha. On Monday, District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha held a press conference with SP Akhil Mahajan at the Integrated District Collectorate Mini Conference Hall on the handover of government land. On this occasion, District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha said that the government had allotted 2 acres of land in Tador village survey number 545/1/1/3/1 to former Sarpanch Padma in 2018, and the collector said that it has been decided to hand over 2 acres of land to the government. The Collec-

tor said that if anyone in the district is involved in land encroachment, they should voluntarily surrender the land to the government and that these lands will be used for the welfare of the poor people, for distributing house titles to the poor people and for constructing Indiramma houses. "The Collector said that a demand notice will be issued for the recovery of the money for benefiting from government schemes such as Rythu Bandhu and others while occupying government land from 2018 to 2023. Journalists and others were present in the meeting.



■ Former Sarpanch of Lakshmiapuram Mittapalli Padma handed over the government land back to the government  
■ District Collector and SP held a press conference on the handover of government land

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

**DEMAND NOTICE**  
NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961. RC/320/2019 24-12-2024

Central Bank of India  
Versus  
A.Kanaka Durga and Others

To  
(CD 1) Sri A.Kanaka Durga Rao, S/o Sri A.Adinarayana Rao, R/o H.No.3-5-28, Sumitranagar, Kukatpally, Hyderabad-500072.  
(CD 2) Sri A.V.V.Satyanarayana, S/o A.Adinarayana Rao, R/o H.No.4-35, Plot No.203, Mounica Enclave, Sumitranagar, Kukatpally, Hyderabad-500072.

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2) in OA/3133/2017 an amount of Rs.20,02,050.62 (Rupees Twenty Lakhs Two Thousand Fifty and Paise Sixty Two Only) along with pendente lite and future interest @ 9.70% Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. 16-04-2019 till realization and costs of Rs. 0 (Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/ Fully/Limited).

2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under.

3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of your assets on or before the next date of hearing.

4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 04-02-2025 at 10:30 a.m. for further proceedings.

5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay:  
(a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate / execution proceedings.  
(b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 24-12-2024.  
Recovery Officer  
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2)

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

**DEMAND NOTICE**  
NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961. RC/630/2020 16-12-2024

Bank Of Maharashtra  
Versus  
M/s. Susma Enterprises and Others

To  
(CD 1) M/s. Susma Enterprises, Flat No.107, Sanali Heavens, Nagarjuna Nagar Ameerpet, Hyderabad-500073. Also At: M/s. Sushma Enterprises, C/o. Medex Systems, Plot No.23/A, 6th Floor Nandana Vanam Complex, S.R.Nagar 'X' Roads, Behind Umesh Chandra Statue, Hyderabad-500038.  
(CD 2) Sri. Suman Gunti, Villa No.61, Splendid Apama Palm, Meadows Kompally, Secunderabad-500014.  
(CD 3) Smt. Reshma Gunti, Villa No.61, Splendid Apama Palm, Meadows Kompally, Secunderabad-500014.  
(CD 4) Sri. Gunti Bhupal Raju, H.No.7-2-694, SRT 473, Opp. Road to Old Andhra Bank, Sri Venkateswara Nivas Sanatnagar, Hyderabad-500018.

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2) in OA/3353/2017 an amount of Rs.54,34,973.24 (Rupees Fifty Four Lakhs Thirty Four Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Three And Paise Twenty Four Only) along with pendente lite and future interest @ 14.70 % Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. 13-06-2017 till realization and costs of Rs 1,45,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Forty Five Thousand Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/ Fully/Limited).

2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under.

3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of your assets on or before the next date of hearing.

4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 21-01-2025 at 10:30 a.m. for further proceedings.

5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay:  
(a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate / execution proceedings.  
(b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 16-12-2024.  
Recovery Officer  
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 2)

## Andhra Pradesh to attract Rs 1.82 lakh crore investment

Continued From pg 01  
The State will get Rs 88,747 crore in revenue through this project in the next 20 years, they said while the Chief Minister instructed the officials to take steps to complete the project before 2029.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is investing Rs 80 crore in the port city of Visakhapatnam providing employment to 2,000 youth. The Azad India Mobility Limited is setting up a green project to manufacture electric buses, three-wheelers and battery packs in an extent of 70.71 acres at Gudipalli in Satya Sai district in the coming six years providing employment to 2,381 persons. The Balaji Action Buildwell Pvt Ltd is setting up a plant on 106 acres at Rambilli in Anakapalli district.

## BRS demands memorial for former PM Narasimha Rao in Delhi

Hyderabad, Dec 30 (IANS): Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has demanded that a memorial be built for former Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao in New Delhi. BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao made the demand while speaking in the Telangana State Assembly during the special session to pay tributes to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who passed away last week. While backing the demand for Bharat Ratna to Manmohan Singh, Rama Rao said that former Prime Minister and son of Telangana P. V. Narasimha Rao should also be given due respect and recognition KTR, as Rama Rao is popularly known, stated that Narasimha Rao is the only Prime Minister who does not have the honour of a memorial in the national capital. The BRS leader demanded that the state government come forward and move a resolution requesting the same in the State Assembly. He hoped that the Cen-

tre would accept the same. BJP floor leader A. Maheshwar Reddy also spoke about the lack of a memorial for Narasimha Rao. He said though the Congress party was in power at the Centre for 10 years, it did not care to build a memorial for the son of Telangana, who was the only Telugu to hold the office of the Prime Minister. He stated that it was Narasimha Rao who a p p o i n t e d Manmohan Singh as the finance minister. The BJP leader said the Congress also did not confer Bharat



Ratna on Narasimha Rao and it was the BJP government led by Narendra Modi who conferred the highest civilian honour on the late leader. Maheshwar Reddy said the BJP-led government also ensured the state funeral of Manmohan Singh with due honour and respect for a former Prime Minister and also announced space for a memorial in the national capital. He said the Congress not only denied Bharat Ratna to Narasimha Rao but its leader Sonia Gandhi and her family did not attend the ceremony where the highest honour was conferred on him posthumously by the Modi government. This shows the grudge they had against him, he remarked. The BJP leader also alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi insulted Manmohan Singh by tearing an ordinance which he had brought.

**SHRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED**  
Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032  
Branch Office: NAKKALAGUTTA, HANAMKONDA, WARANGAL, -506001.

**RULE-8(3)] POSSESSION NOTICE**

Note: "It is informed that "SHRIRAM CITY UNION FINANCE LIMITED" has been amalgamated with "SHRIRAM TRANSPORT FINANCE LIMITED" as per order of NCLT, Chennai. Subsequently the name of "SHRIRAM TRANSPORT FINANCE LIMITED" was changed as "SHRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED" with effect from 30.11.2022 wide Certificate of Incorporation pursuant to change of name dated 30-11-2022."

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Shriram Finance Limited (SFL)** under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (said Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (said Rules) issued demand notices to the Borrowers details of which are mentioned in the table below to repay the amount mentioned in the said demand notices. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of SFL has been handed over the physical possession of the mortgaged Properties described herein below in pursuance of the order passed by the Hon'ble Chief Judicial Magistrate, at Hanamkonda, in Cr.I.M.P. No.78/2023, under Section 14 of the said Act and Rules, on this 30th Day of DECEMBER/2024.

BORROWER NAME AND ADDRESS	Amount Due as per Demand Notice
1) <b>Ravinder Reddy Billa</b> S/o Kishan Reddy(Late), Age: 49 Yrs, Occ: Thrisha Constructors, # 2-5-380, Nakkalagutta, Hanamkonda Dist. <b>And Also At Ravinder Reddy Billa</b> S/o Kishan Reddy(Late), # Bheemaram (V), Hasanparthy(Mdl, Warangal Dist.	Rs. 41,56,585 /- (Rupees Forty One Lakhs Fifty Six Thousand Five Hundred And Eighty Five Only)
2) <b>Billa Gouthami</b> W/o Ravinder Reddy, Age: 48 Yrs, Occ: House Wife, # 2-5-380, Nakkalagutta, Hanamkonda Dist. 3) <b>Allam Bharat Reddy</b> S/o Chinappa Reddy, Age: 42 Yrs, Occ: Business, # 24-7-207/26, Pragathi Nagar, Hanamkonda Dist.	

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY** - Open Plot Out Of Sy.No.145/A/1/1 To An Extent Of 541.66 Sq.Yards Or 452.88 Sq.Mtrs Situated At Bheemaram Village, Hasanparthy Mandal Of Warangal District, With In The Limits Of Gwmc, Warangal And With In The Registration District, Warangal And Sub-Register, Warangal Urban Is Located With In The Following **Boundaries**: East : 30 Ft Wide Road, South : Plot Of A Bharath Reddy, North : Plot Of M.Manohar Reddy, West : Land Of B Jagan Mohan Reddy

This notice is also hereby to caution the general public at large that the authorized officer of SFL is in the lawful Physical Possession of the immovable properties mentioned herein above and the Borrowers or any person shall not after receipt of this notice transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise deal with/ alienate any of the above mentioned secured assets referred to in this notice, without prior written consent of SFL.

Date : 30-12-2024  
Place: HANAMKONDA  
Sd/-Authorized Officer  
SHRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED

## Mastering frontier technologies is need of the hour : Rajnath Singh

Continued From pg 01

Addressing the officers at the Army War College (AWC) in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, the Defence Minister said that unconventional warfare methods like information warfare, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based warfare, proxy warfare, electromagnetic warfare, space warfare and cyber attacks are posing big challenges. The Defence Minister also stressed on the need for the military to remain well-trained and equipped to deal with such challenges, lauding the training centres in Mhow for their valuable contribution in these efforts.

He commended the centres for constantly improving their training curriculum, in sync with the changing times, and striving to make the personnel fighting fit for every kind of challenge. Rajnath Singh highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's vision of making the country Viksit Bharat by 2047, describing the current phase as a transition period. "India is constantly moving on the path of development and is rapidly emerging as a manufacturing hub. From a military point of view, we are getting equipped with modern weapons. We are also exporting Made-in-India equipment to

other countries. Our defence exports, which were around Rs 2,000 crore a decade ago, have crossed the record figure of Rs 21,000 crore today. We have set an export target of Rs 50,000 crore by 2029," he added. The Defence Minister re-asserted the government's resolve to strengthen integration and jointness among the three services, exuding confidence that, in the times to come, the Armed Forces will be able to face challenges together in a better and more efficient way. He appreciated the fact that high-level training is provided to officers of all wings in Mhow Canton-

ment. The Defence Minister urged the officers to explore the possibility of promoting integration through training in areas such as weapons training in Infantry School; AI and Communication Technology in Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE) and Leadership - Junior and Senior Command in AWC. Rajnath Singh added that some officers will work as defence attaches in the future, and they should strive to secure national interests at the global level. "When you take up this post of Defence Attaches.

## Court reserves order on Allu Arjun's regular bail petition

Hyderabad, Dec 30 (IANS) : The Nampally Court will pronounce its verdict on January 3 on the regular bail petition of Telugu film actor Allu Arjun in the Sandhya Theatre stampede case. On Monday, the court heard the arguments on the petition and the counter filed by the police. After hearing both sides, the court reserved its judgment. The same will be pronounced on January 3. The court had taken up the petition for hearing on December 27. As the police had sought time to file its counter to the bail petition, the court had adjourned the hearing to December 30. While granting interim bail for four weeks on December 13, the High Court had asked Allu Arjun to move the trial court for regular bail. Allu Arjun was arrested



on December 13 in the case registered against him in connection with the December 4 stampede at Sandhya Theatre during the premier show of 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' that had claimed the life of a woman. He was produced before the Nampally court, which remanded him to 14-day judicial custody. His lawyers approached the High Court, which granted him interim bail the same day.

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE III SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE, CITY CIVIL COURT, SECUNDERABAD. S.O.P.NO. 48 OF 2024

Between:-  
Amol Sudhakar Rao Kurulkar, S/o. Sudhakar Rao Kurulkar, aged about 59 years, Occ: Retd. Govt. Employee, R/o, H.No.360, Maharashtra Bank Colony, Pangari Road, VTC, Beed District, Maharashtra State, presently residing at Flat No.105, 1st Floor, H.No.12-10-28, Sitaphalmandi, Secunderabad, TS.  
...Petitioner.

And  
The Manager, State Bank of India, Himmatnagar Branch, Near Railway Station, Secunderabad.  
... Respondents.

To:  
All Concerned. .... Respondent No.2

The above named Petitioner had filed the above suit S.O.P. No. 48 of 2024 on the file of the Hon'ble III Senior Civil Judge, City Civil Court, at Secunderabad, seeking Grant of Succession Certificate of Late Prabhakar Vinayak Rao in the name of Petitioner and for other reliefs. The said suit S.O.P. No. 48 of 2024 is posted to 21-02-2025 for the objections, if any from the objectors, before the said Hon'ble Court either in person or through an Advocate at 10-30 A.M. failing which the matter will be decided ex-parte.

(By order of the Court)  
M/S. NAGA ANIL KUMAR,  
P.S. TEJAS  
ADVOCATES FOR PETITIONER

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया  
Bank of India **BOI**

**BANK OF INDIA, Banjara Hills Branch, 8-2-403/4, Ground Floor, Road No.4, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500034. Tel: 040-23354941, 23350806, Email: BHILSCP.Telangana@bankofindia.co.in**

**DEMAND NOTICE**  
**Notice U/S 13(2) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002**

All of you the under mentioned parties are hereby informed that the Bank has initiated proceedings against each of you under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and the notice under Section 13 (2) of the Act sent to each of you separately by Registered Post ACK not received. Hence you are hereby called upon to take notice to pay the outstanding amount within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the Bank will proceed against the below mentioned property to realise its dues with interest and costs as contemplated under the Act. Needless to mention that this notice is addressed to you without prejudice to any other remedy available to the Bank.

Name and Address of Borrower/ Guarantor	Date of NPA / Demand Notice	Amount Outstanding	Description of the Property
1. Mr. Tuniki Linga Reddy, H.No.1-105/72, Plot No.6, Sai Sanjeeva Nagar, Nagaram Village, Keesara Mandal, Medchal-Malkajgiri District, Telangana-500083. 2. Mrs. Tuniki Vani, H.No.1-105/72, Plot No.6, Sai Sanjeeva Nagar, Nagaram Village, Keesara Mandal, Medchal-Malkajgiri District, Telangana-500083. 3. Mr. Tuniki Linga Reddy, Plot bearing No-01 Middle Part, Survey No. 447,448,451,452 & 453 of "V.N.S. Homes", Dammaiguda H/o Nagaram Village, Dammaiguda Grampanchayat, Keesara Mandal, Medchal Malkajgiri District, Telangana-500083. 4. Mr. Tuniki Vani, Plot bearing No-01 Middle Part, Survey No. 447, 448, 451, 452 & 453 of "V.N.S. Homes", Dammaiguda H/o Nagaram Village, Dammaiguda Grampanchayat, Keesara Mandal, Medchal Malkajgiri District, Telangana-500083.	NPA Date: 29-11-2024 Demand Notice: 11-12-2024	Outstanding Dues Rs.33,94,225.52 (Rupees Thirty Three Lakhs Ninety Four Thousand and Two hundred Twenty Five and Fifty Two Paise only) + Uncharged Interest from 29.11.2024 @ 9.00% p.a + 2.00% as penal interest per month in Housing Loan at monthly rests with costs, expenses etc. + Charges	All that Semi-Finished Residential Independent House on Plot bearing No.01 Middle Part, measuring 130.0 Sq.Yds or 108.68 Sq.Mtrs, with built up area 740 SqFt Ground Floor R.C.C. in Survey No.447, 448, 451, 452 & 453 of V.N.S. Homes", situated at Dammaiguda H/o Nagaram Village, Dammaiguda Grampanchayat, Keesara Mandal, Medchal Malkajgiri District and bounded by: North: Plot No.01 Part South: Plot No.01 Part, East: 30' Wide Road, West: Plot No.28.

Date: 30-12-2024, Place: Hyderabad  
Sd/- Authorised Officer, Bank of India



## From labourer to transport company owner - this BJP leader is famous as 'Gold Man'

**Ranchi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** A man laden with heavy gold jewellery caught everyone's attention during the programme organised at the Jharkhand BJP office in Ranchi on Monday on the 100th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. His name is Thakur Manoj Singh and these days he has become famous as 'Gold Man'.

From a labourer to a transport company owner to a BJP leader, this man, in fact, has come a long way. Manoj, who moved to Mumbai three decades ago as a labourer, is today counted among the bigger businessmen in Maharashtra. He has employed around 500 people in his transport company.

Thakur Manoj Singh originally hails from Kutlu, a small village in Chauparan block of Hazaribagh district in Jharkhand. Since the financial condition of his family

was not good, Manoj shifted to Mumbai at the age of 18. After wandering around for many days in Mumbai, he did not get any work, so he started working as a labourer. Sometimes he would carry goods on his shoulders, and sometimes on a cart. Later he got a job in a transport company. When he gained experience, he formed his own small transport company in 2010. This company first started sending goods from Mumbai to Rajkot. In a few years, the transport company made huge strides and today it has more than 100 trucks. Manoj is very popular among about 15 lakh people of Jharkhand living in Mumbai and nearby areas. Manoj is also active in politics. In 2014, he joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He also got a chance to work with the then Education Minister and Mumbai BJP President Ashish Shelar.

## Mizoram: Seven held for lynching youth over stealing money

**Aizawl, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Mizoram Police have arrested seven members of a Village Defence Party (VDP) in connection with killing a 31-year-old man near Aizawl over allegations of stealing money, officials said on Monday. A police official said that on Sunday, police arrested two VDP members and five more persons were arrested from different places during the past three days.

The police have registered a case of culpable homicide under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) following a complaint filed by the victim's mother Nunthangmawii. Police said that David Lalmuanpuia, a daily wage earner of Turrial Airfield locality, on the outskirts of Aizawl and his friend Laldusaka, 20, were reportedly beaten by VDP members after a pastor alleged to the vigilantes that Rs 26,000 was stolen from quarters by the burglars while he was

attending church service on December 18. Lalmuanpuia's mother Nunthangmawii alleged that the VDP members took her son from their house on December 18 night after getting a complaint from the pastor. She claimed that the VDP members questioned her son for several hours and constantly assaulted him mercilessly, leading to his death. "I pleaded for mercy to the VDP members and the pastor as well to intervene, but none lis-



tened to me," the victim's mother told the police and the media. After prolonged questioning and assault, Lalmuanpuia was found unconscious in the VDP room and was shifted to the hospital in Aizawl late on December 18 night. According to Nunthangmawii, her son succumbed to his injuries in the early hours.



## 'Taking law into your hands doesn't suit your dignity', says Pralhad Joshi to K'taka CM Siddaramaiah

**Bengaluru, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Union Minister for Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs, Pralhad Joshi, said on Monday that taking the law into one's own hands is unbecoming of someone like Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. "It doesn't suit your dignity," he added. He made the statement speaking to the media on Thursday, referring to the egg attack on BJP MLA N. Munirathna Naidu in Bengaluru, allegedly by the Congress workers and police high-handedness on BJP MLC C.T. Ravi in the derogatory remark case. Pralhad Joshi commented on allegations against MLA Munirathna, saying that the law is taking its course and the court has granted him bail. He asked whether the court

had prohibited MLA Munirathna from visiting his Assembly constituency. Munirathna was organising an event in honour of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee in his constituency, and eggs were thrown at him during the event. Referring to this condemnable incident and the ongoing alleged derogatory remark case involving BJP MLC C.T. Ravi, Union Minister Joshi emphasised that these decisions should be left to the courts. "Such actions resemble the behaviour of figures like former PM Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay Gandhi during the Emergency, and called it unacceptable." "Taking the law into your own hands, engaging in attacks, or throwing eggs is condemnable," he said. He also expressed concern over the delay in filing an FIR regarding BJP MLC Ravi's complaint. "Even today, an FIR has not been

filed based on C.T. Ravi's complaint; they claim it was initiated suo motu," he said. "When lawyers asked why no complaint was registered, officials reportedly said that the case had been transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID)," the Union Minister added. Joshi said that an FIR should first be filed before transferring the case. He questioned the suspension of Khanapur Circle Inspector Manjunath Nayak, asking why the Belagavi Police Commissioner or Police Superintendent present at the time had not acted. Union Minister Joshi accused the Congress of creating an atmosphere of fear and questioned the lack of direct communication from the Police Commissioner in such situations.

## School operator shot dead by neighbour in Bihar



**Patna, Dec 30 (IANS) :** A man running a private school in Bihar's East Champaran district was gunned down allegedly by his neighbour on Monday. The deceased, Mohammad Irshad, a school operator from Rampurwa village under Dumaria Ghat police station, suffered gunshot injuries in his head and back when his neighbour, Mohammad Shahabuddin, allegedly shot him. Following the attack, Irshad managed to reach his uncle's house, but the gate was closed. Villagers, with the assistance of the district police, took Irshad to a private nursing home in Motihari for treatment where he succumbed to the injuries. Cops from Dumaria Ghat police station and Chakia SDPO reached the scene after receiving the information. "The police have initiated an investigation into the matter. We have also called the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team to aid in the probe.

## New Mizoram Guv likely to take charge next week

**Aizawl, Dec 30 (IANS) :** New Mizoram Governor General (retd.) Vijay Kumar Singh is likely to take charge next week, replacing Hari Babu Kambhampati, who was appointed as Governor of Odisha by President Droupadi Murmu on Monday, sources from the Raj Bhavan said on Monday. Sources said that Kambhampati is now in Andhra Pradesh and is likely to return to Aizawl on

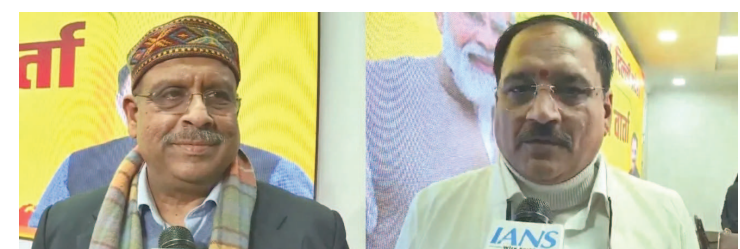
Friday and then move to Odisha to take up his new role. Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Monday.



## BJP slams Kejriwal over 'Mahila Samman Yojana' after Delhi WCD disowns it

**New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The political storm surrounding the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government's welfare schemes intensified on Monday as the state Women and Child Development Department disowned the Mahila Samman Yojana, sparking a war of words between the ruling party and the opposition BJP. The scheme, which promised Rs 2,100 per month to women, was labelled as "fraudulent" by BJP leaders, who accused former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of misleading the public with false promises. Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Vijender Gupta, slammed Kejriwal and the AAP for spreading misin-

formation. Speaking to IANS, Gupta said: "On one hand, Kejriwal is making promises about schemes that don't exist, and on the other, they are misleading the people of Delhi. It's nothing short of cheating. They're using OTPs to scam citizens. If the Delhi government is issuing an advertisement saying that there is no such scheme, Kejriwal should explain why AAP continues to speak about it." He also accused the government of enabling cyber scammers by allowing such fraudulent claims to persist. Gupta went on to predict a looming defeat for AAP in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections.



## K'taka: Cong names centenary event 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Constitution' convention

**Bengaluru, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Karnataka Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar said on Monday that the upcoming public gathering on Dec 27 on the occasion of the centenary celebration is named "Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Constitution".

## 2 held; cigarettes valued at Rs 1.5 crore seized from Bihar's Muzaffarpur

**Patna, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) arrested two persons and seized a major consignment of foreign cigarettes on Monday, officials said. The seized item is valued at Rs 1.5 crore in the international market. DRI received specific intelligence about the smuggling of cigarettes from Myanmar. Accordingly, they have laid a trap at the Gaighat toll plaza

on National Highway 57. "As soon as the two individuals, travelling on a container, reached the Gaighat toll plaza, we surrounded the container and arrested them. They were travelling in a Haryana-registered container vehicle," said a DRI official. When we thoroughly checked the container, we found that the cigarette consignment, manufactured in Myanmar, had been recovered. The cigarettes were concealed amid bamboo loaded in the container. The substance originated from



Myanmar and entered Indian territory via the Arunachal Pradesh's border. During questioning, they disclosed details of the consignment and its route. The consignment was being transported from Guwahati, Assam, and was destined for Delhi.

## Three held in Rajasthan with drugs valued at Rs 12 lakh

**Udaipur, Dec 30 (IANS) :** In a major crackdown ahead of New Year celebrations, the Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) and Sukher police station in Udaipur have arrested three persons and seized 103.71 grams of MDMA from them which is estimated to be valued at Rs

12 lakh in the international market. The accused trio reportedly mortgaged their bike to buy the drugs which they had planned to sell further. Acting on a tip-off from AGTF, the police arrested the three individuals and confiscated three mobile phones from them. The Additional Director General of Police, AGTF, Dinesh M.N.,

said that the operation was carried out under the supervision of Deputy Inspector General of Police Yogesh Yadav and Additional Police Superintendent Asha Ram Chaudhary. AGTF teams have been deployed across cities to apprehend gangsters, wanted criminals, and smugglers. On Monday, during routine intelligence gath-



ering, the AGTF teams received credible information about three youths in possession of a substantial quantity of drugs in the Sukher area.

OPINIONmail



**CENTRE'S 'ONE NATION ONE POLL'  
BILL MAY NOT PASS THE OPPOSITION TEST**

The introduction of the controversial bill, 'One Nation One Poll,' has created more hullabaloo than acceptance. The BJP has been talking about it, but now after introducing it has sent it to the joint select committee of the Parliament. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in a hurry to fulfil the BJP's unfinished agenda. He had already opened the Ayodhya temple and abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. This long-awaited bill aims to streamline the electoral process for 28 states and eight Union territories, with an electorate of nearly a billion voters. The bill has triggered widespread debate, significant interest, and opposition from various parties. Though momentum is building for simultaneous elections, some questions need answers, including whether Modi has the required two-thirds majority to pass the bill in Parliament. Is there a political consensus? Will the Opposition come on board? Is the timing of the bill right?

Most Opposition parties reject the idea of simultaneous polls. They include the Congress, the Left parties, the Trinamool Congress, and regional and smaller parties. They reject it mainly to settle political scores and apprehension that the bill may benefit the BJP. Former President Ram Nath Kovind chaired a nine-member committee recommending simultaneous polls last year, labelling it a 'game changer.' Thirty-two parties supported the concept, and 15 rejected it. The panel also advised that the Centre form a panel to oversee the implementation of this proposal. Also, there should be a joint electoral roll for all elections so that voters will use the same list for national, state, and local polls.

Over the years, elections have become a standard feature, but the 'One Nation, One Poll' bill has the potential to reshape our election process. Proponents of the bill argue that it could significantly reduce campaign costs, alleviate the strain on administrative resources, and streamline governance. This could ultimately benefit the public by reducing the frequency of elections, a prospect that should inspire optimism. Elections in India are held at different levels. The first is panchayat, followed by the district level, the state assembly level, and finally, the national level. They happen at different times, and the government wants to streamline the system. Interestingly, the idea of simultaneous polls is not new. Historically, it was a synchronised poll from 1952 to 1967. The premature dismissal of various governments and the consequential dissolution of Assemblies led to staggered polls. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi dismissed many Opposition-ruled state governments.

The most important thing is that the BJP needs the support of the allies and friendly parties. In the recent 2024 polls, the BJP was 40 short of a majority in the house and could form the government only with the help of J.D. (U) and Telugu Desam. Most opposing parties reject simultaneous polls, including Congress, the Left parties, the Trinamool Congress, and regional and smaller parties. Even in the BJP, 20 MPs were absent while the bill was introduced. The Kovind panel also suggested having the votes in two parts. The first will be for Lok Sabha and Assembly votes, and the second for local groups. The bill faces significant constitutional, legal, and political challenges. The Kovind panel suggests amending Articles 83 and 172 to allow simultaneous elections. However, the BJP lacks the two-thirds majority for this amendment, and the Constitution needs clarification on concurrent polls. The potential impact on the federal structure of the country and the logistical challenges of conducting simultaneous elections for a billion voters are crucial factors to consider. Prime Minister Modi's main challenge is to gather enough support in Parliament. At the same time, the government must build political consensus and persuade the Opposition to agree. The Opposition has rejected simultaneous polls, fearing it might benefit the BJP. The 15 opposing parties hold 205 MPs, while Modi needs 362 votes to proceed. A legal framework for simultaneous elections is essential to address mid-term government collapses and central political manoeuvring.

(By Kalyani Shankar)

EDITORIAL  
the indian mail

**SAUDI ARABIA AND UNITED STATES  
MAY PART WAYS OVER SECURITY AGREEMENT**

As the Biden administration prepares to relinquish power next month, it may leave without accomplishing a much-discussed diplomatic goal: the normalisation of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia, accompanied by a formal US security agreement with Saudi Arabia. The future of a formal US-Saudi security agreement remains uncertain, though the Biden administration appears to be now pursuing a pact that would not involve a broader deal with Israel making concessions towards a Palestinian state.

While the Biden-administration may want to expedite the deal so that it is complete before 20 January 2025, western media reports that Riyadh is now looking for a "more modest" agreement that forgoes normalising ties with Israel. Reuters citing sources says that the Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman (MbS) has doubled down on the condition that normalisation with Israel must depend on Tel Aviv's commitment to work towards the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, in line with the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is still eager to secure normalisation with the Saudi powerhouse as a historic milestone and a sign of broader acceptance in the Arab world.



**NEW RBI GOVERNOR HAS LIMITED  
ROLE TO PLAY IN STABILISING THE RUPEE**

It will be unfair to expect much from the new Reserve Bank governor, Sanjay Malhotra, a career bureaucrat and former revenue secretary, in terms of delivery of key functions of a central bank chief such as controlling inflation, stabilizing domestic currency, foreign exchange control and lifting economic growth. If three of his predecessors since 2014 – Raghuram Rajan, Urjit Patel, and Shaktikanta Das – were not able to deliver those objectives, there is little reason to expect that the performance of the present RBI governor will be much different. Shaktikanta Das, also a career bureaucrat and former finance secretary, had the second longest tenure as the RBI governor. Despite that Das achieved little to arrest price inflation, especially for wage goods which concern over 70 percent of the country's population under the low-and-medium income group, check the slide of Rupee's exchange value, bring large foreign direct in-

vestment, check hot money flow, both inward and outward, stabilize trade and economic growth among others. Rather alarmingly, the Rupee-US\$ exchange parity has dipped by over 40 percent since 2014, from Rs.60.34 for one US\$ to beyond Rs.85 for a dollar, now. It is certainly not within the prowess of the RBI governor to independently pursue his functional objectives and be responsible for his success or failure. It's more often that the RBI governor is seen acting under pressure from the government and politically influential big industrial borrowers. India's average GDP growth rate over the last 10 years (2013–2023) was 8.5 percent.

**CAN PAKISTAN ECONOMY BE BAILED  
OUT BY IMF'S USD 7 BILLION PACKAGE?**

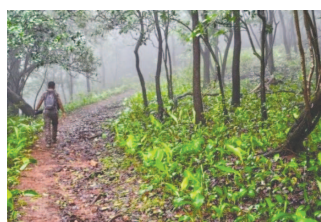
Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif securing a \$7 billion package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in September was accompanied by a commitment to break Pakistan's longstanding reliance on bailout programmes. Since 1958, it has taken recourse to it 20 times. The country is struggling with a worsening unemployment crisis and a brain-drain. There are recent reports of the World Bank cancelling a \$500 billion loan for a clean energy programme. This is another pointer to Pakistan's cash-strapped economy lurching from one crisis to another. There has been a revision of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor power pur-

chase agreement and things are not quite looking up for the country on India's western border. Nearly a million workers have left Pakistan since 2008, according to a study by Karachi-based Pulse consultants. The exodus is gaining momentum, it added. The alarming rate of unemployment is flagged by an ILO report. Reverting to the IMF package, one wonders whether it is a long-term solution to Pakistan's economic woes. It was learnt that the IMF package can help the country to stay afloat now. In a way, it is a temporary solution. But there are silver linings too. The Pakistan economy is showing signs of recovery, according to the October update of the World Bank. Economic activity was



marked with an upsurge in the financial year (FY) 2024 following a recession in the previous FY. The growth which was 40.2 percent in FY 2023 rose to 40.5 percent in 2024 FY. But this growth rate is insufficient. This growing stability has led the central bank to cut rates aggressively. The stock exchange has entered a bull run due to greater optimism around economic stability but sustaining this recovery requires fundamental economic reforms.

The IMF package is not a milk and honey one for Pakistan. For it comes with an uncomfortable precondition of stopping Chinese investments in the borrowing country. It comes at a time when Pakistan was looking forward to attracting more Chinese companies with 9 Export Promotion Zones (EPZs). Earlier this year Prime Minister Sharif sought the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) from China which did not materialise. (IPA Service)



**INDIA YET TO  
MEET FOREST COVER  
GOAL, 35 YEARS  
AFTER NATIONAL  
FOREST POLICY**

India is still struggling to meet the target of the National Forest Policy set 35 years ago in 1988. In 2023, it could attain a forest and tree cover of only 25.17 percent against the target of a minimum one-third (33.3 percent) of the total land area of the country to maintain environmental stability, restore ecological balance and conserve natural heritage.

**HOW PROGRESSIVE CIVIL SOCIETY  
BECAME PROFESSIONAL NGO CULTURE**

The Democratic Party has failed to earn the support of what was once its working-class base. This ought to be a moment of reckoning for the party. The anger it faces is justified and necessary to intensify pressure to abandon its tepid political strategies and overreliance on big donors who oppose large-scale redistribution and pro-worker policies. But while the party deserves a lot of blame, understanding the depth of the crisis on the Left requires a much broader analysis than finger-pointing at Democratic campaign officials and strategists allows. The problem is the Left's lack of civil society institutions. Achieving a turn back to the working class and rejecting neoliberalism — with its

marketization of social life and hollowing out of government — requires more than finding the right program and messaging. It demands a tremendous democratic will anchored in strong, lasting relationships and institutional ties within working-class communities. Only through such connections can we build a popular coalition that is capable of driving transformational change. Right now, progressive civil society is poorly equipped for this task. Broadly defined to include left-leaning advocacy groups, NGOs, think tanks, and public forums — such as publications, podcasts, social media networks, and community spaces — progressive civil society has come too close to abandoning mass politics to build working-class alliances and support for left visions. The roots of this problem

lie in a decades-long transformation of civic institutions. Since the 1960s, there's been a sharp decline in popular, member-based civil organizations, and a rapid surge of advocacy organizations run and managed by professional staff. Political scientist Theda Skocpol has identified a key force behind this tectonic shift: the departure of college-educated professionals from mass-member groups in the late 1960s. This was not a simple story of class snobbishness. Among other factors, college-educated whites turned away from the cross-class, fraternal, and women's organizations because these groups were often racially segregated and limited by gender roles.



## UN Chief alarmed by spreading famine crisis in Sudan

**United Nations, Dec 30 (IANS)** : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is alarmed by the rapidly worsening food security situation in Sudan and calls for the parties to facilitate access to humanitarian assistance, his spokesperson said in a statement. After over 20 months of conflict, more than 24.6 million people in Sudan -- over half the population -- face high levels of acute food insecurity, the statement said, citing the latest UN-backed assessment. In a report released on Monday, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the global hunger monitor, confirmed that famine is present in at least five areas of Sudan, including North Darfur's Zamzam camp and

parts of the Western Nuba Mountains. The crisis is projected to expand further, with five additional areas expected to face famine between December 2024 and May 2025. The statement on Tuesday said that the United Nations and its partners are scaling up the delivery of food assistance and other essential support for the most vulnerable, but ongoing fighting and restrictions on the movement of relief supplies and personnel continue to imperil aid operations, Xinhua news agency reported. Guterres reiterated his call for the parties to facilitate rapid, safe, unhindered and sustained access so that humanitarian assistance and staff can reach people in need. The UN chief also underscored the need for an im-

mediate cessation of hostilities and to prevent the crisis in Sudan and its impact on neighbouring countries from escalating even further in 2025. He appealed for urgent international support and cooperation to bring the parties closer to a peaceful resolution of the conflict through a lasting ceasefire and step-up funding for humanitarian action. Sudan has been witnessing deadly clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since April 15, 2023, which have killed 15,550 people and displaced 8.7 million others so far, according to recent estimates by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

## Syria's interim FM vows to represent 'all sectors of society'

**Damascus, Dec 30 (IANS)** : Asaad al-Shaibani, the newly appointed foreign minister by Syria's interim administration, pledged to prioritise serving the people and representing "every segment of society," asserting that the country will reclaim its regional and international role. In a series of posts on the social media platform X, al-Shaibani emphasised that protecting citizens' rights and interests, as well as ensuring fair representation of all ethnic and social groups, will be the "compass" guiding Syria's future. He stated that "in the new Syria, everyone will feel they belong," adding that the state aims to guarantee dignity, freedom, and a return home for those displaced by past conflicts, Xinhua news agency reported. Acknowledging the struggles endured by the Syrian people, al-Shaibani highlighted "the immense sacrifices and suffering" they have faced. "Our sole tribute to those victims," he said, "is to ensure such atrocities never happen again and to bring perpetrators to justice." On

Syria's position in the international arena, al-Shaibani stated he would represent the country "with sincerity and strength," emphasizing the interim government's commitment to creating a "brighter future." He also urged Syrian youth to contribute to the rebuilding of the country and to lead it toward innovation and progress. "We require the efforts of all young Syrians to shape the present and map out the future," he said. In another post on X, al-Shaibani warned Iran against "spreading chaos" in Syria, urging the country to "respect the will of the Syrian people." Iran has long been a key ally of Bashar al-Assad, the former president of Syria, who was ousted on December 8 following a series of offensives launched.



## Guterres pays tribute to Indian peacekeeping leader's 'commitment'

**United Nations, Dec 30 (IANS)** : Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has paid tributes to the leadership and commitment of Brigadier Amitabh Jha who led the peacekeeping force along the Syria-Israel border in "complex circumstances". Jha, who was the acting force commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), died suddenly. "The Secretary-General is deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Brigadier General Amitabh Jha of India", his Associate Spokesperson Stephanie Trmpbaly said on Monday. Jha "recently served as acting Force Commander of UNDOF in complex circumstances, following the fall of the [Basher al-] Assad government in Syria", she said.



## Israel's negotiation team to return after 'meaningful' talks on Gaza ceasefire

**Jerusalem, Dec 30 (IANS)** : Israel's negotiation team involved in the Gaza ceasefire talks will return to the country from Qatar for "internal consultations" after "meaningful" talks, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said in a statement. The team, which includes senior officials from the Mossad, Shin Bet security agency, and the Israel Defense Forces, has been engaged in a "significant week of negotiations in Qatar," the office said. "The team is returning for internal consultations in Israel regarding the continuation of negotiations for the return of our hostages," it added. Israeli and Palestinian media reported that efforts led by Qatari, Egyptian, and US mediators have shown progress, though a breakthrough remains elusive, Xinhua news agency reported.

## Crypto mogul Kwon's appeal against extradition verdict rejected

**Rome, Dec 30 (IANS)** : Montenegro's Constitutional Court has dismissed an appeal lodged by South Korean crypto mogul Do Kwon over a verdict on his extradition, a report said. In a unanimous decision, the Constitutional Court rejected the appeal that Kwon lodged, citing legal issues, according to the Montenegro daily Vijesti. With the latest decision, the European country's justice minister is set to decide on whether Kwon will face trial at home or in the United States, reports Yonhap news agency. Kwon appears more likely to be extradited

to the U.S., given the justice ministry's stance on the case. Kwon, co-founder of the cryptocurrency firm Terraform Labs, is wanted both by South Korea and the U.S., where he faces investigation and indictment on charges connected to the crash of the firm's TerraUSD and Luna coins in May 2022. He was arrested in Montenegro in March last year after being caught traveling on a fake passport. In August this year, Montenegro's highest court postponed an earlier

decision on the extradition of South Korean crypto entrepreneur Do Kwon to his home country in connection with a massive cryptocurrency crash. Previously, a Montenegrin appeals court upheld a lower court's ruling to hand over Kwon to South Korea, rejecting a request to send him to the United States instead. However, the Supreme Court announced on its website that Kwon's extradition to South Korea has been postponed pending a decision on a legal request by



prosecutors. Kwon, co-founder of the cryptocurrency firm Terraform Labs, is wanted by both South Korea and the U.S. The disgraced tycoon is under suspicion of fraud and other charges related to the crash of the firm's TerraUSD and Luna coins in 2022, which devastated investors around the world.

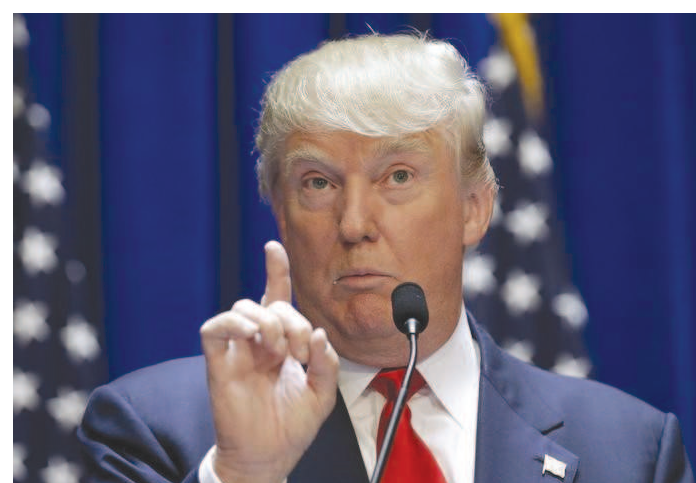


## Pak airstrikes in Afghanistan claim 15 lives; Taliban vows to retaliate

**Kabul, Dec 30 (IANS)** : At least 15 people, including women and children, have been killed in Pakistani airstrikes in Afghanistan, with the death toll expected to rise further, according to local media reports. The strikes carried out late on Monday, targeted multiple areas in the Barmal district of Paktika province.

## South Korea: BOK to cut rates further next year on higher downside risks

**Seoul, Dec 30 (IANS)** : South Korea's central bank said Monday it plans to cut its benchmark interest rate further next year due to growing political uncertainties and other downside risks. In its monetary policy report for 2025, the Bank of Korea (BOK) said it will make additional rate reductions to maintain the moderating pace of growth in inflation, as well as mitigate downside risks to the economy, Yonhap news agency reported. "The BOK will take increased political uncertainties, tougher competition (with global rivals) in (the country's) major industries and expected changes in the global trading markets into account when making rate decisions," the BOK said in the report.



## Trump slams Biden's decision to commute death sentence of 37 individuals

**Washington, Dec 30 (IANS)** : US President-elect Donald Trump slammed outgoing President Joe Biden's decision to commute the sentences of 37 individuals on federal death row. "Joe Biden just commuted the Death Sentence on 37 of the worst killers in our Country. When you hear the acts of each, you won't believe that he did this. Makes no sense," Trump said in a post on his social media platform Truth Social. Trump's remarks came one day after Biden made the announcement that he was commuting the sentences of 37 of the 40 individuals on federal death row to life sen-

tences without the possibility of parole, Xinhua news agency reported. "Make no mistake: I condemn these murderers, grieve for the victims of their despicable acts, and ache for all the families who have suffered unimaginable and irreparable loss," Biden said in a statement.

## Namibia issues malaria outbreak alert in northern regions after surge in cases

**Windhoek, Dec 30 (IANS)** : Namibia's Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) has raised an alert following a sharp rise in malaria cases in the country's northern regions. The outbreak resulted in 2,210 cases reported as of December 15 and 265 severe cases, nine deaths during the period from November 4 to December 15, MoHSS Executive Director Ben Nangombe said in a statement Monday. "At least 16 malaria-endemic districts have surpassed the epidemic threshold and are experiencing outbreaks," he said. Affected districts include Eenhana, which accounted for 661 cases or 30 per cent of the total.



## MP's Khajuraho farmers, locals thank PM Modi for the launch of Ken-Betwa Link project

**Bhopal, Dec 30 (IANS) :** On former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 100th birth anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for several major development projects in Madhya Pradesh, including the highly anticipated Ken-Betwa Link Project.

The event marked a significant milestone in the region's development, with PM Modi highlighting the transformative potential of these initiatives,

particularly the river-linking project, for the Bundelkhand region and surrounding districts in Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing a large gathering, PM Modi said that once the Ken-Betwa Link Project is completed, it will open new doors of prosperity and happiness for the people of Bundelkhand. The project, aimed at improving water availability and irrigation facilities, will also benefit neighbouring districts of Uttar Pradesh like Banda, Mahoba, Lalitpur, and Jhansi. The project is expected to have a

profound impact on the local economy, especially for the farming communities in the region.

Several farmers from the Khajuraho area expressed their excitement and optimism for the future, telling IANS about how the project would resolve long-standing water scarcity issues and improve their livelihoods. One farmer commented: "It's great news for all of us that PM Modi has initiated this project."



## IT most effective means of curbing corruption: Haryana Governor

**Chandigarh, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatraya on Monday emphasised that information technology (IT) is the most effective means of ensuring transparency, implementing good governance, and curbing corruption.

Speaking at the 'Good Governance Day' event organised at LNJP Hospital in Kurukshetra on the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Governor Dattatraya highlighted the state government's efforts in transitioning from outdated systems to creating a public-friendly framework, which has yielded significant success.

Before addressing the event, Governor Dattatraya paid floral tributes to a portrait of former PM Vajpayee, distributed fruits among patients, and extended greetings of the 'Good Governance Day' to the people of the state.

The Governor formally inaugurated the 'Good Governance Day' programme by lighting a ceremonial lamp. During the event, he interacted with patients, interacted with hospital doctors and staff, and participated in a commemorative group photograph.

Governor Dattatraya noted that the state government is organising programmes in every district on Good Governance Day to reinforce the principles of governance. Reflecting on former PM Vajpayee's legacy, he said that the

former Prime Minister dedicated his entire life to society, working tirelessly for the country's progress through inclusive development.

"Late Vajpayee ji was a true patriot who selflessly served the nation, and his birth anniversary is now celebrated across the country as the Good Governance Day," said Governor Dattatraya, while emphasising the need for the younger generation to draw inspiration from former PM Vajpayee's exemplary life. Governor Dattatraya also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following the path shown by former PM Vajpayee, has implemented welfare-oriented policies aimed at eradicating poverty and ensuring holistic development.

## K'taka police dept's morality undermined under Cong govt : Bommai

**Bengaluru, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Former Karnataka Chief Minister and BJP MP Basavaraj Bommai said on Monday that the present Congress-led state government has completely undermined the moral integrity of the police department.

Speaking to reporters, former CM Bommai also alleged that senior police officials are behaving like constables. Those who work legally and fairly are being punished, he alleged.

"Policemen should uphold the law, but the Congress

wants officers who are loyal to them. This has led to a division in the police department based on party affiliations," he said. "Punishing officers in uniform is demoralising them. This system must be corrected immediately, or it will lead to major problems in the future," he underlined.

Former CM Bommai also accused the Congress of shifting from its pre-independence nationalist stance to becoming "anti-people" and "anti-nation" today.



## Bengal school job case: ED records show Partha Chatterjee biggest beneficiary in total scam

**Kolkata, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Former West Bengal Education Minister and Trinamool Congress Secretary General Partha Chatterjee and his close associate Arpita Mukherjee have been shown as the highest beneficiaries in the total scam amount of Rs 151.26 crore in the cash-for-school job case in the records of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as elaborated in its fifth and last supplementary charge sheet.

As per the supplementary charge sheet filed at a special

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Kolkata, of the total amount of Rs 151.26 crore confiscated by the ED so far, the combined share of proceeds of Chatterjee and Mukherjee in the entire amount is Rs 103.78 crore. The confiscation is in terms of cash and gold seized and immovable property attached.

The second highest confiscation amount in the matter, as mentioned by the ED in its records, is that of a private corporate entity linked to another prime accused, Sujay Krishna Bhadra, where the confiscation amount is Rs 7.47

crore. Apart from that, as the agency informed the special court, another amount of Rs 2.70 crore linked to the same corporate entity is in the process of confiscation.

The other major beneficiaries in the case, as per the records of the ED are private promoter Ayan Shil and now-suspended youth Trinamool leaders Kuntal Ghosh and Shantanu Bandopadhyay. The combined confiscation amount involving the last three individuals mentioned is Rs 15.03 crore. Subsequent charge sheets filed by ED in the school job case have



named a total of 54, out of whom 29 are individuals and the remaining 24 are corporate entities and trusts. These trusts were mainly used to divert the scam proceeds in the matter under the masquerade of donations.

## BSF in Rajasthan shoots dead Pakistani intruder trying to cross Indo-Pak border

**Jaipur, Dec 30 (IANS) :** A Pakistani intruder was shot dead by the Border Security Force (BSF) along the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar district when he was attempting to cross over to Indian territory near a village in the Kesarisinghpur area.

The incident was confirmed by Superintendent of Police Gaurav Yadav. He said that the intruder was identified as Abdul Gaffar, a 33-year-old resident of Minchinabad, Pakistan. He was carrying Pakistani Rupees 1,700 (around Rs 518). SP Yadav told IANS: "The body of the intruder has been

handed over to Kesarisinghpur police after Pakistan refused to take his body in the flag meeting. The name of the intruder is written as Abdul Gaffar on the identity card found with him. He is a resident of Minchinabad. His age is mentioned as 33 years."



## Rename Kolkata's popular protest point as 'Abhaya Crossing', doctors' forum urges Mamata

**Kolkata, Dec 30 (IANS) :** West Bengal Doctors' Forum, an association of medical practitioners in the state, on Monday, sent an email communique to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to rename Dorina Crossing, a popular protest point in central Kolkata, as 'Abhaya Crossing'.

The junior doctor of Kolkata-based R.G. Kar Medical College & Hospital who became the victim of a brutal rape and murder within the hospital premises in August this year is referred to as "Abhaya" since the legal system of the country bars revealing the identity of any rape or murder victim.

According to the leader of the forum, the meaning of "Abhaya"

is not restricted to the dictionary meaning that it refers to a brave woman. Rather, pointed out one doctor, the name "Abhaya" now symbolises movement for justice, security and honour.

That is why, he added, they want the name of 'Dorina Crossing' to be changed to "Abhaya Crossing". Currently another association of doctors namely the West Bengal Joint Platform of Doctors is currently holding a protest at Dorina Crossing which will continue till Monday. The protest is against the failure of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to present the supplementary charge sheet against the two accused of tampering with the evidence in the case.



## Cooperatives will drive prosperity in Rajasthan, says CM Sharma

**Jaipur, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma said on Monday that cooperative societies across the country will boost prosperity in the state.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has announced the launch of 10,000 newly formed Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (M-PACS), Dairy, and Fisheries Cooperative Societies across the nation to commemorate the birth centenary of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

These initiatives aim to bolster the rural economy by ensuring the efficient availability of resources and services at the grassroots level. The event also saw the participation of Chief Minister Sharma, who addressed the audience via video conference from a parallel state-level ceremony at Rajasthan International Centre, Jaipur. Certificates of registration were distributed to selected cooperative societies, including Ghevar PACS from Alwar district, represented by its President Ramesh Chand Sharma.

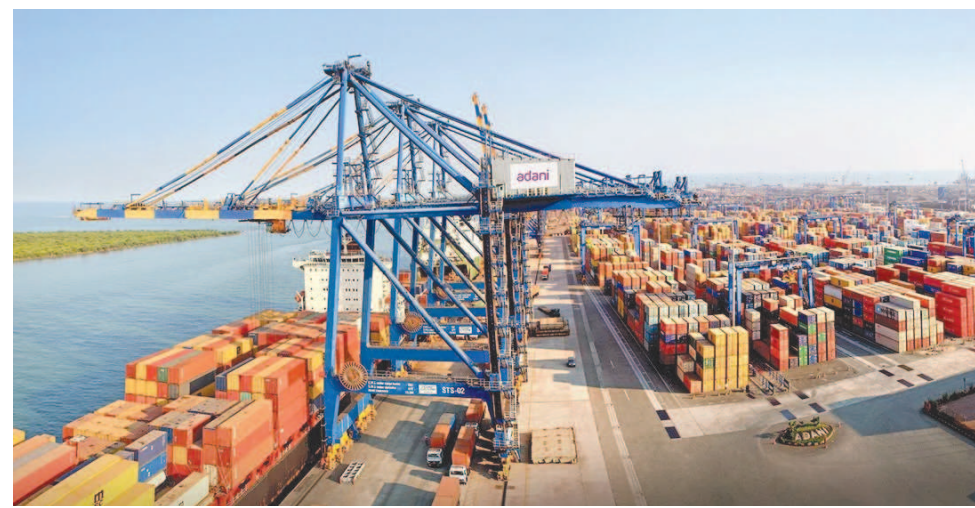


## Market value of Samsung Group's affiliates drops 23 pc in 2024

**Seoul, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The combined market capitalisation of Samsung Group's affiliates dropped about 23 per cent in 2024 due to the sluggish performance of its key affiliate Samsung Electronics, data showed on Sunday. The market value of Samsung's affiliates stood at 548.4 trillion won (\$371.5 billion) as of Thursday, compared with 709.6 trillion won a year earlier, according to data compiled by Yonhap Infomax, the financial news arm of Yonhap News Agency. Samsung Group has 22 affiliates listed on the local stock market, including Samsung Electronics Co., Samsung Biologics Co., Samsung C&T Corp. and Samsung Life Insurance Co. The overall decrease came as shares of Samsung Electronics tumbled 31.71 per cent this year, with those of Samsung SDI Co. and Hotel Shilla Co. falling 47.66 per cent and 42.58 per cent, respectively. "Shares of Samsung Electronics are expected to trade within a limited range for the time being due to the downcycle of memory chips," said Kim Dong-won, a researcher at KB Securities Co. Meanwhile, Earnings forecast for Samsung Electronics for the fourth quarter have been revised down largely due to a downturn in industry demand.

## MHCVs, tractor sales in India to report better volumes post-festive period: Report

**New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The medium and heavy commercial vehicles (MHCVs) and tractor sales are likely to report better volumes in India this month as the festive season buying rush gets over, a report said on Monday. Retail sales post-festive have moderated across two-wheelers (2Ws) and passenger vehicles (PVs), as per the report by Emkay Global Financial Services, citing Vahan data. "We forecast 21,000 and 8,000 units of wholesale dispatches for Mahindra & Mahindra and Eicher.

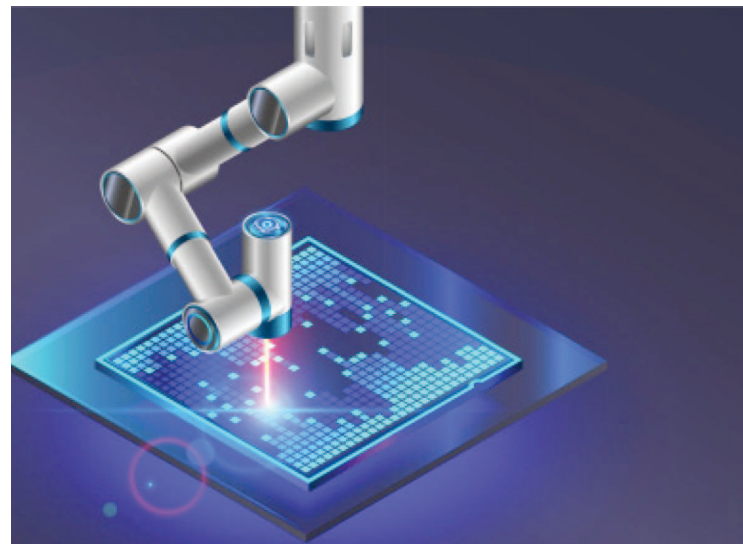


## Adani Ports places India's largest order for tugs worth Rs 450 crore with Cochin Shipyard

**Ahmedabad, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) on Monday announced the procurement of eight state-of-the-art harbour tugs, with a total contract value estimated at Rs 450 crore, which will be constructed by Cochin Shipyard Ltd. These tugs are expected to be delivered in December 2026 and continue until May 2028, significantly improving the efficiency and safety of vessel operations in Indian ports, the Adani Group's flagship company said in a statement. The eight, 70-tonne bollard pull tugs will increase Adani Ports' total fleet to 152. "This collaboration to procure from Cochin Shipyard Ltd signifies our commitment to enhancing maritime infrastructure in India and demonstrates our confidence in our nation's PSUs," said Ashwani Gupta, Whole-time Director and CEO of APSEZ. "By leveraging local manufacturing capabilities, which are world-class, we aim to contribute to the 'Make in India' initiative while ensuring that our operations meet international standards of safety and efficiency," Gupta noted. Earlier, APSEZ contracted the construction of two, 62-tonne bollard pull ASD (Azimuthing Stern Drive) tugs to Cochin Shipyard Ltd for Ocean Sparkle Ltd, both of which were delivered ahead of schedule and deployed at Paradeep Port and New Mangalore Port.

## India dominates IPO market with 200 issues in Asia Pacific in 2024, China falters

**New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** India dominated the initial public offering (IPO) market in the Asia-Pacific region with over 200 companies going for public issues in 2024, according to a report on Monday. However, China saw a sharp drop in the number of IPOs by 51.3 per cent, impacted by tightened regulations. The country saw the launch of 64 IPOs raising just over \$5.2 billion. India's IPO market hit a bull run this year, with proceeds skyrocketing to \$11.2 billion — more than doubling the \$5.5 billion raised in 2023, said GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company. "The pipeline for 2025 promises even bigger fireworks, fuelled by skyrocketing retail participation, hefty domestic inflows, and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) flexing their muscles despite being net sellers in the secondary market."



## 4 chip manufacturing units, 3 supercomputers this year to boost India's global tech position

**New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The year 2024 saw four new semiconductor manufacturing units and three 'Param Rudra' supercomputers, among several other initiatives, to strengthen India's position on the global tech stage, the government said on Monday. Tata Electronics Private Limited (TEPL)'s proposal for setting up of OSAT facility in India with an investment of Rs 27,120 Crore was approved in the same month.

## Indian smartphone market poised for 6 pc growth in 2025 amid PLI push

**New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The Indian smartphone market is poised for significant growth in 2025, with a projected 6 per cent increase (year-on-year) driven by improving consumer sentiment and government initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment, industry experts said on Monday. The mobile phone production surged from Rs 18,900 crore in 2014-15 to an estimated Rs 4.10 lakh crore in FY24.



## FIIs remain net investors in India this year amid robust economy, resilient market

**Mumbai, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Despite stock market volatility amid geo-political uncertainties, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net investors in India so far this year, as the country's economy showed tremendous resilience, market watchers said on Monday. For 2024, FIIs sold equity for Rs 119,277 crore through the exchanges. In contrast to this selling trend, they invested Rs 120,932 crore through the primary market, said experts.

## Tata Group to create 5 lakh manufacturing jobs over next half decade: N. Chandrasekaran

**Mumbai, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The Tata Group plans to create 500,000 manufacturing jobs over the next half-decade in sectors like battery, semiconductors, electric vehicles and solar industries, Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran said on Monday. In his annual letter to group employees, Chandrasekaran said these jobs will come in part from facilities across India - factories and projects that will produce batteries, semi-

conductors, electric vehicles, solar equipment and other critical hardware destined to play a central role in the economy of tomorrow. "This is in addition to the many services jobs we expect to introduce across retail, tech services, airlines, and hospitality, among other sectors," he wrote. In a recap of 2024 for the salt-to-software conglomerate, Chandrasekaran highlighted key milestones like groundbreaking ceremonies at over seven new manufacturing plants, including India's first semiconductor fab at Dholera in Gujarat and an outsourced semiconductor assembly and test facility in Assam. Ground-breaking ceremonies and construction began at over seven new manufacturing plants in 2024, including India's first semiconductor fab in Dholera, Gujarat and a brand new semiconductor OSAT plant in Assam. "There is the electronics assembly plant in Narasapura, Karnataka, an automotive plant in



Panapakkam, Tamil Nadu and new MRO facilities in Bengaluru, Karnataka. We also have new battery cell manufacturing factories in Sanand, Gujarat, and in Somerset, UK. We inaugurated the C295 final assembly line (FAL) in Vadodara, Gujarat, and began solar module production in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu," he said. This year, TCS and Tejas Networks delivered the first indigenous 4G mobile telecom stack for BSNL, and stand poised for 5G. "Our retail companies continue to scale up. Air India has brought together four airlines to create one integrated airline group to serve India and the world. And Indian Hotels' Taj brand continues to be the world's strongest hotel brand," Chandrasekaran told the employees. Stressing that sustainability remains a focus of growth plans, he mentioned that in Bhutan, "we began our hydroelectric power initiative.

## SGPC chief Dhama undergoes punishment, cleans shoes in Golden Temple

**Amritsar, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Five Sikh high priests, headed by Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh, on Monday pronounced religious punishment, also known as "tankhah" for Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhama for allegedly making offensive remarks against Bibi Jagir Kaur, a three-time chief of the gurdwara management body. This voluntary punishment

comes less than a month after Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Badal was held guilty of religious misconduct by the high priests. The former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister was ordered to clean utensils and shoes in gurdwaras, including the holiest of all Sikh shrines, Harmandir Sahib, popularly known as the Golden Temple in Amritsar, and complied. Earlier in the day, SGPC chief Dhama appeared before the Akal Takht here and held a meeting with the Akal Takht Jathedar be-

fore appearing before the high priests, who asked him to wash dishes and clean shoes of the devotees for an hour each in the Golden Temple. Soon after the religious punishment was pronounced, the SGPC chief, who accepted the directive, underwent the religious punishment in the Golden Temple. Earlier Dhama had apologised for using foul language and submitted an apology letter to the Akal Takht. Before the religious punishment,

Punjab State Women Commission Chairperson Raj Lali Gill had issued a notice to the SGPC President for allegedly making offensive remarks. Gill had stated that the commission took suo-motu cognisance of an audio recording circulating on social media, in which Dhama purportedly used offensive and demeaning language during a telephonic conversation with a journalist. "The remarks were not only personally defamatory but also disrespectful to women as a whole,"



she had said, emphasizing the seriousness of the issue. The commission had underlined that Dhama, as the head of a revered institution like the SGPC, is expected to uphold the highest standards of respect and dignity. "Such language is unbecoming of his office and sends a damaging message to society," she had added.



## Manipur was on right trajectory of growth, good governance before unrest outbreak : CM Biren Singh

**Imphal, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Monday said that the state was on the right trajectory of development and good governance before the outbreak of ethnic violence in May last year that has brought a disturbing impact on normal life in the northeastern state. Addressing the Good Governance Day function in Imphal, the Chief Minister said that Manipur was on the right trajectory of development and good governance before May 3, 2023, and the state had hosted G-20 events, Femina Miss India competition and the tri-nation football tournament. Biren Singh stated that the law-and-order situation in the state was not so good in the state and that when his government came to power in 2017, his priority was to bring people-oriented governance. The Chief Minister further cited

several schemes and missions initiated under his government for the welfare of the people. He said the "Meeyamgi Numit" (a flagship scheme) was launched with the basic aim of providing people-oriented governance. Under the "Meeyamgi Numit", various certificates, permits, verification of certificate, collection of land revenues, soil health cards, farmer cards, health checkup, detection of blood sugar, blood pressure, receiving complaints /queries for MGNREGS, account opening by Banks, distribution of fire-extinguishers to schools, medicals Kits to schools, aids and appliances to differently able students, services given by Legal Services authority, old age pension applications, revenue related cases applications, water connection applications, ration card applications were received on the spot.

## 9 drug peddlers arrested in Kashmir Valley, narcotics seized

**Srinagar, Dec 30 (IANS) :** J&K Police said on Monday that it has arrested nine drug peddlers from various districts of the Kashmir Valley and recovered various narcotic substances from them. "In its tireless efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, police have arrested nine drug peddlers in various districts of Kashmir Valley and recovered contraband/psychotropic substances from their possession," a police statement said. It said that in Srinagar, a party of police station Nowhatta, during routine naka checking at Ganj Baksh Park, apprehended two drug peddlers identified as Khalid Ahmad

son of Mohd Ismail Rather, a resident of Rashan Ghat, Soura, and Basit Ahmad Dar, son of Bilal Ahmad Dar, a resident of Usmaniya Colony, Wantpora, Eidgah. During their search, a substantial quantity of contraband substances was recovered from their possession. In Baramulla district, a police party of police station Baramulla, at a checkpoint established at Azadgunj Chowk Baramulla, intercepted a person identified as Mubashir Mohiuddin Dar, son of Gh Mohiuddin, a resident of Azadgunj. During a search, 200 grams of Charas were recovered from his possession. He was subsequently arrested. Meanwhile in Bandipora, during naka checking at Papachan bridge, officials of police station Bandipora apprehended a drug peddler and recovered 47 bottles of codeine phosphate bottles from his possession.



## Patna Police cane-charge BPSK candidates

**Patna, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The Patna Police resorted to a cane charge on Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSK) candidates at the city's Bailey Road on Monday, the police said. The candidates have been staging a dharna since December 13 at Gardanibagh, demanding the cancellation of the 70th BPSK Combined Examination. The situation escalated as protesters, frustrated by the lack of response from the BPSK, marched to the commission's office, prompting police intervention. As candidates moved to surround the BPSK office, police resorted to a cane charge to disperse the mob. This action has drawn criticism for the use of force against protesting students. BPSK had conducted the 70th BPSK Combined Examination held at 912 centres across Bihar. The candidates are demanding the cancellation of the examination following the chaos that arose at the Bapu Examination Centre in Patna on December 13. The chaos at Bapu Examination Centre led to the cancellation of the examination at that centre. BPSK announced a re-examination at the centre on January 4. Protesters are dissatisfied with BPSK's decision to only cancel the examination at the Bapu Examination Centre.



## J&K: With over 25,000 houses built under PMAY, Doda ranks second in Jammu region

**Doda, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) since its launch in 2016, has brought transformational changes in the lives of people across the country. Even those residing in border states have also benefited from the scheme. In Jammu and Kashmir, Doda has made its mark for the successful implementation of the scheme and is also taking the lead in reaching out to the beneficiaries. Today, it ranks second in Jammu province and eighth in the entire Union Territory in terms of PMAY implementation. Ac-

cording to official figures, more than 30,000 houses have been approved under the PMAY scheme. Out of this, about 26,000 houses have been physically completed till date while work is going on for over 4,000 houses. Giving a break-up of the scheme roll-out, Doda Assistant Commission Development (ACD) Manoj Kumar told IANS that 30404 PMAY houses have been approved so far while work is in progress on 4404 houses. He also said that recovery proceedings will begin for those who have not initiated construction of their dwelling units, after receiving government aid. Elaborating on the scheme, he said, "This scheme is for the houseless and those living in kuccha houses. Many families have got themselves registered under the scheme.



## Health of farmer leader Jagjit Dallewal deteriorating: Punjab AAP

**Chandigarh, Dec 30 (IANS) :** A delegation of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders, led by Punjab party President and Cabinet Minister Aman Arora, on Monday, visited the Khanauri border to meet fasting farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on a hunger strike, saying his health "is deteriorating with his kidneys and liver showing signs of strain". Expressing concern over his deteriorating health, the AAP leaders urged him to accept sustenance through medical treatment. The delegation included prominent Ministers and MLAs, including Health Minister Balbir Singh.

## 'Why was this book banned?' buyers react as 'The Satanic Verses' makes a comeback in India

**New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** British-Indian novelist Salman Rushdie's controversial novel 'The Satanic Verses' has quietly reappeared in India, 36 years after it was banned by the Rajiv Gandhi government under pressure from religious groups. A limited number of copies of the book, which ignited protests worldwide due to its perceived blasphemous content, have been available for purchase at Bahrisons Booksellers in New Delhi in recent days. Talking to IANS, a buyer says, "This is a very famous book, people haven't heard about it. I feel a personal connection to this book because the author, Salman Rushdie, hails from my region, Kashmir. Secondly, the turmoil it caused worldwide is remarkable. There was even a 'Fatwa' issued against him. Over time, however, it seemed to have faded from public focus. This morning, I read in the papers that it is back in the limelight. Salman Rushdie has been a liberal. He has been an intrepid voice, I won't say, against Islam. He has been a seeker of truth. So, I don't see it as an agenda. It is an intellectual exercise and perhaps more relevant in today's time in India. Yes, every religion can be analysed, especially certain religions where nobody wants to talk about it. To



that extent, I feel it is the right time for a social change and for all those politically motivated people to understand that there is no politics behind it and they need to see that every religion has good and bad and one needs to talk about it." Another buyer at the bookshop says, "The importance of knowledge always remains in life, no matter what kind of knowledge it is. It doesn't matter whether it is historical or otherwise. The most important thing is that I believe knowledge is neither new nor old and it should be accepted whenever it is found. But the most important point is that we felt from the beginning, why was this book banned? This book is by an author who is famous worldwide and has been honoured with many awards, so why was it banned?"





## Palestinian President, Irish PM discuss Gaza over phone

**Ramallah, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris had a phone conversation to discuss the latest developments in the Palestinian territories, according to the Palestinian official news agency WAFA. During the phone call on Monday, Abbas highlighted the urgency of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2735 to end the fighting in Gaza, provide humanitarian aid to the enclave, and ensure the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces.

He thanked Ireland and its people for their support for peace and stability in the region, and their commitment to resolving the Palestinian issue on the basis of the two-State solution, Xinhua news agency reported.

Abbas also acknowledged Ireland's support for the Palestinian people, which includes Ireland's recognition of the State of Palestine, backing for the Palestinian government, contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and efforts to host injured children from Gaza.

## French PM unveils new cabinet, including two former prime ministers

**Paris, Dec 30 (IANS) :** French Prime Minister Francois Bayrou unveiled a new government, appointing two former prime ministers, Manuel Valls and Elisabeth Borne, to his cabinet, according to a press release from the Elysee. Bayrou has downsized the new government to 14 full ministries. Valls will head the Ministry of Overseas Territories, while Borne will lead the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, Xinhua news agency reported.



## Maia Sandu sworn in as Moldovan president

**Bucharest, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Maia Sandu on Monday assumed office as president of the Republic of Moldova for a second term.

The inauguration ceremony was held at the Palace of the Republic in Chisinau.

After the validation of her re-election by the Constitutional Court, Sandu took the oath of office with her hand on the Constitution, vowing to uphold democracy, sovereignty, and the rights of citizens.

She also expressed her gratitude to Moldovans for their resilience and unity, saying, "Moldova is not just a small country with a big heart but also an inspiration to others in uncertain times," Xinhua news agency reported.

Sandu outlined her policy priorities as European integration, national security, and economic growth.

## South Korean, Chinese FM's reaffirm ties amid political uncertainties

**Seoul, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The top diplomats of South Korea and China reaffirmed efforts to advance bilateral ties in a phone conversation Monday, Seoul's foreign ministry said, their first discussion following a botched martial law imposition in South Korea. The 30-minute talks between Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, took place amid concerns over their bilateral ties after Beijing said it was "deeply surprised and dissatisfied" over President Yoon Suk Yeol's December 12 public address accusing Chinese nations of spying.

In Tuesday's talks, Cho said the government's stance on improving South Korea and China's strategic cooperative partnership remains unchanged under acting President Han Duck-soo, Yonhap news agency reported.

Cho suggested the two nations cooperate in a range of areas as South Korea is set to host

the 2025 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in its southeastern city of Gyeongju, the ministry said.

In response, Wang noted that improving their relationship in a healthy and stable manner is in line with their mutual national interests, and called for close cooperation and communication to further boost their ties.

Wang reaffirmed Beijing's support for Seoul's hosting of next year's APEC summit, according to the South Korean ministry, with the two foreign ministers also likely to have discussed Chinese President Xi Jinping's possible visit on the occasion of the gathering.

Both sides agreed to continue to seek strategic communications to



manage the situation on the Korean Peninsula in a stable manner, the ministry said.

Tuesday's talks came about two weeks after the trade ministry hosted a high-level dialogue with China to discuss ways to bolster bilateral exchanges.

On December 10, Fang Kun, the charge d'affaires ad interim of the Chinese Embassy in Seoul, had expressed hope for South Korea's economic and social stability amid

heightened political uncertainty following the botched declaration of martial law.

The remarks were made during a meeting with Deputy Finance Minister Choi Ji-young in Seoul. "As a close neighbour and an important cooperative partner, we hope for the continued stability of South Korea's economy and society," Fang was quoted by the finance ministry as saying.

## Lebanon files new complaint to UNSC over Israeli violations of ceasefire

**Beirut, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants has filed a complaint through the country's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York with the UN Security Council (UNSC) in response to Israel's repeated violations of its ceasefire agreement with Lebanon.

The Lebanese ministry said on social media platform X that between November 27 and December 22, Israel launched over 816 land and air attacks against Lebanon, shelling border villages, booby-trapping homes, destroying residential neighborhoods, and blocking roads.

Such violations complicate Lebanon's efforts to implement the provisions of UN Resolution 1701, hinder the Lebanese army's deployment in the south, and represent a serious threat to international efforts aimed at achieving regional security and stability, it said in the complaint, Xinhua news agency reported. Lebanon has continuously shown the utmost restraint and cooperation to avoid falling back into "the hell of war," it said, urging the UN Security Council to take a firm and clear po-



sition towards Israel's violations and work to oblige it to respect its obligations. It also called for strengthening support for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon and the Lebanese army to protect Lebanon's sovereignty and help the country restore stability.

A ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hezbollah went into effect on November 27, putting an end to the confrontations that erupted on October 8, 2023.

Despite the agreement, there have been multiple claims of ceasefire violations by both sides. The Israeli army has continued to carry out strikes in Lebanon, though at a significantly reduced intensity, with some attacks resulting in casualties in southern and eastern Lebanon. In response, Hezbollah fired munitions into border areas once, in early December, describing the actions as retaliation for the ongoing Israeli strikes.

## Australia braces for extreme bushfire danger period

**Sydney, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Communities and fire crews in Australia were on Monday preparing for several days of extreme bushfire danger.

Several out of control fires continued to burn in the southeastern state of Victoria on Tuesday despite more favourable conditions for firefighters. With temperatures forecast to exceed 30 degrees Celsius across the state on Wednesday, Christmas Day, and 40 degrees Celsius on Thursday, Victorians have been advised to brace for catastrophic fire conditions. Residents of communities that were evacuated over the weekend due to the threat posed by a major fire in the Grampians National Park, about 230 km west of Melbourne.



## Excessive levels of PFAS chemicals found in water from 44 private suppliers across Japan

**Tokyo, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Potentially harmful PFAS chemicals have been detected at excessive levels in tap water from 44 private suppliers across Japan, including some that supply the Japanese Self-Defence Forces facilities, local media

reported Monday. A government survey from fiscal 2020 looked into some 2,000 private suppliers of drinking water nationwide dedicated to supplying hospitals, schools and other facilities, amid growing concerns over the health impact of the widely used and long-lasting substances already

detected in water filtration plants and rivers across the country, Xinhua news agency cited a Kyodo News report.

According to the survey, the private water suppliers with excessive PFAS levels include the Air Self-Defence Force's Ashiya Air Base in Fukuoka Prefecture.



## Thai cabinet approves minimum wage rise, cash handouts

**Bangkok, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Thailand's cabinet on Monday approved minimum wage increases and the second phase of the government's cash handout programme for senior citizens, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said. The Southeast Asian country's wage committee on Monday agreed to adjust the minimum wage, raising daily wages by an average of two per cent to between 337 and 400 baht (about 9.86 and

11.71 US dollars) depending on the region, effective from January. The highest rate within this range will apply specifically to the popular resort islands of Phuket and Samui, along with provinces in the Eastern Economic Corridor -- Chachoengsao, Chonburi and Rayong. Speaking at a press conference, Paetongtarn said the cabinet approved the second phase of the cash handout programme that would provide around four million citizens aged 60 and above with 10,000 baht (about 292 dollars) each by the end of January.

The first phase of the programme, launched in September, distributed a cash stimulus of 145.5 billion baht (about 4.26 billion dollars) to around 14.55 million underprivileged individuals and people with disabilities, Xinhua news agency reported. Some 36 million Thais have registered for the handout scheme, a key campaign promise of Paetongtarn's ruling Pheu Thai Party. The cabinet also approved a tax deduction of up to 50,000 baht (about 1,464 dollars) for purchases of certain goods and services, aiming to stimu-



late economic activity and spur consumer spending between January and February, the Prime Minister said. At the same time, Thailand's cabinet on Tuesday acknowledged an agreement to maintain the offi-

cial inflation target of one per cent to three per cent in 2025, Deputy Finance Minister Julapun Amornvivat said. Following the agreement reached between the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Thailand, the government has asked both agencies to maintain an average inflation rate of two per cent to support the ongoing economic recovery, Julapun said after a cabinet meeting. The Southeast Asian country's headline inflation remained below the official target for a sixth consecutive month in November, averaging 0.32 per cent in the first 11 months compared to the same period last year.



**DST, AICTE announce undergraduate courses for quantum**

**New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The Department of Science and Technology (DST) in collaboration with All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) announced a dedicated curriculum at the undergraduate level, to create a thriving quantum-trained ecosystem in India as part of the National Quantum Mission. Professor Ajay K Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Central Government, said that the curriculum will integrate theoretical knowledge with hands-on lab experience, aiming to deepen graduates' understanding of quantum technologies through a minor programme in the subject at the undergraduate level. Highlighting the progress made in the National Quantum Mission, Prof. Sood emphasised the importance of this initiative to align with the goals of the Mission in order to create a quantum-ready workforce for the country's technological advancement and global leadership.



**Giriraj Singh demands Bharat Ratna for Nitish Kumar**

**Patna, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Union Minister Giriraj Singh has demanded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, for Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and former Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik.

**Beginning of new era for Bundelkhand: Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Ken-Betwa project**

**Khajuraho, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said laying the foundation of the Ken-Betwa river linking project will be the start of a new era of Bundelkhand region in both Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The Union Minister said the Bundelkhand region was deprived of progress during the Congress regime. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is coming to Madhya Pradesh to perform bhoomi puja of Ken-Betwa river linking project. It's a matter of pride that this occasion has come on the birth anniversary of our great leader and former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It will be the start of a new era of Bundelkhand," Chouhan said. Ahead of PM Modi's arrival, the Madhya Pradesh BJP organised a 'Kalash Yatra'. Water for Kalash Yatra was brought from the origin point of river Ken in Katni.

State BJP chief and Khajuraho Lok Sabha member V.D. Sharma led the Kalash Yatra. He was joined by Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla, Rural Development Minister Prahlad Singh Patel along with several other BJP leaders. The venue of the event where the 'bhoomi puja' of the Ken-Betwa river link project will be performed by PM Modi, has been decorated beautifully in saffron colour and BJP flags. The Rs 49,000-crore project, the country's first river-linking initiative under



the national river interlinking policy, aims to address drought and migration issues in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The project is expected to give irrigation benefits of more than 8.11 lakh hectares in Madhya Pradesh and 59,000 hectares in Uttar Pradesh, impacting around seven lakh farmers and stabilising existing irrigation facilities.



**Congress using Ambedkar's name for political gains : Himanta Biswa Sarma**

**Guwahati, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday launched a scathing attack at the Congress, alleging that the opposition party has been using B. R. Ambedkar's name only for political gains. CM Sarma told reporters here, "While Congress was in power for many decades, they have named many institutions in the name of the Nehru-Gandhi family; however, they have not named any university in Ambedkar's name." "Forget about a university, did Congress name any school after Ambedkar? The answer is no," he added. Terming the Congress party shameless, CM Sarma said, "With an aim to have political gains only, the Congress leaders have been using B.R. Ambedkar's name. This is such a shameless act being done in the country."



**Political equations in TN likely to shift after PMK's offer to DMK**

**Chennai, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The PMK, the political arm of the influential Vanniyar community, has offered support to the DMK government if it implements a 15 per cent internal reservation for the Vanniyar community within the Most Backward Class (MBC) quota. This move has the potential to significantly alter Tamil Nadu's political landscape. The PMK is, presently, allied with the BJP as part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss recently announced that his party would provide unconditional support to the DMK in the 2026 Assembly elections if the reservation is implemented. He also stated that the PMK would not demand any seats for contesting as part of this alliance. Tamil Nadu currently has a 69 per cent reservation policy, which includes 30 per cent for Backward Classes, 20 per cent for Most Backward Classes, 18 per cent for Scheduled Castes, and 1 per cent for Scheduled Tribes. The PMK has argued that after the Supreme Court upheld the Arundhati sub-quota within the Scheduled Castes category, a similar internal reservation should be extended to the Vanniyar community.



**Will overcome challenges, CM Fadnavis reveals 5-year Maha roadmap**

**Nagpur, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday revealed the Mahayuti government's roadmap for five years which includes a home for all under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY) to be powered by solar energy. Those who move to these homes will get free electricity as they do not have to pay electricity bills. Besides, the government will implement a 25-year plan for the power sector and will make efforts to lower power tariffs to categories of consumers. "We will conduct transparent governance. Maharashtra will be better off in all sectors," he said during his interaction with reporters here. "The Central government has allocated an additional 13 lakh houses for Maharashtra this year, totalling over 20 lakh homes in a year under the PMAY according to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Nearly 26 lakh people have registered for the scheme, of whom 20 lakh will be provided houses," announced CM Fadnavis. The CM said that 80 irrigation projects from Vidarbha have been completed. In addition, the projects that were stalled for years in Western Maharashtra, Konkan

Marathwada and North Maharashtra have been put on track. "We have made great strides in the last five years. I got the opportunity as Deputy Chief Minister in the last two and a half years when the government did good work in the energy and home departments. We even prepared a roadmap for the next 25 years in the energy department. In two years, a situation will come where we will reduce the rates of all types of electricity consumers including industry. We have done so much work. We have undertaken six river-linking projects in irrigation. It is going to change Maharashtra," informed CM Fadnavis. He said that the Maoist-affected Gadchiroli district will emerge as the next steel city in India. "Yesterday, two Naxalites surrendered. We are going to change areas like Gadchiroli.



**Haryana CM reviews construction of 700-bed hospital in Gurugram**

**Gurugram, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday chaired a review meeting regarding the construction process of the 700-bed civil hospital to be built in Gurugram. The hospital will be constructed as part of efforts to improve healthcare services in the region. During the meeting, the Additional Chief Secretary, Health Department, Sudhir Rajpal, while providing an update on the construction progress of the civil hospital in Civil Lines, shared that the hospital will be built on 7.73 acres of land at a cost of around Rs 990 crore.

**Omar Abdullah conducts surprise visit of Kashmir's premier healthcare institutions**

**Srinagar, Dec 30 (IANS) :** J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday carried out a surprise visit to Kashmir's premier healthcare institutions and gave orders on the spot for upgradation & improvement. Conducting surprise inspections of premier health Institutions in Srinagar to gain firsthand knowledge of the facilities and services being provided to patients and their attendants, the Chief Minister visited the Bone & Joint Hospital, Barzulla, one of the region's top orthopaedic healthcare facilities. During his inspection, he toured various sections and wards, interacting with patients and attendants to understand their concerns. Accompanied by Minister of Health, Sakeena Itoo, senior faculty members and Doctors, he engaged with hospital staff to assess the winter arrangements, treatment facilities and the availability of medical professionals and paramedics. CM Abdullah also inspected the state-of-the-art additional block of the hospital, constructed under the Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) with funding from the World Bank. Designed with earthquake-resilient technology, the block will add 160 beds, doubling the hospital's total capacity from 150 to 310 beds. During his visit, the Chief Minister emphasised the need to expedite the completion of the new block, which is critical for addressing the space crunch caused by a fire incident in 2022 that reduced the hospital's original capacity of 200 beds. He directed the executing agencies to ensure its swift operationalisation by January 2025 to enhance patient care and to dedicate the facility to public service. The Chief Minister also inspected the 500-bed Children's Hospital in Bemina, where he interacted with



patients, attendants, and hospital staff. During his visit, attendants from far-flung areas raised concerns about the lack of a Sarai (inn) for their stay. The Chief Minister immediately directed the authorities concerned to construct a 'Sarai' to accommodate attendants and alleviate their difficulties. As hospital staff highlighted the challenges of expanding super-speciality facilities due to express space constraints, he assured them that their issue would be addressed on priority. He also promised to resolve the shortage of medical staff, including doctors and paramedics, not only at this hospital but across healthcare facilities in Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore,

the Chief Minister instructed hospital authorities to ensure the timely availability of medicines and other essential facilities for patients. During the inspections, Omar Abdullah reiterated his government's commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure ensuring better facilities for the public and addressing manpower shortages in health institutions across Jammu and Kashmir. The Chief Minister was accompanied during his visits by Health Minister Itoo, the Medical Superintendent of the Children's Hospital, senior faculty members and other officials.



**NC MP Ruhullah's protest was 'Camera show', says J&K Congress leader**

**Srinagar, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Senior Jammu and Kashmir Congress leader and MLA, G. A. Mir said on Monday that the National Conference (NC) Lok Sabha member, Syed Ruhullah Mehdi could have behaved more seriously than opting for what Mir called a 'Camera show'. Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here, Mir said that the NC Lok Sabha member, who held an anti-reservation protest march outside Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah's residence on Monday could have behaved more seriously.

**Bangladesh-based terror outfit likely to target Suvendu Adhikari, intelligence agencies sound alert**

**Kolkata, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The Central intelligence agencies have alerted the West Bengal government of a possible terror attack on Suvendu Adhikari, the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Assembly, by the associates of a Bangladesh-based fundamentalist outfit who have already entered the Indian territory through the porous borders with the neighbouring nation.



### Mozambique's Constitutional Council proclaims Daniel Chapo winner of presidential election

**Maputo, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Mozambique's Constitutional Council (CC), the body in charge of constitutional and electoral affairs, proclaimed Daniel Chapo the winner of the October 9 general elections. Chapo will take the baton from the incumbent president Filipe Nyusi to become the fifth president of the Republic of Mozambique, Xinhua news agency reported. As the presidential candidate of the ruling party Frelimo, Chapo has won 65.17 per cent of the votes, less than the 70.67 per cent announced on October 24 by the National Electoral Commission (CNE), according to the data released by President of the CC Lucia Ribeiro in Maputo, the Mozambican capital.



### Kremlin says gas supplies to Europe 'difficult' as Ukraine transit deal nears end

**Moscow, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The transit of Russian gas to European countries is currently "very difficult" and requires attention, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday. Peskov made the remarks after a meeting between Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Monday where the parties discussed the transit of Russian gas as Ukraine declined to renew a gas transit deal with Russia. "You have heard the statement from the Ukrainian side, and you know about the position of those European countries that continue to buy Russian gas and that consider it necessary for the normal operation of their economies," Peskov said, noting it is a very complicated situation that requires attention, Xinhua news agency reported. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Thursday at a European Union Summit that he will not extend Ukraine's five-year gas transportation deal with Russia, which expires at the end of 2024.



### Jordan's FM visits Damascus, pledges support for Syria's political transition

**Damascus/Amman, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi held talks with Ahmad al-Shara, head of Syria's de facto governing group, in Damascus on Monday, with discussions focusing on Syria's political transition and broader regional security concerns. According to Sham FM, a Syrian media outlet, Safadi reaffirmed Jordan's support for Syria's transition, which includes forming an inclusive government and drafting a new constitution. During the meeting, Safadi also highlighted the need for the safe and voluntary return of Syrian refugees, stressing Jordan's readiness to facilitate the repatriation process in collaboration with Syria's new leadership. Addition-



ally, Safadi reiterated Jordan's commitment to aiding Syria's reconstruction efforts, emphasizing that Jordan would encourage both regional and international partners to engage with Syria's emerging leadership, Sham FM reported. A statement posted by Jordan's Foreign Ministry on social media platform X further underscored Safadi's remarks, stressing that Syria's reconstruction is

of strategic importance to both Jordan and the broader region, Xinhua news agency reported. The statement also noted that Arab countries are united in their support for Syria's recovery, free from external interference. In the context of regional security, Safadi emphasized the significance of securing the 386-kilometer border shared by Jordan and Syria.



### Bangladesh seeks extradition of former PM Hasina, sends request to India

**Dhaka, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The interim government in Bangladesh on Monday said that it has sent a diplomatic note to the Indian government, asking for extradition of the country's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. A leading voice in the struggle to restore democracy in the country, Hasina, the daughter of Bangladesh's founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had to flee the country in an ignominious manner and seek refuge in India on August 5, earlier this year. Touhid Hossain, the interim government's Foreign Affairs Advisor, confirmed the latest development in Dhaka on Monday afternoon.

"We have informed India. We have conveyed our request for Sheikh Hasina's return for judicial purposes. This has been communicated through a note verbale (diplomatic note)," Hossain told local media. Earlier in the day, the country's Home Affairs Advisor, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Md. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury had said that his ministry had written to Hossain's office to facilitate the return of the ousted Prime Minister from India.

### Hamas claims killing three Israeli soldiers in northern Gaza

**Gaza, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Hamas' armed wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, said on Monday its fighters killed three Israeli soldiers and "rescued" Palestinians held by Israeli forces in a house in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza Strip. In a statement, Al-Qassam said its members "stabbed and killed three Israeli soldiers who were on a mission to protect a building." It added that Hamas fighters also seized the Israeli soldiers' weapons and freed several Palestinians held captive. The Israeli military did not immediately comment, Xinhua news agency reported.



### Yemen bears highest burden of cholera globally: WHO

**Aden, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The World Health Organization (WHO) warned that Yemen bears the highest burden of cholera globally. In a statement, the WHO reported on Monday that as of December 1, Yemen had recorded 249,900 suspected cholera cases and 861 associated deaths in 2024 alone, representing 35 per cent of the global cholera burden and 18 per cent of reported global

fatalities from the disease. The latest figures reveal a significant year-on-year surge, with the number of cases and deaths reported in November 2024 increasing by 37 per cent and 27 per cent.



### Tibetan carpet art weaves life, sustains age-old tradition

**McLeodganj (Himachal Pradesh), Dec 30 (IANS) :** Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama's vision to preserve and disseminate the unique art heritage of Tibet through self-sustaining means is one of the everlasting embodiments of his commitments. Started on May 7, 1969, with seed money of Rs 15,000 given by the Dalai Lama, Ti-

betan Handicraft Cooperative Society in McLeodganj, home to the Tibetan government-in-exile widely known as "Little Lhasa", has been earning profit since then. Its annual turnover is around Rs 3 crore. Its ethnic products include hand-made premium sheep wool Tibetan carpets, traditional dresses, handbags, cushions and ritual items that are available in four sale

counters in McLeodganj, a small and quaint hill station in the suburbs of the northern hill town of Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. The society, run by all 40 employees, a majority of them fled from their Himalayan homeland, creates jobs after training them for three months at no cost with an aim to keep the age-old skill and more importantly, the tradition alive through the hands of master

weavers, who learnt the weaving at the tender age. Currently, the hand-knotted rugs with original and contemporary designs of flowers, dragons and eight lucky signs, weaved on vertical looms by tying double knots over a rod, are much in demand across the globe, mainly in Japan, the US, Canada, Britain, Australia and Germany. Every day a team of workers while dyeing wool derived from traditional vegetal dyes, laying out designs or weaving carpets chant Buddhist mantras, which they believe will bring happiness and good fortune to the customers. Most of these workers were born in Tibet and had to flee from Chinese tyranny to seek refuge in India.



### 50 wild elephants electrocuted in Sri Lanka this year

**Colombo, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Around 50 wild elephants have so far been electrocuted by unauthorised electric fences or wires in Sri Lanka this year, the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) said on Monday. The CEB said that the wild elephants, a symbol of the country's biodiversity, are increasingly under threat of extinction due to human activities. According to the statement, the CEB has already taken various appropriate

measures regarding this illegal act, and it expects public support to protect wild elephants, Xinhua news agency reported. In 2023, electrocution had claimed the lives of 72 wild elephants in Sri Lanka, an increase from 50 such deaths reported in 2022, the Department of Wildlife Conservation said.



### Italy boosts security as 2025 Jubilee Year kicks off in Rome

**Rome, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The 2025 Jubilee Year was officially launched in Rome under heightened security measures. Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi convened a national public safety and security committee meeting ahead of the launch on Monday to outline measures aimed at safeguarding millions of pilgrims and tourists expected to take part in the celebrations. Around 700 security units have been deployed across the capital, reinforcing regular patrols at sensitive sites, particularly the Vatican, Basilicas, and the city centre. The 2025 Jubilee Year, which will run until January 6, 2026, was inaugurated as Pope Francis opened the heavy bronze 'Holy



Door' at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. Police patrolled the streets of Rome and St. Peter's Square as preparations unfolded. Security checkpoints have been set up along key routes leading to the Vatican, notably on Via

Ottaviano and Via della Conciliazione, with significant deployment of police, Carabinieri, the Guardia di Finanza, and local officers, Xinhua news agency reported quoting state-run media Ansa.



## Kohli deserves a longer rope, no comparison with Rohit, says Manjrekar

**New Delhi, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The aftermath of India's loss in the Boxing Day Test against Australia has reignited debates over the Test careers of veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. While both batters have faced criticism following their lackluster performances, former cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar has voiced strong opinions about the distinction in how their contributions to Test cricket should be assessed. Manjrekar stated that Virat Kohli deserves more leeway than Rohit Sharma due to his stature as a modern-day Test great. "I must say there is no comparison between Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli as Test batters. Virat Kohli is right up there. He's a great Test batter and Rohit Sharma is a good Test batter. Rohit's white-ball batting was great. So Virat Kohli obviously deserves a longer rope."



## United Cup: Boulter gives Britain 1-0 lead over Argentina

**Sydney, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Katie Boulter picked up a win in Britain's opening match of the United Cup, defeating Argentina's Nadia Podoroska 6-2, 6-3 to notch a 1-0 lead in Group F tie in on Monday. Boulter took down 100th-ranked Podoroska in their first career meeting in one hour and 26 minutes at Ken Rosewall Arena. British No. 1 Boulter is fresh off her first Top 50 season, having won two WTA titles in 2024. Boulter slammed nine forehand winners and converted three of her nine break points in Monday's opening set, which ended on a Podoroska double fault. Podoroska, the 2020 Roland Garros semi-finalist, tried to regroup in the second set.

## HIL 2024-25: Happy to start the season with two points, says Soorma's Harmanpreet Singh

**Rourkela (Odisha), Dec 30 (IANS) :** Soorma Hockey Club captain Harmanpreet Singh is elated to open their account in the Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25 season with two points after securing a shootout win over Tamil Nadu Dragons at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela on Sunday. Nathan Ephraums (49') scored the first goal of the game for Tamil Nadu Dragons in the fourth quarter but Gurjant Singh (54') quickly equalised for Soorma Hockey Club, ending regulation time as a 1-1 draw. Harmanpreet, Victor Wegnez, Vivek Sagar Prasad and Nicolas Keenan scored for Soorma Hockey Club while Vincent Vanasch made two saves to win the match 1-1 (4-1) in penalty shootouts. "We had the ball possession for most of the time in the match and throughout the match, we played well. This was our first match with new players and we have built a lot. In the next match, we will try to improve and win the match. Shootout is always a 50-50 chance and we're happy to win the match and start with two points," Harmanpreet said after the match.



## 4th Test : India-Australia game sets new record for Test match attendance in Australia

**Melbourne, Dec 30 (IANS) :** The Boxing Day Test between India and Australia has set a new record for attendance figures in Tests in Australia, beating the previous record set in 1936/37 when Australia faced England in a six-day game. During the lunch break of Day 5 play, 51,371 fans were in attendance at the MCG in anticipation of a grandstand finish to the match. Such was the rush of fans coming into the MCG to witness day five's play that the stadium staff was scrambling around to make more arrangements around security, as well as food and beverage supplies. "We've officially surpassed the attendance record set in 1936/37 when Australia faced England — a Test which spanned six days," said the MCG through its 'X' account on Monday. "Thank you, Melbourne. An Australian cricketing record, an MCG record and history made," Cricket Australia said on its 'X' account. Now, Cricket Australia (CA) has confirmed the final number at 74,362, with total attendance for the ongoing game standing at 373,691. It has now comfortably beaten the previous overall record of 350,534 spectators at the same ground during the 1936/37 Ashes series against England, when Donald Bradman made 270 in a six-day Test match. "We've been blown away by the support of fans across the Boxing Day Test. Our partnership with the MCC and Victorian Government is a special one, and it's been a great team effort to achieve this result."



## Premier League : Salah stars as Liverpool beat West Ham 5-0 to move 8 points clear

**London, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Mohamed Salah became the first player to register a goal and an assist in eight different Premier League matches in a single season as Liverpool surged eight points clear at the top of the table with a dominant 5-0 victory at West Ham United. Salah now has 23 assists in all competitions in 2024, the most by any Liverpool player in a single calendar year in the Premier League era.

## It contributes about 19 pc to sport's development: Paralympic champion Navdeep hails PKL's impact on Kabaddi

**Pune, Dec 30 (IANS) :** Paralympic javelin throw gold medallist Navdeep Singh emphasised how the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) has helped transform the Kabaddi from primarily a rural sport into a professional spectacle. "Since PKL's entry, the standard of the game has risen significantly," Singh said. "Sports science has played an equally important role, and I believe PKL contributes about 19% to the sport's development," he added.

Singh, who played as a defender during his school days, spoke about the intense physical demands of the sport. "In kabaddi, there's a higher risk of injury because when one raider goes in, three or four players can apply force at once," he explained, underlining the importance of proper fitness and conditioning in the modern game. The Paralympic champion also highlighted kabaddi's deep roots in Haryana, noting that "it would be rare to find an athlete who hasn't played kabaddi at least once in their life" in the state. This connection to Haryana's sporting culture remains strong, with Singh admitting that while he appreciates all teams, he maintains extra support for Haryana. "The game has reached such a significant level now," Singh remarked, reflecting on kabaddi's growth since the start of the PKL. Meanwhile, Haryana Steelers, who finished top of the table in the league stage during PKL Season 11, produced an outstanding display on the mat on Sunday evening, as they went on to clinch their maiden PKL crown.



## Bumrah nominated for ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year award

**Dubai, Dec 30 :** India's fast-bowling spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been nominated for 2024 ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year award. Apart from him, Sri Lanka all-rounder Kamindu Mendis and England batting duo of Joe Root and Harry Brook have been nominated for the prestigious honour. Having returned to the Test arena through the Centurion Test against South Africa in 2023 after a back surgery kept him out, Bumrah dominated the bowling charts in the longer format in 2024 by picking 71 wickets in 13 Tests, the most scalps taken by a bowler this year. Bumrah's 71 scalps in 2024 is also the fifth most wickets taken by an Indian bowler in a Test calendar year.



## 4th Test: Win over India at the MCG one of the best games I've been part of, says Cummins

**Melbourne, Dec 30 (IANS) :** After Australia took a 2-1 lead in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, skipper Pat Cummins reckons the 184-run win over India in the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground is one of the best games he's played in.

## Wolvaardt, Chamari among ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year nominees

**Dubai, Dec 30 (IANS) :** South African batter Laura Wolvaardt and Sri Lankan allrounder Chamari Athapaththu have been nominated for the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year 2024 alongside Annabel Sutherland of Australia and Melie Kerr of New Zealand. Wolvaardt scored 697 runs across 12 ODIs, averaging 87.12, with the highest score of 184 and 223 runs across three Tests at 37.16.

