



U19 WOMEN'S ASIA CUP: SONAM, KAMALINI GUIDE INDIA TO 9-WICKET WIN OVER PAK- PAGE : 11

Food Supply min vows to prevent outflow to Bengal

Ranchi, Dec 15 (IANS): Jharkhand has commenced the procurement of paddy from farmers at Rs 2,400 per quintal, including a Rs 200 bonus above the Minimum Support Price (MSP). State Food Supply Minister Irfan Ansari said that the paddy produced in the state will not be allowed to go into neighboring West Bengal or other states.

Speaking at the inauguration of a paddy procurement center in Nizampura, Jamtara district on Sunday, Minister Ansari urged farmers to sell their harvest at government procurement centers only rather than through middlemen. "This year's paddy crop will remain within Jharkhand to support the state's food security," he stated.

The government has set a procurement target of 60

Jharkhand begins paddy procurement



lakh quintals this year, matching last year's target. A total of 699 procurement centers have been set up across the state, with 112 centers starting operations on Sunday.

On the inaugural day, a quite a good number of farmers brought their harvest for sale. Farmers will receive 50 per cent of the total amount for their paddy at

the time of sale, with the remaining 50 per cent and the bonus to be paid after the paddy is processed by rice mills or delivered to district-level warehouses. The Minister said

farmers will receive Rs 2,400 per quintal for standard paddy and Rs 2,420 for grade-A paddy, inclusive of the Rs 200 per quintal bonus.

Over 2.33 lakh farmers have registered to sell paddy at government centers across the state. A cap of 200 quintals per farmer has been set to ensure equitable benefits for small and marginal farmers. The state has reported a bumper crop this year, with an estimated production of 41.38 lakh tonnes of paddy cultivated across 15.48 lakh hectares. This marks a significant increase from 2023's production of 32.10 lakh tonnes. Minister Ansari also announced plans to enhance the efficiency of Public Distribution System (PDS) and Large Area Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS) across the state to ensure better support for farmers.

Aspirants threaten protest at JSSC office today

Mail News Service

Ranchi, December 15: Days after Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren directed for a CID probe into allegation of paper leak in JSSC (CGL) exam, the Jharkhand State Students' Union (JSSU) announced that it would gherao the state SSC office on Monday, demanding the cancellation of the recruitment examination held in September over allegations of malpractices.

JSSU leader Devendra Mahto made the announcement after the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission on Saturday said that it has called 2,231 shortlisted candidates for document verification between December 16 and 22.

They qualified for the Jharkhand General Graduate Level Combined Competitive Examination (JGGLCCE) in which 3.04 lakh candidates appeared.

Mahto said thousands of candidates from all 24 districts would gather in Ranchi on Sunday and gherao the SSC office on Monday.

"We want immediate cancellation of the verification exercise by the commission," he said.

The district administration imposed prohibitory orders within the 500-metre radius of the SSC office from 5.30 am on Saturday to 8 pm on December 20 in view of the protest. Security cordon has been

kept near the JSSC office and at different points of Ranchi.

Students have been protesting over the JSSC (CGL) Examinations, through which recruitment is supposed to be made in mostly junior-level posts in the government, alleging that widespread malpractices happened in it.

A mega demonstration happened outside the SSC office on September 30, demanding the cancellation of the examination. The JSSC had set up a three-member committee to probe the allegations of malpractices, taking cognisance of the students' complaints.

Rejecting the allegations, JSSC secretary Sudhir Gupta said the examination was conducted in a free and fair manner.

"The students majorly made five allegations and they provided a CD and a pen drive to back their claims. But, the CD was found to be blank. The commission repeatedly sent notices to submit the original video but it was not provided," he said.

Gupta said it was alleged that a large number of candidates from outside Jharkhand were declared successful, but it is completely baseless.

"A total of 2,231 candidates have been invited for verification of certificates, of which 2,145 candidates are residents of Jharkhand," he said.

CS highlights Jharkhand's potential at NITI Aayog Conference

Mail News Service

New Delhi, Dec 15: The three-day Chief Secretary Conference organized by NITI Aayog concluded with a focus on leveraging India's demographic dividend to explore new avenues of development. Jharkhand Chief Secretary Alka Tiwari led the state delegation and emphasized key areas such as agriculture, employment, urban development, renewable energy, and progressive economic growth.

Tiwari highlighted Jharkhand's achievements and potential, particularly its significant role in pulses production. The conference aimed to foster cooperation between the Centre and states and facilitate collaborative dialogue. Jharkhand's delegation included Principal Secretary (Planning) Mast Ram Meena, Rural Development Secretary K. Srinivasan, Industry Secretary Jitendra Kumar Singh, and other senior officials. (w/gsd)



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The Steel City of Jamshedpur is reeling under an intense cold wave as the mercury plunged to 9.2°C, marking one of the coldest December nights in recent years. The biting cold has disrupted daily life, with residents bundling up in multiple layers to combat the chill.

Meteorological experts attribute the drop in temperature to cold winds sweeping in from northern India, coupled with clear skies, which have intensified the drop in nighttime temperatures. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has

predicted that the cold wave conditions may persist for the next few days, urging residents to take necessary precautions.

The cold spell has particularly impacted early-morning workers, school children, and daily wage laborers. "The mornings are freezing, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to commute," said Rajesh Kumar, a resident of Mango.

Meanwhile, the local administration has issued advisories for schools to consider delaying morning timings to ensure the safety of students. Several shelters have been set up across the city for the homeless, and bonfires have been arranged in key



areas to provide some relief from the icy conditions. As the city's iconic Jubilee Park and other open spaces wear a frosty look, weather

Kanke records 2.4°C, cold wave alert for 7 districts

Ranchi, December 15: Jharkhand is reeling under severe cold, with temperatures plummeting across the state. Kanke recorded a minimum temperature of 2.4°C today, with the maximum reaching 21.4°C. The cold has forced people to light bonfires even during the day for relief.

The Meteorological Department has issued a yellow alert for cold wave conditions in seven districts including Bokaro, Dhanbad, Ramgarh, Garhwa, Palamu, Chatra, and Gumla. Over the past 24 hours, minimum temperatures across the state hovered around 10°C, with McCluskieganj recording 2.5°C. Garhwa was the coldest district, registering 4.5°C. The weather department predicted no immediate relief from the biting cold and advised residents to stay warm and seek medical attention if needed. Bonfires were recommended as a preventive measure against the harsh weather. (w/gsd)

enthusiasts are capturing the winter beauty while eagerly awaiting updates on whether the temperature will dip further in the coming days. (W-pb)

In Maharashtra cabinet expansion, BJP gets 19 berths, allies get 20

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS): Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expanded his 10-day old cabinet on Sunday with 37 MLAs taking oath as ministers. Among the newly inducted ministers 19 are from the BJP, 11 from Shiv Sena and seven from the Nationalist Congress Party.

Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office at a ceremony held at Raj Bhawan in Nagpur in the evening. The swearing-in came just a day ahead of the winter session of the legislature. The legislators who were sworn in as ministers today included BJP state president Chandrashekhar Bawankule, party leaders Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, Chandrakant Patil, Girish Mahajan, Ganesh Naik; NCP's Hasan Mushrif and Dhananjay Munde; Shiv Sena's Gulabrao Patil, Dada Bhuse and Sanjay Rathod. Fadnavis, along with his deputies-Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar-attended the ceremony, which marks a rare occasion as the last such event in Nagpur was held in 1991.

Govt not to introduce One Nation, One Election bill today

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) The 'One Nation, One Election Bill, officially known as the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, will not be tabled in the Lok Sabha on Monday. The Revised Business List of the Lower House for the day does not mention the Bill.

The first list had scheduled the Bill for Monday. It mentioned, "... Arjun Ram Meghwal to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India. Also to introduce the Bill."

Property dealer shot dead in broad daylight in Ranchi

Ranchi, Dec 15 (IANS): Madhusudan Rai, also known as Madhu Rai, a real estate businessman, was shot dead in broad daylight by criminals in the Namkum area of Ranchi on Sunday.

The brazen attack, carried out in the middle of the road, created panic across the city. According to reports, Rai had left his home in Rajaulatu Unidih, under the Namkum police station, on a scooter. He was attacked near Kawali, where the assailants shot him and fired 12 bullets after he collapsed on the road. The criminals fled the scene without any resistance.

Rai succumbed to his injuries on the spot. Upon receiving the news, his family members and local residents gathered at the site and blocked the road in protest. Police later managed to clear the

Zakir Hussain passes away

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS): Zakir Hussain, the legendary tabla maestro and composer, passed away on Sunday, December 15, 2024, at the age of 73.

Earlier on Sunday, Hussain was admitted to the ICU of a San Francisco hospital with heart related problems, his friend and flautist Rakesh Chaurasia said. "He has been admitted to a hospital in San Francisco for a heart related problem for the last two weeks," Bachani added.



Will end Naxalism by March 2026: Amit Shah

Raipur, Dec 15 (IANS) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday reiterated the government's resolve to rid Chhattisgarh of Maoism by March 31, 2026, and hailed the state police's efforts in curbing Left-wing extremism over the past year.

Speaking at an event here to mark the President's Colour Award to Chhattisgarh Police, Shah appealed to Maoists to join the mainstream and make the best use of the surrender policy of the state government.

"I have been in touch with Chhattisgarh Police over the years for anti-naxal operations and I have no hesitation in saying that it is among the most courageous forces in the



country, fighting naxals and making lives of citizens easy," he said.

Hailing the achievements of

the force over the past year, the Union Home Minister said that during this period 287 extremists have been neutralised, almost

1,000 arrested and 837 surrendered.

"Due to the efforts of Chhattisgarh Police, the top 14 naxals were killed," he said, adding that for the first time in four decades, the number of fatalities among troops and citizens had fallen below 100 in one year. The Union Minister said the motto of "Viksit Chhattisgarh, Viksit Bastar" will get renewed contributions from the Chhattisgarh Police which has got the President's Colour Award even before completing 25 years of its existence, a rare achievement for an armed force.

Shah highlighted the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi due to which, during the past decade, as

compared to the one before that, a drop of 73 per cent was recorded in fatalities among security forces and a drop of 70 per cent was seen in deaths of citizens. When Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee created the new state in 2000, the people of the state elected a BJP government for 15 years. "Now Vishnu Deo Sai has been elected as CM and I assure you that we shall rid Chhattisgarh of naxals before March 31, 2026."

He hailed the state police for getting the Award even before the completion of 25 years of service and expressed confidence that the President's flag on the uniform of policemen would further enhance their confidence.

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the demise of our beloved

Vijay Kumar Kohli

23rd March 1941 - 13th December 2024

Prayer Meeting at
Arya Samaj, Tapti Road, Sakchi
16th December 2024 (Monday)
3 pm - 4 pm

Grief Stricken:
Rama Kohli (Wife)
Veekas and Ruchika Kohli (Son and Daughter in law)
Divya and Saket Seth (Daughter and Son in law)
Tanvi, Utkarsh, Varnika, Toshani (Grandchildren)

Denizens throng picnic spots as mercury dips

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: With winter in full bloom, bringing much-needed respite from the scorching heat of previous months, residents of Jamshedpur are flocking to popular picnic spots to enjoy the cooler weather. Destinations like Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, Dimna Lake, Jubilee Park, and Tata Zoological Park are buzzing with activity, with families, friends, and adventure enthusiasts making the most of the season. Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, known for its diverse flora and fauna, has emerged as a favorite among nature lovers.

The dense forests, interspersed with open grasslands and water bodies, offer an idyllic setting for picnics and nature walks. “The sanctuary truly comes alive during the winter. It’s a fantastic place to relax and connect with nature,” remarked Shakeel Ahmed, a school teacher and frequent visitor. Youngsters, too, are enjoying the thrill of trekking through the rocky terrain, testing their stamina and exploring the sanctuary’s rugged beauty. Dimna Lake and Jubilee Park have also become hotspots for families seeking a serene outing. The calm waters of Dimna Lake provide opportunities for boating, while



Jubilee Park’s lush greenery and open spaces are perfect for group gatherings. Meanwhile, Tata Zoological Park continues to attract crowds, offering visitors a chance to enjoy a picnic

under the shade of towering trees while observing animals in their enclosures. The winter rush has proved to be a boon for caterers, tent house suppliers, and transport operators, as picnic organizers seek their services to ease the burden of planning. Many families are turning these outings into mini celebrations, with every member contributing to the menu and activities. Chandil Dam, another popular spot, witnessed heavy footfall over the weekend. Ramesh Mehra, who visited with his family, shared his excitement: “We went on a boat ride twice today! It’s been a memorable day for us.” Local food vendors and kiosks, too, are enjoying brisk business, with long queues forming for snacks and beverages. However, the surge in visitors has also led to some challenges. Parking lots at popular destinations are overflowing, with vehicles lining up for space, leaving the air thick with gasoline fumes. Traffic congestion has become a common sight, especially during peak hours. Despite these minor inconveniences, the joy on the faces of picnickers is unmistakable. The season has not only brought people closer to nature but has also created a festive atmosphere across the city, making winter a much-anticipated time for all. (w/pb)

BJP conducts district-level workshop on membership drive SHS celebrates 76th anniversary with alumni milan utsav



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, December 15: To ensure the success of its membership campaign, the BJP Jamshedpur unit organized a district-level workshop on Sunday at the Hanuman Bada Mandir premises in Mango. The event was presided over by District President Sudhanshu Ojha, with former Jharkhand BJP State President and Rajya Sabha MP Deepak Prakash attending as the chief guest. The workshop was attended by prominent leaders, including Jamshedpur East MLA Purnima Sahu, former MP Abha Mahto, District In-Charge Dr. Jeetu Charan Ram, former MLAs Menka Sardar and Meera Munda, Campaign District Coordinator Dr. Rajeev

Kumar, District General Secretary Sanjeev Singh, and hundreds of party workers. During the workshop, attendees were trained in the nuances and technical aspects of the membership drive. Detailed strategies were shared on how to reach a broader audience and effectively connect people with the party. Leaders and workers pledged to disseminate the party’s policies and ensure the campaign’s success. The workshop commenced with a formal inauguration, where dignitaries paid homage to the portraits of the party’s founding fathers and lit the ceremonial lamp. Addressing the gathering, MP Deepak Prakash described the membership drive as a festival for the

organization. He urged workers to reach the grassroots level and acquaint people with the party’s ideology and activities, encouraging them to join the BJP. He emphasized that the drive would not only strengthen the organization but also foster public trust in the party’s principles. MLA Purnima Sahu highlighted the importance of expanding the party’s reach to every segment of society, especially women. She stated, “The goal of the membership drive is not only to grow the organization but also to connect people from all walks of life with the BJP. The more members we bring in, the stronger our ideas and policies will resonate within society.” Sahu further added that the campaign serves as an opportunity to inspire both new and existing members to play an active role in the party’s activities, ensuring its vitality and growth. The workshop concluded with enthusiasm and a collective determination to make the membership campaign a grand success, reinforcing the BJP’s commitment to reaching every household with its vision and mission. (w/pb)



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, December 15: Sakchi High School (SHS), popularly known as Ambagan School, marked its 76th year with a grand "Milan Utsav" organized by its Alumni Association in the school premises. The program was inaugurated by School Committee Chairman Vikas Mukherjee, along with distinguished alumni including Swami Kripatmananda Maharaj of Ramakrishna Mission Belur Math, Tapasi Bose, Shipra Bhattacharya, and Arvind Mitra, who lit the ceremonial lamp. The event honored both alumni and teachers, celebrating their con-

tributions and achievements. During the first session, alumni reminisced about their school days, shared memories, and showcased musical performances. The second session featured enchanting musical renditions by Kolkata-based singers Madhumita Dutta and Shivendu Mohapatra, adding a special touch to the celebrations. The event attracted alumni not only from Jamshedpur but also from across the country and abroad. Attendees included successful professionals, social workers, and cultural figures, who rekindled old memories and expressed their enduring bond with the school. Debashish Naha of the Alumni

Association emphasized that the Milan Utsav aimed to strengthen friendships and inspire efforts to improve opportunities and facilities for current students. He announced plans for even larger-scale celebrations in the future. The program’s success was credited to the efforts of Subhdeep Mandal, Jayanto Dutta, Soumya Sen, Subroto Biswas, Pranab Sarkar, Neeta Bose, Sanjukta Sarkar, Swagato Chakraborty, Shobhan Mukherjee, Tapasi Bose, Sangeeta Sarkar, Biswadeep Mandal, Bijan Sarkar, Shilpa Hazra, Manas Shee, and others. The milestone event was a proud moment for both present and former students of Sakchi High School. (w/gsd)

Waste disposal crisis deepens in Jamshedpur



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: In response to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) ruling, the Jamshedpur Akshes and Mango Municipal Corporation have ceased the dumping of garbage at the Sonari Marine Drive. Previously, up to 150 to 200 tons of waste were being discarded daily at this site. This action followed a petition raised by local MLA Saryu Rai, who highlighted the environmental damage caused by the garbage dump, especially the ongoing fire and pollution issues. The NGT directed the Jharkhand Pollution Control Board and the district administration to take immediate action to put out the fire at the Sonari garbage dump and mitigate the pollution resulting from the accumulation of waste. In response, the dumping was halted, but this has led to a new and pressing issue: the question of where to dispose of the vast amount of garbage generated daily. While the Mango Municipal Corporation had earmarked one acre of land in Betakocha for disposal purposes, local villagers have strongly opposed this plan, preventing the garbage from being dumped there. On Friday, the corporation attempted to use an alternate site in Dimna, but local protests again thwarted these efforts, resulting in garbage left stranded in the vehicles. Meanwhile, in Jamshedpur’s notified areas, waste disposal has been redirected to Sidgora CRM Bara, a site where Tata Steel UISL also disposes of its waste. Jamshedpur Notified Area Committee (JNAC) has received permission to continue dumping garbage there. However, with the ongoing protests in Mango and limited options for disposal, the situation is becoming increasingly critical for the Mango Municipal Corporation. The waste management crisis in Mango could escalate further if a solution is not found promptly. Garbage collection in the area is already at risk of being halted, as the vehicles used for waste collection are now filled and unable to unload their contents due to the lack of available dumping sites. The delay in finding a resolution poses a serious challenge to the city’s waste management system and environmental health. (w/nkm)

Karim City College hosts Youth Festival

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The District-Level Youth Festival 2024 was organized at Karim City College, Sakchi, Jamshedpur, under the joint aegis of the District Administration, Sports Department (East Singhbhum), Mera Bharat Nehru (Youth Centre East Singhbhum), and the National Service Scheme (NSS) East Singhbhum. The inaugural ceremony took place at the college auditorium at 11:00 AM. The event was graced by the chief guest, Shatabdi Majumdar (SDO Dhalbhum), along with Amit Kumar (District Sports Officer). The program commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries. A mesmerizing music and dance performance by college student Muskan set the tone for



the event. Dr. Mohammad Reyaz, Principal of Karim City College, delivered a warm welcome speech to honor the guests. In her address, the chief guest emphasized the importance of perseverance, stating, “Life brings more failures than successes, but amidst those failures lie the paths to achievement. The key is to focus on efforts rather than outcomes.” The festival featured 11 diverse competitions, including poetry, music, science exhibitions, painting, photography, speeches, folk dance, and story writing. Participants from various schools, colleges, and even remote areas showcased their



talents. Experienced and invited judges evaluated the performances, and the winners were awarded cash prizes and recognition. Selected participants will now advance to the state-level competition. The event continued throughout the day, with notable contributions from Dr. Kamal Kumar Mahato (NSS Nodal Officer, Patamda Degree College), Anjali Kumari (District Youth Officer), Avinash Tripathi (District Youth Officer), Dr. Ale Ali (NSS Officer, Karim City College), and NSS Coordinator Syed Sajid Parvez. The program was skillfully hosted by Manav Ghosh. (w/pb)

Carmel Community College awards diplomas to 73 women

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The Graduation Ceremony of Carmel Community College, Jamshedpur, took place on December 14, at Sacred Heart Convent School, Bistupur. A total of 73 students were awarded their diplomas during the event. The ceremony was graced by AnjanaMarandy, Senior Manager of Projects & Partnerships at Dharma Life Foundation; Sr. Sareena A.C., Superior and Manager of Sacred Heart Convent School; Sr. M. Steffi A.C., Principal of Sacred Heart Convent School; and Sr. Angela A.C., In-charge of Carmel Community College. Parents, teachers, and other guests also attended the event. Carmel Community College offers professional training in courses such as Office Management, Event Management, Fashion Designing, and Tailoring and Embroidery. The Office Management program prepares students for office assistant roles with training in basic computers, account-



ing, TALLY, communication skills, functional English, life skills, and office management. Students also undergo internships with reputed organizations such as Sacred Heart Convent School, TriveniEngiconsPvt. Ltd., Apex Hospital, Tanishq Jewellery Showroom, and ASL Motors, among others. Notably, 23 students from the current batch have secured employment at companies like Tanishq Jewellery Showroom, Apex Hospital, Trinetrnam Eye Hospital, and Amazon. In the field of fashion designing, three students have successfully launched their own boutique, Muskaan, in Sakchi, which has already garnered attention from the local community. Sharing her experience, SeemaKalindi, a graduate of the Office Management pro-

gram, said, "As a fresher, it was difficult to find a job due to my lack of experience. This course, supported by the sisters of Sacred Heart Convent School, helped me acquire skills in computers, TALLY, and communication. Today, I work in the accounts department at Triveni Engicons Pvt. Ltd., and I am now able to support my family financially." Since its inception in July 2015, Carmel Community College, run by the Apostolic Carmel Sisters, has aimed to empower underprivileged women through professional training. The one-year diploma courses also include credit programs such as Event Management. Sr. M. Steffi A.C., Principal of Sacred Heart Convent School, Jamshedpur, remarked, "Watching these young women grow in confidence is truly inspiring. I encourage organizations in Jamshedpur to support these courageous women in their journey toward self-reliance. My best wishes to all the graduates." The initiative continues to uplift and provide opportunities to women, fostering hope and self-reliance in the community. (w/pb)

JNAC issues final warning to defaulters in Jamshedpur sairat bazar

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The Jamshedpur Notified Area Committee (JNAC) has launched a stringent drive to recover outstanding rents from shopkeepers in the city's sairat bazar. Over 200 shopkeepers in Sakchi, Bistupur, and other areas have been given a week to clear their dues or face shop closures. This action targets nearly 7,500 shops spread across 52.73 acres of government land in 10 Sairat markets, which were initially managed by Tata Steel before being handed over to JNAC.

According to a JNAC official, "More than 200 shopkeepers with substantial dues have been issued a final warning. If the dues are not cleared within the stipulated time, sealing actions will follow." The crackdown is particularly focused on Sakchi and Bistupur markets, where some shopkeepers owe large sums. For example, Mohammad Rafiq and Rambalak from Sakchi each owe over Rs 17,000 under old rental rates.



Revised rates would increase the outstanding amounts significantly. These unpaid rents have caused significant revenue losses for JNAC, prompting this recovery campaign. Sairaat markets, vital hubs for Jamshedpur's economy, provide employment to numerous small business owners. Discontent among shopkeepers has grown in

recent years following steep rent hikes, further contributing to the delays in payments. The ultimatum extends beyond Sakchi and Bistupur to other markets such as Kadma, Sonari Aerodrome Market, Kagalnagar, Baridih, Golmuri, and Sidgora. The JNAC emphasized that this drive is essential to maintaining the markets and ensuring

steady revenue. "Sairat Bazar is the economic backbone of Jamshedpur, and timely rent payments are crucial for its sustainability," the official added. Shopkeepers are urged to settle their dues immediately to avoid disruptions, as the JNAC prepares to take decisive action against defaulters unwilling to comply. (w/nkm)

No action taken against rule violations by Sairat Bazar shopkeepers

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The Jamshedpur administration continues to issue notices to shopkeepers in Sairat Bazar for violating building regulations, yet no concrete action has been taken. Recently, notices were sent to shopkeepers who have violated height regulations, with a warning that action will be initiated within a week if the violations are not rectified. However, this is not the first time that notices have been issued to shopkeepers in the area. Over the past three years, the Jamshedpur Notified Area Committee (JNAC) has sent three notices to 742 shopkeepers who increased the height of their shops. Despite these repeated warnings, no follow-up action has been taken, and the violations remain unaddressed.

Krishna Kumar, the deputy municipal commissioner, JNAC, explained that action is indeed planned, stating, "Action is taken against those who have been sent notices, but the legal process takes time. Once the process is completed, action will be taken." However, shopkeepers allege that the JNAC often tacitly approves the unauthorized alterations in



exchange for bribes, only to issue a notice after the fact. According to some traders, JNAC staff verbally grant permission for shop extensions in return for money, but when they fail to comply with the rules, they are served with notices. "The market committee's inaction is often blamed on the slow legal procedures. It's clear that the JNAC just saves face by issuing notices," one shopkeeper claimed.

Despite the promises of action, Sairat Bazar has yet to see any resolution of its long-standing building issues. In a bid to address these problems, a survey was conducted by the Jamshedpur Sairat Market Committee to determine fair rental rates for shops in the area. The committee also proposed categorizing shops into

four different types to standardize rent. However, the plan has yet to be implemented.

The administration has suggested that creating multi-storey market complexes could help resolve the space issues in Sairat Bazar. This plan is seen as a potential solution to alleviate the problems faced by the city's residents due to overcrowded markets. "If a multi-storey market complex is built in place of Sairat Bazaar, many of the problems faced by the citizens will be solved," said a district administration official. The initiative has gained support from both Tata Steel and the district administration, who believe that a modern, well-organized structure could streamline the city's commercial landscape. (w/nkm)

SIT cracks Sonu Sardar murder case, two arrested, weapon recovered

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, December 15: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by Seraikela SP has made significant progress in the murder case of Sonu Sardar, husband of Yashpur Panchayat Mukhiya Parvati Sardar and President of the District Para Teachers Union. Sardar was killed late Friday night while returning from a birthday party near his village. According to sources, the SIT has arrested two suspects and recovered the pistol used in the crime. While the motive for the murder remained unclear, initial theories about the case appeared to have been ruled out. An official statement from the police is expected on Monday.

Sonu Sardar, known for his popularity in the education department and his close association with former Chief Minister Arjun Munda, was an active participant in the social and political affairs of Yashpur Panchayat. Following the murder, the police recovered seven cartridges from the crime scene.

The incident sparked protests from para teachers, political, and social organizations, demanding swift justice and a thorough investigation. All eyes are now on the police's forthcoming disclosure. (w/gsd)

New MGM Hospital OPD faces low patient footfall due to insufficient facilities

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The newly established outpatient department (OPD) at MGM College Hospital is witnessing an alarmingly low patient turnout, with only around 50 patients visiting daily despite the presence of 16 doctors and 24 health workers. This stands in stark contrast to the old MGM Hospital in Sakchi, which caters to approximately 1,200 patients every day. The main reason for this disparity is the lack of emergency services and essential diagnostic facilities such as pathology and radiology in the new hospital. As a result, most patients prefer the old hospital, which provides a full range of services.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Jujhar Majhi acknowledged the issue and said that efforts are underway to start all necessary services in the new hospital to ensure better utilization of resources. Currently, the new OPD operates in eight departments, including Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, General Surgery, General Medicine, Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, ENT, and Dermatology. However, due to the absence of admission and emergency services, the hospital remains largely underutilized, and doctors often wait for patients during their shifts.

The opening of the new hospital has also caused a significant strain on resources at



the old MGM Hospital. Staff were reassigned to the new facility, resulting in a 36% reduction in manpower at the old hospital. This imbalance has created challenges for both doctors and patients. In the old hospital, a single doctor is

attending to approximately 70 patients daily, whereas, in the new hospital, a doctor sees only about seven patients on average. The reception counter at the new facility often remains empty, and in some cases, interns are left to handle patients in the absence of

doctors.

Meanwhile, the old hospital in Sakchi is grappling with severe overcrowding. Patients face long wait times of around 1.5 hours for consultations, and doctors are overburdened throughout the day. The decision to start OPD services at the new hospital has been criticized as hasty, with inadequate planning and poor resource allocation resulting in challenges for both facilities. The health department is now making efforts to address these issues by expediting the activation of emergency and diagnostic services at the new hospital. This step is expected to balance the patient load between the two facilities and improve healthcare services in the city. (w/nkm)

Satellite imaging to curb forest land encroachment in Jharkhand

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The central government is introducing satellite imaging technology to combat the increasing encroachment on forest lands in Jharkhand. Under a digital security initiative by the Ministry of Forest and Environment, states are being consulted to implement this cutting-edge technology. Currently, a similar system is being successfully employed in Uttarakhand to monitor illegal activities in forests.

According to a survey, 30% of



forest land encroachments across India occur due to agricultural activities, and Jharkhand is no exception.

Commercial ventures along roads passing through forests also contribute significantly to deforestation. Forest expert

Rakesh Kant highlighted the dangers, stating, "Once human activities begin in dense forests, the entire ecosystem is disrupted, threatening the existence of surrounding flora." The Ministry is planning to establish a dedicated satellite channel to create digital footprints of forest activities. This system will enhance monitoring and aid in forest conservation. Rakesh Kant added that satellite technology will also support agroforestry by identifying areas where economically significant plants thrive, ensuring timely intervention for their

protection. The new technology is expected to play a crucial role in curbing illegal opium cultivation, a persistent issue in forested regions of Jharkhand. By identifying precise locations through satellite imagery, authorities can take swift action.

The roadmap for implementing this digital security system across the country, including Jharkhand, is already prepared, marking a significant step toward preserving forest ecosystems while balancing economic and environmental priorities. (w/nkm)

Chandil Police Station in-charge suspended for escorting VVIP without permission

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, December 15: Chandil police station in-charge Varun Kumar Yadav of Seraikela-Kharsawan district has been suspended by DGP Anurag Gupta for escorting a VVIP without prior permission. Seraikela SP Mukesh Kumar Lunayat confirmed the suspension, stating it was done on the directives of senior officials. A replacement for the position will be assigned soon.

DGP Anurag Gupta has issued strict guidelines to all district DIGs and SPs, emphasizing the importance of polite public interaction by police personnel. Immediate action has been mandated in cases involving cybercrime, SC/ST issues, human trafficking, and crimes against women. The DGP directed that complaints from victims be registered promptly, irrespective of jurisdiction. These measures aim to enhance public trust and ensure swift justice. (w/gsd)

East Singhbhum lags behind in SC-ST loan distribution

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: East Singhbhum district has fallen short of its target for providing loans to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities. Despite being classified as an aspirational district, banks in the district have only achieved 8% of the mandated 10% loan distribution target. The deadline to meet this goal has now been extended to March 2025.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Santosh Kumar highlighted the district's inclusion among 19 aspirational districts in Jharkhand, out of 119 such districts in the country. He said, "Of the total loans disbursed in the district, 10% must be allocated to SC-ST beneficiaries. Unfortunately, this target has not been met yet."

Currently, only 8% of loans have been distributed to SC-ST individuals, leaving the district 20% short of its target. Kumar expressed concerns over the performance of local bank branches in fulfilling their obligations. The shortfall is set to be reviewed soon by a team from NITI Aayog, which aims to identify the reasons for the lag.

The district has a significant SC-ST population, and the loan scheme is designed to support their economic, social, and educational development. Kumar emphasized, "Ensuring access to loans for these communities is vital for their overall development."

As part of the Aspirational Districts Programme, East Singhbhum is expected to prioritize inclusive growth. However, the district's performance in loan disbursement remains a concern. Discussions during the NITI Aayog review will likely focus on strategies to overcome the challenges and meet the target by 2025. The banks have been urged to expedite loan approvals and ensure the SC-ST community receives the intended support to foster economic empowerment and development. (w/nkm)

Approval sought for vending market zones in Adityapur

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: Efforts are underway to revive the long-delayed vending zone project in Adityapur under the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM). This initiative aims to address encroachment issues and provide employment opportunities for street vendors. Six years after the initial surveys and vendor identification, the Adityapur Municipal Corporation has reactivated plans to construct three vending zones at an estimated cost of Rs 4.49 crore. The proposed locations include Dindali Bazaar with a budget of Rs 3.08 crore, Ashiana Mor at Rs 80.37 lakh, and Chuna Bhatta at Rs 60.66 lakh. Technical feedback has been sought from the Chief Engineer to ensure smooth execution of the project. Municipal Corporation officials have emphasized the importance of organizing street vendors systematically by providing them dedicated spaces. An official stated that this initiative will bring order to the streets of Adityapur, benefiting both vendors and the general



public. The vending zones aim to create a structured environment for businesses to flourish.

In addition to the vending zones, the corporation plans to establish a food market, popularly known as "Khai Gali," in Adityapur. This market will feature popular street food items like golgappas, momos, chaat, samosas, dosas, and idlis. Vendors will operate from designated handcarts, ensuring cleanliness and convenience for customers. A corporation spokesperson highlighted the significance of this market, stating that it will not only

support local vendors but also provide a vibrant and hygienic environment for residents to enjoy their favourite dishes. The food market is expected to boost the local economy while organizing street food businesses scattered across the city.

The Adityapur Municipal Corporation has identified three sites for the establishment of modern street vending zones to support registered street vendors. These zones will feature small shops equipped with modern facilities, aimed at improving the working conditions for vendors in the region. To implement this

initiative, the Corporation has sought technical approval for the construction of the vending zones under a plan sanctioned by the 14th Finance Commission. Executive Engineer Pankaj Jha confirmed that a request has been sent to the Chief Engineer of the Urban Development and Housing Department for technical approval. Jha stated that once approval is granted, the tender process will begin, paving the way for the project to be implemented on the ground.

The Corporation has proposed three specific locations for the vending markets. The first market is planned near Ashiana Mor, the second near Dindali Basti, and the third near the Lime Kiln Settlement. These sites have been chosen to address the needs of street vendors while ensuring easy accessibility for the residents of Adityapur. The vending zones are expected to provide a more organized and efficient space for vendors to conduct their business, enhancing their livelihoods and contributing to the local economy.

Addressing a related dispute over toll collection in the

AdityapurDindali market, Market Master Manoj Paswan explained that the toll collected from the haat market is directed to the government through the Agricultural Market Production Committee. He stated that this process is essential for managing the market operations. Paswan highlighted the challenges faced by vendors, particularly Dalits and tribal sellers who bring vegetables from rural areas and operate by laying sacks on roadsides to sell their produce. He clarified that the toll collection is done as per the committee's mandate and added that any objections regarding this matter should be supported by valid government orders. Furthermore, he emphasized that action against illegal structures rented out in the market is justified.

This initiative by the Adityapur Municipal Corporation is expected to streamline street vending operations, provide better facilities for vendors, and ensure smoother market management, benefitting both the vendors and the local community. (w/nkm)

Carmel Junior College hosts KG Parents' Nite 'A Magical World of Tiny Stars'

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: Carmel Junior College in Jamshedpur organized a heart-warming event, "A Magical World of Tiny Stars," for the parents of its LKG and HKG students on 14th December 2024, at 4:30 p.m. on the school premises. The event, designed to showcase the talents of the youngest members of the school, was graced by Gyanendra Karan, Principal Legal Counsel at Tata Steel Limited, as the Chief Guest.

The evening began with a ceremonial lamp-lighting to mark the significance of the occasion. School Manager Sister Jyothi D'Souza A.C., Principal Sister M. Sharel A.C., Vice Principal Sister Amala



Rani A.C., and the Chief Guest Gyanendra Karan were all present to inaugurate the event. Following the lighting ceremony, the parents were warmly welcomed by Principal Sister M. Sharel A.C., who expressed her gratitude for their continuous support.

The students of LKG and HKG took the spotlight with a series of captivating performances. They enthralled the

audience with their charm, performing songs, poems, and dance routines. A special fashion show, where the tiny tots strutted in their best attire, added to the excitement. One of the most impactful performances of the evening was a heartfelt act highlighting the empowerment of the girl child, with the students conveying a powerful message: every girl has the right to dream and the

potential to achieve her dreams.

As the event progressed, the students also delivered a touching Christmas song, wishing the audience joy and a warm welcome to the upcoming New Year. The students' energy and enthusiasm were contagious, leaving the parents filled with pride and admiration.

The grand finale of the evening was the most memorable part of the

program. All the students came together on stage, united in a beautiful display of harmony, singing a song that resonated with themes of peace, love, and compassion. This finale not only captivated the parents but also underscored the unity and spirit of the school community.

The event was not only a celebration of the students' talents but also a

valuable opportunity for the parents to witness the growth and creativity of their children. Each performance reflected the dedication and effort put in by both students and teachers.

The evening concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Vice Principal Sister Amala Rani A.C. She expressed her gratitude to the parents, teachers, and everyone involved in making the event a success. Her words of appreciation highlighted the collective effort in organizing such a wonderful evening for the school community.

With the support of the parents, teachers, and staff, the event was a resounding success, leaving everyone excited for the future of the school's youngest stars. (w/nkm)

Kolkata water supply to be disrupted on Dec 16 and 17

Kolkata : Kolkata Water Cut: Residents in Kolkata will face disruption in water supply on December 16 and 17. Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) said temporary water supply disruption will take place on Monday and Tuesday from 9:00 am on December 16 to till 6:00 am on December 17, due to essential maintenance work at the IGWTP-Tallah Pumping Station system.

"Complete shutdown of the IGWTP-Tallah Pumping Station system on 16.12.2024 9:00 AM - 17.12.2024 6:00 AM. Filtered water supply will be temporarily stopped at IGWTP (Palta Water Works) from 9:00 am on 16 December to 6:00 am on 17 December, 2024 for installation and repair of higher diameter valves, electro-mechanical devices, H.T. pumps, High voltage motors/electrical appliances, leakage repairing work on higher diameter pipelines and various maintenance works. Thus filtered water supply will remain suspended in Borough-I to Borough-VII & part of Borough VIII including Kasba during that time inconvenience caused is regretted," Kolkata Municipal Corporation's statement posted on X read.

According to the civic body, government staffers will carry out works related to installation and repair of higher diameter valves, electro-mechanical devices, HT pumps, High voltage motors, electrical appliances, leakage repairing work on higher diameter pipelines and various maintenance works.

The Kolkata civic body appealed to people in the city to use less water.

On CCTV, chaos during Bihar exam, candidates run with papers, tear them

Patna/New Delhi: CCTV footage of the chaos that unfolded at an exam centre of the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) on Friday shows a large group of people tearing question papers in the storage area and snatching them from candidates who were taking the test.

One of the CCTV clips shows some candidates rushing into a room where the exam officials were talking to some candidates, who were upset over a 40 to 45-minute delay. A police complaint filed by the authorities says the

exam officials told the candidates they would get the extra time that they lost due to the delay.

The crowd along with more candidates who rushed into the room, however, pushed aside the officials and raided the boxes that contained the question papers.

Some of them tore the question papers, while others ran out carrying them. Outside, they distributed the question papers to people who had gathered there due to the commotion, CCTV footage shows.

"After opening the

sealed box of the question paper in a proper manner, the sealed packet of question paper and OMR sheet were made available in different rooms of each block. When there was a delay of 40-45 minutes in distribution of the question papers, some candidates started creating ruckus despite the superintendent and invigilators explaining that extra time would be given for the delay," the exam authorities said in the police complaint.

"The candidates demanded to know why the sealed box was not opened in their room.

Aati Puaal Mushroom discovery to revolutionize farming

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: Dr. Amresh Mahato's recent discovery of Aati Puaal Mushroom has the potential to transform the lives of farmers, according to Divyanshu Tembre, Manager of ABIF (IIT Kharagpur).

Tembre, accompanied by his colleague Shambhunath Biswai, visited Dr. Mahato's head office and attended a meeting with farmers, where they were introduced to the innovative farming methods for growing Aati Puaal Mushroom, cassava, sweet potato, and CRS Paddy 310.

During the visit, Tembre expressed his enthusiasm about the new technology, which is part



of the Start Up India initiative aimed at improving agricultural practices. He spoke to the farmers about the cultivation process and its benefits, noting that the application of such new techniques can triple profits with

lower investment. "This new farming approach can uplift the financial status of farmers by producing high-demand crops in less time," Tembre stated.

Dr. Mahato elaborated on the health benefits of Aati Puaal

Mushroom, calling it a "panacea" for various ailments such as cancer, diabetes, and gastric problems. He highlighted the mushroom's rich vitamin content and its growing market demand. "Farmers can not only improve their financial condition but also contribute to better health in society by growing these crops," Dr. Mahato added.

The event also saw the presence of Deen Bandhu Trust President Uttam Chakraborty, General Secretary Nagendra Kumar, and other local dignitaries, who honored the guests with bouquets and shawls. The visit ended on a positive note, with the attendees expressing their support for this revolutionary agricultural initiative. (w/nkm)

Kolhan Vice Chancellor resolves vocational teachers' issues

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The Vice Chancellor of Kolhan University held a constructive meeting with representatives of the Kolhan Vocational Teachers' Union today, addressing their long-standing concerns and taking immediate steps toward resolution. The union, which had planned a one-day dharna at the university headquarters, called off the protest following the Vice Chancellor's proactive approach and assurance.

During the meeting, the Vice Chancellor carefully reviewed the teachers' demands and directed the concerned officials to expedite pending matters. Key decisions included: Contract Renewal: The Vice Chancellor



instructed officials to complete the contract renewal process within two days and submit a report. Outstanding Salaries: Orders were given for the immediate disbursement of unpaid salaries. Salary Hike: The process for increasing salaries was to be finalized within a week,

with the revised amounts provided to the teachers promptly. The swift decisions were warmly welcomed by the Kolhan Vocational Teachers' Union, whose members expressed gratitude for the Vice Chancellor's decisive action. Union President Prof. Amar Nath Singh called the initiative a

pivotal step that would bring financial and mental relief to the affected teachers. Union Secretary Prof. Somnath Padiya, Vice President Prof. Nazia Tahseen, Joint Secretary Sayantani Banerjee, Treasurer Prof. K.M. Rai, and Media Incharge Prof. Sandeep Kumar Officer, among

others, were present at the meeting. Representatives from various colleges under the university, including Workers College, Co-operative College, Graduate College, K.S. College in Saraikela, and Tata College in Chaibasa, praised the Vice Chancellor's efforts.

Union members hailed the decisions as historic and beneficial for the teaching community. "This is a landmark move that reflects the administration's commitment to addressing teacher grievances and fostering better cooperation between faculty and the university," said Prof. Ishwar Rao of Co-operative College. (w/pb)

Trinamool leader says 'Muslims can be bigger than majority', BJP fires back

Kolkata: Trinamool Congress leader and Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim's call for Muslims to grow and outnumber the "majority" in the country has invited strong condemnation from the BJP, which questioned his "mindset".

Speaking at an event for minority students in Kolkata on Friday, Hakim said that the Muslims should empower themselves so that their voices are automatically heard and their demands for justice and development are met.

"In West Bengal, we are 33 per cent and nationwide we are 17 per cent. We are called a minority. But we do not think of ourselves like that," Hakim said. "If



Allah's mercy and teachings are with us, then one day we will become bigger than the majority."

The Bengal municipal affairs and urban development minister said there is an urgent need for the judiciary to have more Muslims, claiming that the community is underrepresented. He

called on the members of the Muslim community to work hard to bridge this gap.

"We can become so empowered that we will not need to hold candlelight rallies for justice. We will be in a position where our voices are automatically heard, and our calls for justice answered.

Two labourers from Bihar shot dead in Manipur

Mail News Services

Patna, Dec 15: Two migrant workers from Bihar were shot dead in Meitei dominated Kakching district of Manipur on Saturday late evening, police said on Sunday.

According to the officials, the incident took place near the panchayat office in Keirak on Kakching-Wabagai Road in the evening hours on Saturday. The slain have been identified as Sunalal Kumar (18) and Dashaarat Kumar (17)--both hailing from Rajwahi village in Bihar's Gopalganj district. They have been working in a construction site, police said adding the killers were yet to be identified.

"As per the information available, the duos suffered bullet injuries in cross-firing and collapsed," said Prashant Kumar CH, district magistrate (DM), Gopalganj.

The Kakching district saw the shooting deaths of two migrant labourers Saturday night. The dead were among five workmen contracted to build a house in the Keirak area, and they were apparently making their way back to their rented accommodations. The deceased, Sunalal Kumar (18) and Dashaarat Kumar (17), were both inhabitants of Rajwahi village, which is located in the Yadavpur police station area of the Gopalganj district of Bihar. Local sources claim that the attack happened on the road and it was dark during the attack. The attack



happened while the workers were returning home from their shift. To catch the criminals, police have started a thorough search.

Santosh Kumar, one of the labourers accompanying the deceased, said three of us lag behind as we were heading toward our rented accommodation. "It was dark and full of stillness. The stillness was disturbed as we heard a distress call and rushed to the spot only to find my brother Dashaarat and other fellow Sunalal bleeding profusely. With the help of the police we rushed them to a hospital where they were declared brought dead," said Santosh Kumar, brother of Dashaarat Kumar, a victim of in the incident.

Meanwhile, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday expressed

grief over the killing of two migrant workers from the state in Manipur's Kakching district, and announced ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for family members of the deceased.

A statement issued by the chief minister's Office (CMO) said, "The CM has expressed deep sorrow over the killing of two migrant workers from the state in Manipur's Kakching district. Heartfelt condolences to their family."

It said that the CM Nitish Kumar has announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each to the immediate family members of the deceased.

"He also directed officials of the state's social welfare and labour departments to ensure that the family members get other benefits, too, as per existing provisions," it said.

Tejashwi dubs Nitish as extravagant CM of a sick state during his Jan Savad Yatra of Bihar

Mail New Services

Patna, Dec 15: Embarking on his Jan Savad Yatra of Bihar, former Bihar deputy chief minister and leader of opposition Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday came down heavily on Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and dubbed him extravagant chief minister of what he said of a sick state and promised to implement Mai-Bahin Maan scheme taking a cue from "Maiya Samman Yojana" which is on run in neighbouring Jharkhand to provide financial assistance to weaker section, if his government was formed in Bihar.

"What else can be irony than the fact while on one hand CM Nitish Kumar calls Bihar a poor and sick state, on the other hand, in the name of 15 days' journey, more than two billion rupees were flowing like water. This is a misuse of the public's hard-earned money and the officials have a free hand to loot," said Yadav, questioning the wisdom behind allocation of ₹250 crore for CM Nitish Kumar's much publicised 'Mahila Samvad Yatra.'

He dubbed the Nitish government failure on all front. "Nitish government lathicharges innocent students. Their voice is being suppressed. Fact is this government has failed to conducted any



examination in the state with question leak," said Tejashwi, the scion of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav, the former Bihar chief minister, who stated off as a Janata Dal leader, floated a new outfit in 1997 and later passed on the mantle to wife Rabri Devi who succeeded him as chief minister and occupied the post till 2005.

With an eye on the next year's assembly election the state, Yadav is on tour of the state which has been christened as Jan Savad Yatra. Taking a cue from Hemant Soren government in neighbouring Jharkhand, Tejashwi said that if the government is formed in 2025, we will implement the Mai-Bahin Maan scheme.

"Under this, an amount of Rs 2500 will be given to the mothers' bank

accounts every month. As soon as the government is formed, we will start this scheme within a month," said former deputy CM staking his individual credence for all the employment generated during his 17-month-old stint in mahagathbandhan. He reiterated his demand for the special status for Bihar by the central government for which the people went whole hog during three successive parliamentary elections.

However, taking a swipe at former deputy CM's Mai-Bahan Maan scheme, Bihar's deputy CM Vijay Sinha it is his job only to make empty claims and promises. This has no logical and practical basis. In reality, for them politics is not 'commitment' but entertainment," said Sinha.

BJP West Singhbhum district committee meet on membership campaign



Mail News Service

Chaibasa, December 15: An important meeting of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) West Singhbhum District Committee was held at the BJP District Office to discuss the Membership Campaign Mahaparv. The meeting was chaired by State President Babulal Marandi, with District In-charge Manoj Bajpai also in attendance. Babulal Marandi emphasized

the significance of the membership campaign, urging party workers to ensure its success. He stated that the campaign was a crucial step in spreading the party's ideology and increasing BJP's contribution to the country's progress. The meeting also outlined the upcoming programs, which included Mandal Training and Membership Training Campaign on 18 and 19 December, Membership Campaign from 22 December to 14 January, Active

Member Campaign from 5 January to 14 January. The BJP aimed to accelerate the membership drive in West Singhbhum and encouraged active participation from party workers. Several prominent leaders were present, including District President Sanjay Pandey, former MLA Shashi Bhushan Samath, State Spokesperson JB Tubid, former MP and State Spokesperson Geeta Koda, former Chief Minister Madhu Koda, Chaibasa Assembly Candidate Geeta

Balmuchu, and former District Presidents Ashok Sarangi and Satish Puri. They all shared their views and encouraged party workers to contribute to the campaign's success. It was decided that BJP workers would go door-to-door, connecting with people and educating them about the party's policies and principles. The initiative aimed to strengthen the party through its membership campaign. The program was conducted

by Vipin Biruli, and key coordinators for the campaign were announced. They included Anil Biruli (District Coordinator), Gita Balmuchu, Amresh Pradhan, and Shambhu Hazra (Co-coordinators). Notable attendees included former MLA Jawahar Lal Banra, District Council members Lalmuni Puri and Rajshree Savaiyan, Malti Gilua, former Nagar Parishad Chairman Neela Nag, and other prominent leaders and Mandal Presidents. (w/gsd)

IMD to celebrate 150th anniversary in Ranchi today

Ranchi, Dec 15: A special program will be organized on Monday at the Ranchi Smart City Auditorium to mark the 150th anniversary of the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The event will be graced by Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, who will inaugurate two key reports: Jharkhand MausamDarpan and Monsoon Report Jharkhand-2024. The program, which will begin at 10:30 am, will also feature Principal Secretary of the Health Department, Ajay Kumar Singh, and Secretary of the Disaster Management Department, Rajesh Kumar Sharma, as special guests. The schedule includes registration starting at 9:30 am, followed by the presentation of IMD's theme song and the release of MausamDarpan and Monsoon Report Jharkhand-2024. Governor Gangwar will then address the gathering. At noon, a technical session will begin with presentations by Dr. SomnathDutt, a scientist from the Kolkata Meteorological Center, and AbhishekAnand, head of the Ranchi Meteorological Center. They will discuss weather services and forecasting in Jharkhand. Stakeholders will provide feedback on services at the Meteorological Center, and experts from sectors like agriculture, irrigation, aviation, and health will share their insights. The event will conclude with a press briefing at 2:30 pm, where weather and climate services for Jharkhand will be discussed. Retired IMD employees will also be honored during the program.

Ayushman Bharat cards in demand, Sahebganj residents rush to the centre

Ranchi, Dec 15: PradhanMantri Jan AarogyaYojana (PM-JAY), since its launch in 2018 has evolved into a game-changer scheme, playing an instrumental role in transforming the country's health landscape. Over the years, lakhs of people and their families have benefitted from the scheme, also called Ayushman Bharat. In Jharkhand's Sahebganj district, thousands of people have got their Ayushman Bharat cards issued under the PM-JAY scheme while thousand other applications are in the pipeline. Scores of people are making formal applications for getting Ayushman Health cards issued for them as well as their families. Many beneficiaries of the scheme spoke to IANS and talked about the wide array of benefits received under the scheme. Aman Kumar Pandey, the co-ordinator of Ayushman Bharat at the city's SahibganjSadar Hospital said that the health cards of beneficiaries are being made on the basis of their applications. "A large number of beneficiaries are coming and getting Ayushman cards made. Even 70-year-old beneficiaries are showing interest in making Ayushman cards. They are going to the centre and getting their Ayushman cards made," he said. "The treatment of patients is done free of cost."

Celebration of artistic talent at Rabindra Bhawan

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, December 15: RabindraBhavan in Sakchi, a hub for budding talent in art and culture, became a proud witness to the recognition of artistic excellence. The venue hosted the All Jharkhand Music Competition from November 30 to December 8, 2024, showcasing the dedication and skill of 408 participants across various disciplines such as music, dance, instrumental performance, and singing. The nine-day event featured competitions in poetry recitation, RabindraSangeet, guitar, Kathak dance, Bharatanatyam, and Hindustani classical music. Talented participants from across Jharkhand, including Chaibasa, Jamtara, Dhanbad, and Ghatshila, competed, with age groups ranging from 5 to over 16



years. The competition provided a platform for aspiring artists to gain recognition and satisfaction through their performances. The event began with a welcome song by students from the Tagore School of

Arts, followed by a welcome speech by Dr. H.S. Paul, President of Tagore Society. During the prize distribution ceremony, Tagore Society General Secretary AshishChaudhary shared an overview of

the event. He explained that the annual competition, initiated in 2011, aims to offer artists from all districts of Jharkhand an opportunity to showcase their talent. He described the event as a gift from the Tagore Society to emerging artists, emphasizing the organization's mission to provide them with a rightful place in society and to ensure the continuous flow of art and culture. AyushMitra and Anidipa Manna, who won the Overall Championship title, were the highlights of the event. A special one-hour performance by the first-place winners captivated the audience with their exceptional talent. The prize distribution ceremony was skillfully hosted by SanhitaLahiri, leaving an indelible impression of the vibrant cultural spirit of Jharkhand. (w/pb)

Ekal Abhiyan organizes zonal sports meet for Ekal Vidyalaya children



Mail News Service

Seraikela, December 15: Ekal Abhiyan organized a zonal-level sports competition for children from Ekal Vidyalayas in remote rural areas. The event, held at the guest house ground in Seraikela, saw participation from around 300 children representing Kharsawan, Dugni, Manik Bazar, Rajnagar, Sini, Sidadih, Bansa, Kandra, and other areas of the district. Led by Zonal President Ganesh Gagrai, the event featured key attendees including Deepak Pradhan, Falguni Karmakar, Pankaj Gaur, Vishwajit Mahato, Gurucharan Mahato, Raghu Kalindi, Mukesh,

and Sonaj Das. Program coordinator Rani Bodra announced that winners from the competition would advance to the state-level meet scheduled for December 28 in Ranchi. Key Results were announced after the event. **400m Race (Boys):** 1st Mangal Haiburu, 2nd Narayan Mahato, 3rd Sachin Mahato. (Girls): 1st Champa Bari, 2nd Maya Mardi, 3rd Reena Mahatai. **200m Race (Boys):** 1st Debar Honhaga, 2nd Arjun Mahali, 3rd Surai Murmu. (Girls): 1st Phulmani Tudu, 2nd Bharti Gop, 3rd Rani Mahato. **100m Race: (Boys):** 1st Satish Mahato, 2nd Anshu Oraon, 3rd

Subhash Majhi. (Girls): 1st Chandana Mahato, 2nd Reema Tudu, 3rd Seema Sawaiya **High Jump (Boys):** 1st Subhash Mahato, 2nd Chinta Bodra. (Girls): 1st Amrit Murmu, 2nd Radhika Singh Munda. **Long Jump (Boys):** 1st Suraj Gagrai, 2nd Subhash Mahato. (Girls): 1st Mansika Oraon, 2nd Deepali Mahato **Kabaddi Winners (Boys):** Seraikela Group (Girls): Manik Bazar Group The event showcased the talent and enthusiasm of children from rural areas, with participants demonstrating their skills across various disciplines. (w/gsd)

Jail Adalat, legal awareness and medical camp held at Mandal Jail

Mail News Service

Seraikela, December 15: As per the directives of JHALSA Ranchi, the monthly Jail Adalat cum Legal Awareness Camp and Medical Camp for December were organized by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) at Mandal Jail Seraikela on Sunday. Out of several applications submitted by inmates, three were addressed during the Jail Adalat. The camp also featured medical checkups for prisoners, including tests for blood pressure, sugar, and haemoglobin, conducted by the Health Department's medical team. DLSA Secretary Tausif Meraj announced that medical camps would now accompany monthly Jail Adalats to enhance prisoners' welfare. Principal District and Sessions Judge Rama Shankar Singh, Chief Judicial Magistrate Kavitanjali Toppo, and other dignitaries, includ-



ing JMFC Anamika Kisku, Jailor Sonu Kumar, and legal aid representatives, attended the event. Judge Singh encouraged inmates to utilize free legal aid services offered by DLSA, particularly for women, Scheduled Tribe members, and those unable to afford legal counsel. He emphasized the importance of education and resilience, sharing inspirational stories to motivate inmates. The event also included a detailed inspection of various jail wards by

Judge Singh, who visited the women's ward, distributed ORS and Cerelec to mothers and children, and provided instructions for their well-being. The medical team, led by Dr. Abhimanyu and supported by ANMs and MPWs, played a key role in the camp. Jail Superintendent Satendra Mahato concluded the program with a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants and contributors. (w/gsd)

Victory procession for minister Deepak Biruwa in Hatgamharia



Chaibasa, December 15: A victory procession and gratitude march was organized in Hatgamharia on Sunday to celebrate the success of JMM MLA and Minister of Revenue, Registration and Land Reforms and Transport, Deepak Birua. Upon his arrival in Hatgamharia, the minister was warmly welcomed by workers, who garlanded him and presented bouquets. Enthusiastic JMM supporters raised slogans such as "Deepak Birua Zindabad" and "Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Zindabad" as the minister greeted them with folded hands. The procession, featuring hundreds of JMM and Congress workers, was a lively celebration, with participants dancing to Tasha and DJ music, bursting crackers, and applying abir-gulal on each other's faces while distributing sweets. Minister Deepak Birua expressed that the victory was a triumph for the common people, who had shown immense faith in JMM.

New government should complete pending plans for journalists: Raghubar



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: Odisha Governor Raghubar Das expressed his hope that the new state government would address the unmet needs of journalists and complete pending plans for their welfare. Speaking at the Kolhan Division Level Honor Ceremony-2024 organized by the Press Club of Jamshedpur, Governor Das emphasized the importance of supporting journalists, acknowledging the contributions of senior journalists, and honoring the families of deceased media professionals. The ceremony, held on Sunday at NH Hill Hotel, brought together journalists and

dignitaries from across the region. Governor Das, who served as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand, reminisced about his efforts to promote journalist welfare during his tenure. "I feel immense joy and pride in meeting and honoring today's young journalists. While I initiated several journalist-friendly initiatives, including housing schemes and health insurance, some plans remained incomplete due to the change in government. I hope the new government prioritizes these initiatives," he said. The Governor expressed sorrow for the loss of many senior journalists and highlighted the need to support their families. During his tenure, he had intro-

duced financial aid of five lakh rupees for deceased journalists' families and initiated health insurance schemes, which were left incomplete. Governor Das encouraged the current government to revive and expand these efforts. The event also featured speeches by notable journalists, including Ganesh Mehta, Editor of Hindustan, and U.N. Pathak, Editor of Dainik Jagran. They shared their perspectives on the evolving role of journalism and the challenges faced by media professionals. Journalists were awarded based on their work across various categories: Print Media (Hard Story): Rohit Singh secured the first prize, followed

Parvinder Bhatia bags first prize in report writing

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: Senior journalist Parvinder Bhatia of The Pioneer, won the first prize in the report writing contest (Print Media- features category) organized by the Press Club of Jamshedpur. Governor Das presented the award to Bhatia for his outstanding report on Ratan Tata, which showcased Tata's lesser-known contributions, including his architectural designs for two houses in Jamshedpur. Bhatia's achievement was celebrated as a testament to the



excellence and dedication of local journalists. (w/pb)

by Santosh Mishra and Uttam Mahato. Print Media (Feature Story): Parvinder Bhatia won the first prize, with Rishabh Srivastava and Raja Karmakar taking second and third places, respectively. Print Media Photography: Sudarshan Sharma took the top spot, followed by Md. Parvez and Anup Mishra. Electronic Media: Vijay Sahu won first place, with Prashant Singh Rajput and Prabhajan Kumar coming in second and third. Digital Media Portal: Akash Kumar claimed the first prize, while Charanjit Singh and Md. Shahzada secured second and third places. In addition, 26 senior journal-

ists, 17 families of deceased journalists, and 19 supporting institutions and individuals were honored for their contributions to the field of journalism. The event began with a presidential address by Sanjeev Bhardawaj, President of the Press Club of Jamshedpur. Kulwinder Singh conducted the program, ensuring its seamless flow, while Vikas Srivastava delivered the vote of thanks. Prominent attendees included Press Club Vice President Rakesh Singh, Sumit Jha, Joint Secretary Amit Tiwari, Uttam Gupta, Treasurer Manman Pandey, and other esteemed members. (w/pb)

Misleading promises

The recent fine of Rs 15 lakh imposed on Darya Prasthan cream for its misleading fairness claims highlights a growing issue in the beauty industry. A consumer had bought the cream in 2013, hoping for the promised skin lightening effects, but after regular use, his skin remained unchanged. Despite following the usage instructions, the product failed to deliver as expected. The company's defence was that the complainant couldn't prove he used the cream correctly, but this response raises critical concerns about the credibility of such products and their claims.

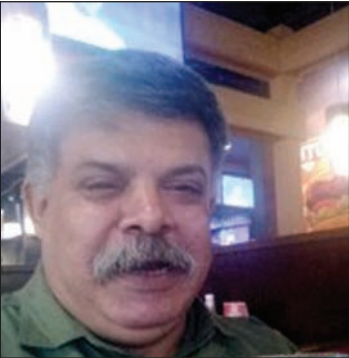
The consumer forum criticized the company's vague instructions and questioned their responsibility in providing complete and accurate guidance. The company acknowledged the incompleteness of their instructions and admitted that achieving the promised results would require more than just applying the cream-proper nutrition, exercise, and good habits are also necessary. This revelation sheds light on how misleading advertisements have been manipulating consumers, particularly in a market where fairness creams generate revenue in the billions.

In India, skin colour holds significant social importance, with fairness often equated to beauty and success. This societal obsession has fuelled the market for products claiming to improve complexion. However, these products not only perpetuate harmful stereotypes but also raise concerns about the long-term effects on health. Experts warn that overuse of these creams, which often contain harmful chemicals, could potentially lead to kidney-related diseases. Ignoring such serious health implications is irresponsible, especially when these products target vulnerable consumers.

Furthermore, these beauty products, by promising an idealized, fair complexion, contribute to the harmful notion of skin colour discrimination. Skin tone is influenced by natural factors like environment, lifestyle, and genetics, and yet, these companies exploit consumers by suggesting that lighter skin is superior. The government must intervene by implementing stricter regulations to control the sale of such products. It is essential to ban misleading advertisements and impose regulations on products that promote discrimination based on skin colour. In the end, beauty should be about health and confidence, not unattainable, harmful standards.

From the Editorial Desk

'Whither France?': The political and economic implications of the French govt's fall



Vikas Datta

France has been left without a government as in a first-of-its-kind move, the far-right and the left coalition joined hands to unseat Prime Minister Michel Barnier a day before his third month in power, propelling the country into a new phase of uncertainty with major and far-ranging implications for its politics and the economy.

As the National Assembly late on Wednesday passed the no-confidence motion against the government with 331 votes in the 577-member house with the leftist conglomeration New Popular Front joined by Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally, the consequences span far beyond the hapless Prime Minister's political future.

The 73-year-old Barnier, who took over on September 5, will go down in history books twice.

He is now the shortest-lived Prime Minister of the Fifth Republic (post-1958), with his 90-day-odd stint beating Premier Bernard Cazeneuve's 160 days in 2016-17, and being just over a third of his predecessor Gabriel Attal's 240 days. He is also the second Prime Minister to be unseated by a no-confidence vote - over half a century after Georges Pompidou in 1962.

The fall of Barnier's centre-right government has left the Budget for the next year in limbo, but also raises questions over future governance, given the deadlock in the National



Assembly, divided into three mutually antagonistic blocs spanning the political spectrum, but each far from a majority on their own.

Yet, the real victim is not Barnier, whose impassioned speech in the house failed to budge the National Rally nor did his concessions to their demands on the budget proposals, but President Emmanuel Macron, who has earned the undying enmity of both the right and the left with his series of reckless - in hindsight, mostly - political moves this year.

Following the vote, Marine Le Pen told media that their decision to oppose the government - after staying out of the Left's first no-confidence motion against Barnier in September - was carefully considered and meant "to protect the French people". The reference was to the proposed budget, with its spending cuts and tax rises, as the deficit rises.

Jean-Luc Melenchon, the leader of NPF's largest party France Unbowed, said that the outcome was "inevitable" and called for

Macron's resignation.

However, Macron, who is midway through his second and final term, has time and again announced he will not quit.

The options before the President are now to appoint a new Prime Minister and reports indicate that Macron, who returned from a visit to Saudi Arabia, has initiated the process. He could install a non-political government of technocrats, as has been the norm in neighbouring Italy, beset by chaotic politics and fractured mandates, but this lacks political legitimacy and will find it difficult to operate in the current polarised milieu.

Fresh parliamentary elections could be a way out, but this option is foreclosed by the constitution till the next July.

Yet, more than the politics, it is the economic situation that should concern the political stakeholders and the people, as the growing budget deficit, currently above 6 per cent of the GDP, is swelling the public debt (beyond 3.2 trillion euros), and making it costlier and costlier to finance.

This, eventually, impacts the government's capacity to act, amid the less-than-optimum climate in Europe, and the spending cuts and raised taxes goes on to fuel the rise of populist forces.

France has already experienced this with the growth of both the far-right and the hard left at the experience of the centrist parties.

The political imbroglio in France gains more significance as it is echoed in neighbouring Germany, where Chancellor Olaf Scholz's "traffic light" coalition has broken down after the expulsion of the Free Democratic Party, leaving his government in a minority.

Elections are due early next year - at least half a year before schedule, and while the right-wing Christian Democratic Union is expected to beat Scholz's Social Democratic Party, the rise of the right-wing Alternative for Germany and the left-wing but socially traditional Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance is fragmenting the political space - again at the expense of the centrists.

What would be more worrisome is that these extreme - by virtue of their position on the political spectrum - and populist parties have a disdain for the European Union, and its policies, especially on immigration. There are not also big fans of the EU views on Ukraine and sanctions against Russia - which are hitting Germany and other European countries more than the government of President Vladimir Putin.

With the political deadlock in both France and Germany - the EU and Europe's biggest powers and economies amid wide-ranging global changes - the thumping victory and the coming presidency of Donald Trump, 2025 seemed destined to be quite eventful.

(Vikas Datta can be contacted at vikas.d@ians.in)

Congress under fire as allies push for new leadership in INDIA bloc



Deepika Bhan

The question -- is it the right time for the opposition-minus Congress to assert its identity today -- no longer seems overstated. The chum has begun and loud voices are seeking a change in the INDIA bloc's leadership.

Mamata Banerjee and Akhilesh Yadav - the bloc's two major performers - have started targeting Congress at its most vulnerable points. Their party leaders are directly and indirectly pointing fingers at the grand old party and its leader Rahul Gandhi.

Their contentions are not unfounded. The Congress has lost its sheen over the past few decades and has witnessed more downslides even as the Gandhi family's electoral fortunes have excelled. It has failed to build on issues and corner the Modi-led government and is rather obsessed with businessmen and the Prime Minister.

Despite having Mallikarjun Kharge as its president, the Congress is largely perceived as a Gandhi family-dominated party. The family has done itself well with Rahul Gandhi winning two Lok Sabha seats - Wayanad and Rae Bareli; Priyanka Gandhi Vadra registering a huge victory in Wayanad after her brother chose to retain Rae Bareli; mother Sonia Gandhi successfully shifted to the Rajya Sabha later giving up Rae Bareli Lok Sabha for her son. Family loyalist Kishori Lal Sharma wrested the Amethi Lok Sabha seat from Smriti Irani. The family has secured its fortunes but the party has floundered. Except for Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh, the Congress has performed badly in the rest of the states.

The party's better performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is being credited to the regional allies. For instance, in the Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, it was chiefly Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party (SP) that did the best in the INDIA bloc and helped the Congress to gain also. The Samajwadi Party raised its tally to 37 seats from five and its vote share jumped from 18.11 per cent to 33.59 per cent. Congress increased



its vote share by over three per cent to 9.46 per cent with six seats against one earlier.

While SP helped Congress in Uttar Pradesh, in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections the grand old party refused to accommodate Akhilesh Yadav's party.

In the recently held bypolls also, Congress fared poorly in comparison to its INDIA bloc allies. The Trinamool Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party did much better. The only consolation for the Congress party was winning all three seats in Karnataka and retaining one in Madhya Pradesh. However, its performance in Rajasthan, Assam, Punjab and Gujarat was poor.

In the Jharkhand Assembly polls, which the INDIA bloc has been celebrating, the truth is that the Hemant Soren-led JMM's strong performance secured the victory. It certainly was not Congress' win. In the South, the DMK has been going strong and has elbowed out all, including Congress though it is an INDIA bloc ally. The only place where the grand old party has been able to maintain its lead is Karnataka.

The Opposition minus Congress has started expressing itself openly. Raising the bugle this time is none other than Mamata Banerjee.

In Bengal, she has maintained her supremacy in the Lok Sabha elections and the Assembly polls and the various bypolls. She remains unvanquished. She has stopped the BJP from growing in the state and has pinned the rest, including the Left and the Congress.

The Trinamool's dominance in West Bengal has bolstered its position within the INDIA bloc, especially after the recent bypoll victories in the state. The back-to-back wins have reinforced Mamata

Banerjee's stature as a formidable anti-BJP force in the opposition bloc.

Her party leaders have been calling on the Congress and other INDIA bloc allies to set aside their egos and recognise Mamata Banerjee as the leader of the alliance. They have also said that the Congress should take the backseat.

The Maharashtra Assembly election results seem to be the last straw for the Opposition minus Congress. Days after a few of her party, Trinamool Congress MPs, said that she should be in the INDIA bloc's driver's seat, Mamata Banerjee expressed her wish. She said that she was ready to take up the leadership of the INDIA bloc.

Quickly lending her support was the Samajwadi Party, which urged the INDIA bloc to discuss Mamata Banerjee's suggestion and extended "100 per cent support and cooperation" to her. The party also wants Congress to take responsibility for the losses, be it in Haryana or Maharashtra where it was the main party. The CPI has also been equally scathing of the Congress for not accommodating its allies, especially in the Haryana and Maharashtra polls.

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) MP Supriya Sule has also positively reacted to Mamata Banerjee's statement. Sule has said that they will be happy if the Trinamool Congress chief takes on more responsibility within the alliance.

The Congress, which is still reeling from the Maharashtra loss, may find it difficult to resist INDIA allies' contentions this time. The party may or may not go for introspection but the Opposition minus Congress needs to find its footing and this is the right time.

(Deepika Bhan can be contacted at deepika.b@ians.in)

Women hail PM Modi's 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' as step towards empowerment

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' in Panipat, Haryana, numerous women expressed their gratitude towards him, praising the initiative as a significant move toward empowering women and improving their economic prospects.

Talking to IANS, Jyoti expressed gratitude and said, "When PM Modi came to Panipat on Monday, I was present to witness the launch of this scheme. I believe it will benefit women greatly and provide us with the opportunity to work and earn. It will certainly empower us and give us wings to succeed."

Another woman, excited about the scheme, remarked, "I came here to register for the Bima Sakhi Yojana. I was present when PM Modi launched it, and I hope many more women will come forward to join. This initiative will empower women."

Another woman said, "Every scheme launched by PM Modi has been beneficial for the development of our country. Since the BJP government came to



power in 2014, India has been progressing steadily. I have come here to apply for the Bima Sakhi Yojana, which will not only help me generate Rs. 7,000 per month but also provide additional commissions. I urge all women to enroll and take advantage of this opportunity."

LIC Development Officer Krishna Beniwal also confirmed the growing interest in the scheme, stating, "Many women are coming every

day for registration, and we are providing information about the Bima Sakhi Yojana. As of now, more than 150 women have registered for it. We are also working to make Panipat a hub for the LIC examinations."

The Bima Sakhi Yojana aims to provide economic empowerment and self-reliance for women by offering both job opportunities and financial independence. The scheme, launched by the government, encourages women to actively participate in the insurance sector, which has traditionally been male-dominated.

The initiative targets women between the ages of 18 and 70 who have completed at least 10th grade. Participants will receive specialised training and a stipend for the first three years to boost financial literacy and insurance awareness.

With an initial budget of Rs 100 crore, the scheme is designed to provide employment opportunities for women in both rural and urban areas, thereby promoting their active participation in the growing insurance sector.

Most Italians deem adaptation to climate change priority

The majority of Italians deemed adapting to climate change a priority, both in terms of lifestyle and investment policy, according to an annual survey released by the European Investment Bank (EIB) recently.

Over two-thirds of Italians or 67 per cent, considered climate adaptation a priority, a report conducted by the EIB showed on Monday. The result was 17 percentage points higher than the EU's average of 50 per cent.

The report was released on the sidelines of the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), or COP29, which kicked off in Azerbaijan's capital city of Baku on Monday.

With their territory stretching into the Mediterranean Sea, the Italians have increasingly become familiar with exceptional



rainfalls and flooding, as well as with prolonged lack of rains, drought, and heat waves during summers, reports Xinhua news agency.

Some 89 per cent of Italian respondents have experienced at least one of these extreme weather events in the last five years, nine percentage points higher than the EU's average, the EIB survey also showed.

On what should be done to better adapt to climate change, some 51 per cent of Italians said the population should be educated to help them change their behaviours, and 47 per cent

of them said that the infrastructure should be prioritised and improved.

About 59 per cent of Italians surveyed also acknowledged their country should do more to help developing countries adapt to the increasing impact of climate change.

Semiconductor plants to reduce dependency on imports, create jobs for youth in India: C.R. Patil

Surat, Dec 15 (IANS) While Surat has long been known for its textile, diamond and solar panel industry, the city will now be also known for the semiconductor industry, Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil said on Sunday. He said this while inaugurating the Suchi Semicon, a Gujarat-based semiconductor company's first Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Testing (OSAT) plant in Surat. "India is on a transformative path towards becoming a global technology hub, and initiatives like the Suchi Semicon OSAT plant are key to realising



this vision," Patil told IANS. "With the government's

focus on increasing semiconductor manufacturing within

India, such plants will play a crucial role in reducing dependency on imports,

creating jobs, and strengthening our domestic industry. "I congratulate the Suchi Semicon team for their vision and efforts in making this dream a reality, contributing to both Gujarat's and India's growth as leaders in technology and innovation," said the Union Minister. The launch of the OSAT plant is a significant step towards enhancing India's semiconductor manufacturing capabilities. The plant, with an initial area of 30,000-square-foot facility, will provide essential assembly, testing, and packaging

services for semiconductor components, supporting industries such as automotive, consumer electronics, and industrial applications. Ashok Mehta, Chairman of Suchi Semicon told IANS: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision is that the country should become self-reliant in every sector. Keeping this vision in mind, I have taken this step and today we have reached the production level. This plan will create many direct and indirect jobs." He further said that at present we are importing raw materials from Japan,

but in future, we are planning to manufacture them in India too. "Starting with 300,000 pieces a day. Our goal is not just to manufacture chips but also to drive innovation in the Indian semiconductor ecosystem. This facility will help us reduce supply chain delays, lower logistical costs, and support the development of a self-sustaining semiconductor industry in India," Mehta added. Suchi Semicon showcased its semiconductor chip, labelled "Made in India," highlighting its contribution to India's self-reliance in

semiconductor manufacturing. With a \$100 million investment, the plant, once at full capacity, will produce up to 3 million semiconductor chips daily. According to the Suchi Semicon, "The company is also in advanced discussions to onboard a strategic technology partner to further enhance its capabilities and drive innovation. Engineered for rapid scaling, this facility is poised to meet the growing demand for semiconductors in both domestic and global markets, positioning India as a key player in the global semiconductor ecosystem."

US accounts for 18 per cent of Indian exports in FY24



New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) The US accounted for 18 per cent of India's total exports in the financial year (FY) 24, as the country's exports to the world's largest economy continuously increased, a report said. Bank of Baroda's report said that India's exports to the US are growing steadily. Its value was \$77.5 billion in FY24. India's exports to the US have been growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.3 per cent over the last 30 years.

According to the report, the growth rate of exports to the US was higher than the growth rate of total exports till FY2000, but after the financial crisis of 2008, it slowed down till FY10. Since then, the growth rate of exports to the US has been higher than the growth rate of total exports, showing that the US is an important market for India.

According to the report, the US share in India's total exports was 18 per cent in FY24 and 16.4 per cent in FY92. However, it is still below the highest level of 22.8 per cent in FY00.

The report also advised that India should reduce over-dependence on one country for exports and focus on diversification of exports.

The US remains an important market for many key Indian industries. The top five items exported to the US in FY24 were drugs and pharmaceuticals, pearls and precious stones, petrochemical products, telecom equipment and readymade garments, which accounted for 40 per cent of the country's total exports.

Other major exports include yarn, marine products and electronic goods, with electronic goods exports facing competition from other Asian countries.

From 2000 to 2022, India's goods export increased from \$48.5 billion to \$467.5 billion while industrial exports grew from \$39.6 billion to \$317.4 billion. The government aims to reach \$2 trillion in exports of goods and services by 2030.

South Korea to invest \$1.9 billion in developing tech to tackle climate change



Seoul, Dec 15 (IANS) The South Korean government will invest 2.7 trillion won (\$1.9 billion) in developing technologies aimed at tackling climate change next year, the science ministry said on Sunday.

The figure marks a 3.9 per cent increase from the 2.6 trillion-won investment into the scheme in 2024, according to the Ministry of Science and ICT.

The investment comes as part of the government's 10-year plan to advance science technologies by 2032 to respond to global warming, reports Yonhap news agency.

South Korea has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent from the 2018 levels by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Next year's budget will be used for developing core technologies for renewable energy, such as next-generation solar battery and massive floating wind power systems, and advancing carbon neutrality technologies, including the next-generation nuclear power system and hydrogen power.

The government will also work to analyse the vulnerability of the forest and marine areas and the broader ecosystem to climate change and devise measures for stable production of food.

Meanwhile, the science ministry said it has completed devising a comprehensive road map on achieving carbon neutrality in various industries.

The presidential special committee on carbon neutrality technologies has drawn up strategies to achieve net zero carbon emissions in six fields, including wind power, energy storage and environment, according to the Ministry of Science and ICT.

With the new guidelines for the six sectors, South Korea has completed devising a comprehensive plan to develop carbon reduction technologies across 17 areas, ranging from steelmaking and chemical industries to car manufacturing and nuclear power industries.

PSBs in India clock record Rs 141 lakh crore in net profit in FY24

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Public Sector Banks (PSBs) in India registered their highest-ever aggregate net profit of Rs 1.41 lakh crore in the financial year 2023-24, the Ministry of Finance said on Sunday.

The gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio steeply declined, dropping to 3.12 per cent in September 2024. Demonstrating continued momentum, they registered a net profit of Rs 85,5206,000 crore in the first half of 2024-25.

In addition to their stellar performance, PSBs have contributed significantly to shareholder returns, paying a total dividend of Rs 61,964 crore over the past three years. This remarkable financial growth



underscores the sector's operational efficiency, improved asset quality, and stronger capital base.

Beyond their financial achievements, these banks have

played a key role in promoting financial inclusion.

They have implemented crucial government schemes like the Atal Pension Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti

Bima Yojana, to name a few.

A turning point came in 2015 when the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) initiated the Asset Quality Review (AQR). This exercise aimed to identify and address hidden stress in banks by mandating the transparent recognition of NPAs.

It also reclassified previously restructured loans as NPAs, resulting in a sharp increase in reported NPAs. The heightened provisioning requirements during this period impacted the financial parameters of banks, restricting their ability to lend and support productive sectors of the economy, said the ministry.

Another indicator of the improved resilience of PSBs is

their Capital to Risk (Weighted) Assets Ratio (CRAR), which rose by 3,983 basis points to 15.43 per cent in September 2024, up from 11.45 per cent in March 2015.

Notably, this CRAR far exceeds the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) minimum requirement of 11.5 per cent, underscoring the strengthened financial health of these institutions.

Public Sector Banks in India have made remarkable strides in recent years, achieving unprecedented financial milestones and contributing significantly to the nation's economic stability and growth.

Market Outlook: US Fed policy, FII data and global cues key triggers for next week

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS) A blend of global and domestic factors will influence the stock market outlook for next week. On the global front, particularly the performance of US markets and the Fed's monetary policy decisions will play a significant role; and domestic economic indicators like GDP growth, FIIs and inflation will shape market sentiment.

Last week, Indian stock markets ended on a positive note, with the Sensex and Nifty gaining nearly 3 per cent from their recent lows. A broad-based buying spree lifted more than 40 Nifty stocks. This strong performance was driven by a combination of factors, improving global and domestic sentiments.



On Friday (the last trading session), the stock market saw a smart turnaround after initially experiencing a big fall. Telecom, tech, consumer durables, and IT stocks saw a strong rally. On a weekly basis, the Nifty rose 0.37 per cent to 24,768 and the Sensex rose 0.52 per cent to 82,133. This was the fourth consecutive week when the

Indian stock market closed with gains.

Between December 9 to December 13, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) net sold Rs 226 crore in the cash market, whereas Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) supported the market with a net investment of Rs 2,880 crore.

Puneet Singhanian,

Director at Master Trust Group said, "Nifty 50 has claimed a bullish stance after breaking the horizontal resistance of 24,700 with closing above it for the first time. The strong support is at 24,100 and 24,300, making it a key level for traders. Buying is favourable at around 24,300-24,400 with a stop loss at 24,100."

"On the upside, the index may aim to reclaim the psychological 25,000 level. However, if it breaches 24,100, further downside toward 23,900 is possible. The current trend indicates optimism, with opportunities for buying on dips and clear risk levels for managing trades effectively," he added.

Indian SCBs clock highest-ever net profit at Rs 23.50 lakh cr in FY24

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) The gross non-performing asset (NPA) ratio for scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) have improved significantly with a reduction to 2.67 per cent in June 2024 from 11.18 per cent in March 2018, according to the government.

Moreover, SCBs recorded highest-ever aggregate net profit of Rs

23.50 lakh crore in FY2023-24, against net profit of Rs 22.63 lakh crore in FY2022-23.

The asset quality of SCBs has improved significantly with gross NPA ratio of SCBs declining to 2.67 per cent (Rs 4.75 lakh crore) in June-2024 from a peak of 11.18 per cent (Rs 10.36 lakh crore) in March-2018, informed the Ministry of Finance.



"Provision coverage ratio (PCR) increasing from 49.31 per cent in March-2015 to a healthy

92.52 per cent in June-24 shows increased resilience," the ministry added.

PM Surya Ghar scheme set to surpass a decade's installation growth in a year

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) In a significant feat for the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, the scheme has achieved more than 6.85 lakh installations to date, and is set to surpass a decade's solar growth in about a year.

Since its launch in February this year, the scheme with 685,763 installations has already reached 86 per cent of what was installed in a decade before that.

The key demand came from the 3-5 kW load segment at 77 per cent installations, while 14 per cent was in the segment higher than 5kW. Gujarat showed the highest installations followed by Maharashtra, Uttar



Pradesh and Kerala.

Gujarat witnessed the maximum number of solar installations under the initiative at 2,86,545. Maharashtra stands next

with 1,26,344 installations, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 53,423 installations.

Around 1.45 crore registrations have been

done so far under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, according to a statement in Parliament. The scheme aims to supply solar power to one

crore households by March 2027.

It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the aim of achieving 1 crore rooftop solar installations in the residential sector by fiscal year 2027 with an allocated budget of Rs 75,021 crore.

As of now, the states with an increasing number of installations include Tripura, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.

In order to popularise the PM solar scheme at the grassroots, Urban Local Bodies and Panchayats have been incentivised to promote rooftop solar systems in their jurisdictions. At the same time, the scheme is

leading to more income, lower power bills and employment generation for people.

With a goal to benefit one crore households, the programme is also expected to save the government Rs 75,000 crore annually in electricity costs.

The scheme offers a subsidy of up to 40 per cent to households, making renewable energy more affordable and accessible.

The government is also partnering with all stakeholders including REC, DISCOMs, and vendors, among others, with an aim to resolve any challenge on the way to a successful implementation of the scheme.

AI-powered voice analysis may revolutionise early diagnosis of Parkinson's disease

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based algorithms that can detect subtle changes in a person's voice and detect Parkinson's disease may be emerging as a potential new diagnostic tool for the neurodegenerative disorder, according to a study.

The disease currently affects more than 8.5 million people. The incidence of Parkinson's has doubled in the past 25 years and now contributes to at least 330,000 deaths each year worldwide.

However, traditional diagnostic methods are often complex and slow,

delaying early detection, according to researchers from Iraq and Australia who reviewed the advancements in AI techniques to detect Parkinson's disease.

The paper, presented to the Fifth Scientific Conference for Electrical Engineering Techniques Research in Baghdad, showed that all the evidence shows that AI-powered voice analysis could revolutionise early Parkinson's diagnosis and remote monitoring of the neurodegenerative disorder.

Speech impairments are often the first indicators of the fastest-growing



neurological disease in the world. "Vocal changes are early indicators of Parkinson's disease, including small variations in pitch, articulation, and rhythm, due to dimin-

ished control over vocal muscles," Ali Al-Naji, a medical instrumentation engineer from Middle Technical University (MTU) in Baghdad.

"By analysing these acoustic features, AI models can detect subtle, disease-related vocal patterns long before visible symptoms appear," Al-Naji said.

Simple voice recordings from Parkinson's patients and healthy controls are used to train the AI tools primarily using machine learning and deep learning algorithms.

Relevant features, such as pitch, speech distortions, and changes in vowels are extracted by these algorithms and then categorised in the voice recordings with remarkable accuracy -- as high as 99 per cent in one research study.

Researchers noted that while Parkinson's has no cure, early diagnosis, and intervention can improve quality of life and slow the progression of symptoms.

Besides early detection, "AI may also help monitor patients from a distance, reducing the need for in-person visits," Al-Naji said, while acknowledging the need for further studies on larger, more diverse populations.

UNICEF to support Kerala's children with special needs

Thiruvananthapuram , Dec 15 (IANS) The UNICEF is giving a big boost to the Little KITES project, implemented by Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE) in public schools in Kerala to use programmes that utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist Children With Special Needs (CWSN).

For this, as the first step, 260 camps spread over two days will be held across the state to develop animation programmes that use AI to raise awareness about environmental conservation.

The camps begin on Saturday.

The highlight of the programme is the development of AI-powered programmes that enable children with speech and hearing difficulties to communicate using sign language.



These modules will not only facilitate the learning of sign language but also encourage interaction with such children.

Video classes for this purpose will also be introduced in the camps. Children will also create animation films based on the concept of a devastated area being restored to greenery through the efforts of two birds.

K. Anvar Sadath, CEO,

KITE said that 15,668 students selected from school-level camps will participate in the sub-district camps among the 2.08 lakh members of 2219 Little Kites units this year.

"1200 trainers have been equipped for this purpose. The camps have been scheduled in various batches starting today without affecting school days," said Sadath.

Standing at work can actually be detrimental to BP

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Prolonged standing at work had a negative impact on blood pressure and in contrast, spending more time sitting at work was associated with better BP, a new study has revealed.

The Finnish study from University of Turku, published in the journal Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, suggests that activity behaviour during working hours may be more relevant to 24-hour blood pressure than recreational physical activity.

"Rather than any single measurement, 24-hour blood pressure is a better indication of how blood pressure stresses the heart and blood vessels throughout the day and night," says doctoral researcher Joa Norha.

If blood pressure is slightly high throughout the day and does not fall sufficiently even at night, blood vessels start to stiffen and the heart has to work harder to cope with the increased pressure.

"Over the years, this can lead to the development of cardiovascular disease," Norha added.

In the Finnish Retirement and Aging study (FIREA) conducted at the University of Turku, the physi-



cal activity of municipal employees approaching retirement age was measured using thigh-worn accelerometers during working hours, leisure time, and days off.

In addition, the research participants used a portable blood pressure monitor that automatically measured their blood pressure every 30 minutes for 24 hours.

The results confirm previous findings that physical activity at

work can be harmful to the heart and circulatory system.

In particular, prolonged standing can raise blood pressure as the body boosts circulation to the lower limbs by constricting blood vessels and increasing the pumping power of the heart.

"A standing desk can provide a nice change from sitting at the office, but too much standing can be harmful. It's a good idea to take

a break from standing during the work day, either by walking every half an hour or sitting for some parts of the day," Norha said.

In addition, the results of the study suggest that sedentary work in itself is not necessarily harmful to blood pressure. Instead, researchers stress the importance of recreational physical activity for both office and construction workers.

Bengaluru auto driver turns vehicle into a 'Mini Library', offers free books to passengers



New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Autorickshaws are ubiquitous in Indian cities and quite popular for cheap short-distance travel. To attract passengers, auto drivers often decorate their three-wheelers with vibrant colours, witty slogans, or quirky posters. One such auto driver in Bengaluru is garnering praise online after he transformed his vehicle into a "mini library" to provide passengers with a unique experience. The autorickshaw features a small collection of books bearing thought-provoking titles such as "Why Divorce?" and "God Loves You." Passengers are warmly invited to peruse the philosophical and spiritual offerings, with a note that reads, "Free for all, take if you wish."

A photo of this one-of-a-kind "mini-library on wheels" was shared by Ravilla Lokesh on his LinkedIn account, after a friend brought it to his attention.

"Bangalore Style! Only in Bengaluru can you find life advice and philosophical wisdom handed out for free... in an autorickshaw! While stuck in traffic, my friend stumbled upon this mini-library on wheels. From "Why Divorce?" to "God Loves You," this auto driver is doubling as a life coach, counsellor, and spiritual guide, all while navigating Bengaluru's chaotic roads," Mr Lokesh wrote while sharing the pic.

This innovation has gained widespread appreciation for blending public service with creativity, highlighting how small efforts can make a big difference in everyday life. Some also called it the 'Peak Bengaluru' moment. One user wrote, "Bangalore's vibes are wild. Is an auto driver giving life lessons? Classic. I'd say that's pure Bengaluru spirit right there. What about those random chai stalls serving wisdom too, huh?"

Recently, another Bengaluru auto driver's innovative approach to seeking funds for his start-up turned him into a viral sensation. Samuel Christy, who is a graduate and works as an auto driver, put up a poster on the back of his seat is a poster, inviting passengers to discuss with him his business idea. I read, "Hi passenger, my name is Samuel Christy. I'm a graduate looking to raise funds for my startup business idea. If you are interested, please talk to me".

Indian researchers find new method to detect Monkeypox virus

New Delhi, (IANS) Researchers from JNCASR, an autonomous institution of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), have identified a new method to understand the virology of monkeypox virus (MPV).

The new findings can help develop diagnostic tools for the deadly infection, declared a global health emergency twice by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the last three years. The 2024 global outbreak saw the disease spread to about 15 countries in Africa, and three out of Africa.

The outbreak has raised serious concern about its unanticipated spread across the globe, as the modes of transmission and symptoms are not well understood. A comprehensive understanding of virology, alongside the rapid development of effective diagnostic and therapeutic strategies, is of



paramount importance.

"MPV is a double-stranded DNA (dsDNA) virus. The detection of the extracellular viral protein gene through polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is a widely established technique for identifying MPV in clinical specimens," said the researchers.

Currently, the disease is detected via PCR, relying on the amplification of double-stranded DNA (dsDNA), which also employs fluorescent probes for quantifying

amplification.

The team identified and characterised highly conserved GQ -- a four-stranded unusual and characteristic DNA structure within the MPV genome. They specifically detected a specific GQ sequence using a tailored fluorescent small-molecule probe, enabling precise detection of MPV.

"These GQ sequences are stable under physiological conditions, highly conserved, and are not present in other pox viruses, other pathogens, and the human genome. These characteristics make the GQ sequences valuable targets for the development of diagnostic tools and therapeutic intervention," explained the team.

Their fluorogenic molecular probe (BBJL) delivered "more than 250-fold enhancement in fluorescence output upon binding with MPV GQs (MP2). The ability of BBJL to selectively detect this highly conserved sequence in the MPV genome sets a precedent for the development of detection techniques targeting noncanonical nucleic acids".

Additional mapping of the MPV genome is being performed to identify potential GQ targets for future therapeutics. Consequently, this study augments the development of potential detection platforms based on GQ, and the GQs identified can be further investigated for their anti-viral properties.

New Zealand study highlights online harm for eight-year-olds

Wellington, (IANS) More than a quarter of New Zealand kids at eight have experienced at least one type of online content that worried or upset them, like bullying, peer pressure, or adult content, showed a study published on Tuesday.

The survey of almost 5,000 New Zealand eight-year-olds produced the self-reported data from children, alongside their parents' assessments of their emotions, behavior, and access to digital devices and media.

Children with behavioral difficulties or more personal devices were at higher risk of online harm and experiencing online harm was linked with depressive symptoms and lower self-worth, according to the researchers from the University of Canterbury.

As young children are spending an increasing amount of their time online, there is a risk that

children come across content or experiences that are upsetting or distressing, including inappropriate or adult content, cyberbullying, and interactions with strangers, said Megan Gath, senior lecturer at the Child Well Being Institute, University of Canterbury.

Gaming devices had the greatest impact on increasing the risk of online harm, followed by computers or laptops, and TVs. Children who own personal devices may be at greater risk of online harm if they are using these away from adult supervision, said Gath, also an author of the study, Xinhua news agency reported.

The study recommended that parents limit access to personal devices and use collaborative, rather than controlling, strategies to manage children's digital media use.

Global study links 1.5 million deaths every year to air pollution from wildfires

Sydney, Dec 15 (IANS) An Australian-led international research has found that over 1.5 million deaths globally every year were linked to the health impacts of air pollution caused by landscape fires.

According to the research published on Thursday by Monash University in Melbourne, 1.53 million deaths per year between 2000 and 2019 were attributable to wildfire-sourced air pollution, Xinhua news agency reported.

The study found that over 90 per cent of all deaths attributable to landscape fire-sourced air pollution occurred in low and middle-income countries -- particularly



in sub-Saharan Africa, southeast, south and east Asia.

It was a comprehensive assessment of the

health risks associated with air pollution from landscape fires, involving researchers from universities around the

world.

Of the 1.53 million annual deaths globally, 450,000 were attributed to cardiovascular disease

and 220,000 to respiratory disease.

Fine particulate matter from wildfires fires contributed to 77.6 per cent

of deaths and surface ozone to 22.4 per cent.

"As wildfires are increasingly frequent and severe in a warming climate, urgent action is required to address such substantial impact on climate-related mortality and associated environmental injustice," the authors wrote in the study.

The countries with the highest attributable mortality rates to landscape fires were all in sub-Saharan Africa.

The authors advocate for high-income countries to provide financial and technological support to help vulnerable developing countries manage the health impacts of wildfire-sourced air pollution and address the socioeconomic disparities in mortality rates.

Donald Trump picks Truth Social CEO Devin Nunes as intelligence board head

Washington DC: US President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday named loyalist Devin Nunes, who heads his social media platform Truth Social, to serve as chairman of a White House intelligence advisory board.

Mr Nunes is a Republican ex-congressman from California who led the US House intelligence committee during the start of Mr Trump's first presidential term.

He has accused the Federal Bureau of Investigation of abusing its powers to spy on a Mr Trump election campaign official who had extensive Russian contacts. Mr Trump said in his post that Nunes will remain the chief executive of Truth Social while leading the advisory panel. In 2018 while chair of the intelli-



gence committee, Mr Nunes released a controversial memo saying the FBI conspired against Mr Trump when it was probing Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election.

"Devin will draw on his experience as former Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee,

and his key role in exposing the Russia, Russia, Russia Hoax, to provide me with independent assessments of the effectiveness and propriety of the U.S. Intelligence Community's activities," Mr Trump said in a statement. The President's Intelligence Advisory Board

Trump to set \$15 million as ABC News agrees to settle defamation

Washington: ABC News will pay a \$15 million settlement payment to resolve a defamation lawsuit brought by President-elect Donald Trump, according to court documents filed Saturday. The lawsuit stemmed from on-air comments made by top anchor George Stephanopoulos, who said Trump was found "liable for rape" during an interview with US Representative Nancy Mace that aired in March.

The terms of the settlement require ABC News to make a \$15 million donation to a fund dedicated to "a presidential foundation and museum" for Trump.

The news organization and Stephanopoulos will also issue public apologies saying they "regret statements" made about Trump during the aforementioned interview, and the broadcaster will pay an addition \$1 million in attorney fees.

(PIAB), created in the mid-20th century, exists to provide an independent source of advice on the effectiveness of the intelligence community's data and its data acquisition. Mr Trump described the board as consisting of "distinguished citizens from

outside of the Federal Government." Later on Saturday, Mr Trump appointed another outspoken loyalist, Richard Grenell, to serve as a presidential envoy for special missions. "Ric will work in some of the hottest spots around.

35 miners trapped under rubble in Afghanistan



Aybak, Dec 15 (IANS) About 35 miners were trapped under the rubble of a coal mine in Afghanistan's Samangan province, local officials said on Sunday.

The provincial health director SayedUsmanHamidi counted 35 miners under the debris, saying rescue teams and health personnel have been dispatched to the area to rescue the trapped miners, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Preliminary reports indicate that several miners were busy in a coal mine in Dara-i-Sufi Payin district of Samangan province yesterday, but part of the mine caved in, and resultantly several miners were trapped under rubble," a statement from the provincial police office released on Sunday said.

The statement further said that police personnel, local officials, and villagers have rushed to the site to rescue trapped miners from under the debris.

39 civilians killed in twin attacks in Niger

Niamey, Dec 15 (IANS)

Thirty-nine people were killed this week in two separate attacks in Niger's western Tillabery region, the Niger Armed Forces (FAN) announced on Saturday.

The incidents claimed the lives of 18 people in Kokorou and 21 in Libiri, Xinhua news agency reported. "Two terrible tragedies occurred in the localities of Libiri and Kokorou: criminals, comered by the incessant operations of the defense and security forces, cowardly attacked defenseless civilians," the FAN reported in its Saturday evening news bulletin.

"Among the victims are many women and children," the army said, adding that "in the face of these barbaric acts, the authorities expressed their deep indignation and solidarity with the bereaved families. They reaffirmed their commitment to take all necessary measures to find and neutralize the perpetrators."

Libiri and Kokorou are situated in the "three borders" region, where Niger shares boundaries with Mali and Burkina Faso. This area has become a hotbed of insecurity in recent years, plagued by attacks from various jihadist groups.



As calls mount for action against mysterious drones, Pentagon says it is 'frustrated'

New York, Dec 15 (IANS)

Amid mounting fears over mysterious drones, the Pentagon has said that it is "frustrated" by their flights over military facilities, and state officials and legislators have called on President Joe Biden's administration to act.

A spokesperson for the Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed on Saturday night reports that drones have been sighted over two military installations in New Jersey, but said, "We don't know what the activity is.

We don't know ... if it is criminal. But I will tell you that it is irresponsible. Here on the military side, we are just as frustrated with the irresponsible nature of this activity."

The drones which have been plaguing parts of the northeast for over a month have shown the vulnerabilities of the US - and other countries - to the UAS, which can not only spy but can be used by terrorists.

A government with extensive spying capabilities that claims to



know about communications by officials and business people in distant places apparently cannot crack the mystery of the drones in an area 325 kilometres from its capital.

President-Elect Donald Trump posted on Truth Social, "Mystery Drone sightings all over the Country. Can this really be happening without our government's knowledge. I don't think so! Let the public know, and now. Otherwise, shoot them down!!!!"

Phil Murphy, the Democrat New Jersey Governor, wrote to

Biden that his state's "residents deserve more concrete information about these UAS sightings and what is causing them."

Echoing earlier statements by National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and other officials, the Joint Chiefs spokesperson asserted that they had "no intelligence or observations" that would tie them to a "foreign actor" or show that "they had malicious intent."

"But," the spokesperson like other officials candidly admitted, "we don't know. We have not been able to locate or identi-

fy the operators or the points of origin."

"This has gone too far", New York's Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul, frustrated by the federal inaction said.

Under current laws, only the federal government can take action against drones, and Hochul and others from both parties are demanding similar authorisation for state and local law enforcement agencies.

Chris Smith, a Republican member of the House of Representatives from New Jersey, which has reported most of the sightings, announced that he was introducing legislation for that.

Hochul disclosed that drones also shut down for about an hour Friday night the runways at Stewart Airport, the base where giant C-17 Globemaster military aircraft are based were shut down.

Members of his party and Republicans called for drastic action against the drones.

A Democrat Senator from Connecticut, Richard Blumenthal said, "They should be shot down, if necessary, because they're flying over sensitive areas."

The surge of drones brought back memories of a Chinese spy balloon that was allowed last year to meander across the US over sensitive facilities for a week before the Biden administration brought it down over the ocean.

The huge balloon carried what Biden said was spy equipment as big as two railway coaches.

Another Republican member of the House, Jeff Van Drew, claimed that the drones were coming from an Iranian "mother ship" off the New Jersey coast.

But Deputy Pentagon Spokesperson Sabrina Singh said, "There is no Iranian ship off the coast of the United States", and added that there was no evidence a foreign power or adversary was behind the drones.

Mango clothing chain founder Isak Andic dies in cliff fall in Spain

Madrid, Dec 15 (IANS) IsakAndic, the founder of the global fashion chain Mango, passed away after falling off a cliff in Spain, the company announced.

The 71-year-old billionaire reportedly slipped and fell 150 metres while walking with his wife and son in the Salitre de Collbato caves, close to Barcelona, at around 13.00 local time (1200 GMT).

"It is with deep regret that we announce the unexpected death of IsakAndic, our non-executive chairman and founder of Mango, in an accident that occurred this Saturday," said Mango Chief Executive Toni Ruiz in a statement, Xinhua news agency reported.

Ruiz praised Andic's lifelong dedication to Mango, saying that his departure 'leaves a huge void'.

Spain Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez paid tribute to Andic on social media, lauding his "hard work and business vision that transformed a Spanish brand into a global fashion leader."

Born in Istanbul, IsakAndic immigrated to Spain from Turkey at the



age of 13. He began his career by selling T-shirts to classmates which culminated in the establishment of Mango's first store in Barcelona in 1984.

At the time of his death, Andic had an estimated net worth of \$4.5 billion, according to Forbes.

Andic, who relocated to Catalonia from Turkey with his family during the 1960s, established Mango in 1984, transforming it into one of the most prominent fashion brands globally. Under his guidance, Mango

experienced swift expansion, initially launching stores throughout Spain and subsequently extending its reach internationally, starting with Portugal and France.

Mango operates 2,700 retail locations across 120 markets globally. In 2023, the company achieved a record sales figure of 3.1 billion euros (approximately \$3.2 billion). Currently, it is in the process of expanding its presence in the US, with plans to establish 65 stores by the conclusion of 2025.

Mikheil Kavelashvili is new Georgian President

Tbilisi, Dec 15 (IANS)

The ruling Georgian Dream party's candidate, MikheilKavelashvili, has been elected Georgian president, the Central Election Commission announced. Kavelashvili received 224 votes from 300 members of an electoral college, according to the commission. To be elected, a candidate has to win at least 200 votes. The presidential election was held in Georgia on Saturday. This is the first time in Georgia's history that the president is elected not by direct vote.

Earlier on Tuesday, Parliament Speaker ShalvaPapuashvili proposed holding the presidential election on December 14, Xinhua news agency reported.

Mount Semeru in Indonesia's East Java erupts

Jakarta, Dec 15 (IANS) Mount Semeru, located in Indonesia's East Java province, erupted on Sunday, prompting the country's Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation to issue an aviation warning.

A thick column of white-to-grey ash rose up to 1,000 meters into the sky, drifting northeast from the crater, according to the center's report.

Authorities issued the second-highest aviation warning, designating an orange Volcano Observatory Notice for Aviation, restricting flights within 5 kilometres of the volcano, Xinhua news agency reported.

A 3-km danger zone has been declared, while the southeastern area of the volcano has a designated danger radius extending up to 8 km from the crater.

Beyond these areas, authorities have prohibited residents from engaging in any activities within 500 meters of rivers originating from the volcano's slopes due to potential lava flows and hot clouds possibly extending up to 13 km.

Mount Semeru, standing 3,676 meters high, is one of Indonesia's 127 active volcanoes

On November 3, Mount Lewotobi



Laki-Laki, a volcano in Indonesia erupted killing nine people and forcing thousands of locals to evacuate.

The volcanic eruption resulted in the cancellation of more than 160 flights to and from Bali.

To facilitate emergency relief efforts, the local government declared an emergency status from November 4 until December 31.

In May, the Ibu volcano on Halmahera Island in the eastern Indonesian province of North Maluku erupted.

The Ibu volcano has erupted more than 80 times since the beginning of this year.

In April, Mount Ruang volcano erupted. The 725-metre-high volcano is one of Indonesia's most active.

Cyclone kills 14 in French territory Mayotte



Paris, Dec 15 (IANS) At least 14 people died and significant material damage was reported in Mayotte as Cyclone Chido swept through the French Indian Ocean territory. The powerful storm, which brought winds exceeding 220 km/h, caused the fatalities in Petite-Terre. Authorities have activated a red alert on the island.

France dispatched reinforcements, including 140 civil security soldiers and firefighters, to assist with rescue and recovery efforts.

They are expected to arrive in Mayotte on Sunday. French President Emmanuel Macron said France would "be there" for the people of Mayotte, while French officials said 250 firefighters and security personnel would be sent to the islands, with some having already arrived. After an interministerial crisis meeting, French Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau told the media that "the situation is dramatic, absolutely exceptional."

However, he didn't disclose a definitive human toll for the moment, Xinhua news agency reported quoting French Media BFM TW. He is scheduled to visit Mayotte on Monday, his office told French media.

South Korea's ruling party leader cancels press conference amid calls for resignation

Seoul, Dec 15 (IANS) The leader of South Korea's ruling People Power Party (PPP) on Sunday cancelled a press conference over his future role in the party, officials said, amid growing calls for his resignation after President Yoon Suk Yeol was impeached.

PPP leader Han Dong-hoon abruptly cancelled the press conference that had been expected to announce his resignation.

Han had earlier vowed to continue his duties in response to calls for his resignation after the National Assembly voted to impeach Yoon on Saturday.

He has since faced growing pressure to step down after all five elected members of the PPP's Supreme Council expressed their intent to resign, Yonhap news agency reported.

Han expressed support for Yoon's impeachment on Thursday despite his earlier calls for Yoon's "orderly" resignation.

On Saturday, the National Assembly voted to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his botched imposition of martial law, suspending him from



his duties until the Constitutional Court decides whether to reinstate him or remove him from office, with citizens cheering over his impeachment.

The impeachment motion against Yoon passed 204-85, with three abstentions and eight invalid ballots, after all 300 members of the Assembly cast their votes.

The martial law order, which was lifted within six hours after the Assembly voted it down, has prompted investigations by the police, the prosecution and the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials into

whether Yoon staged an insurrection. He is currently banned from leaving the country.

Yoon was suspended from his duties at 7:24 p.m., the moment the impeachment resolution was delivered to his office and about 2 and a half hours after the impeachment motion passed.

Just after the suspension of Yoon, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo immediately began his duties as the acting President and convened a Cabinet meeting at the government complex in Seoul.

The impeachment trial can take up to 180 days. If the impeachment is upheld, Yoon

Opposition leader proposes parliamentary-govt consultative body on stabilising affairs in South Korea

Seoul, Dec 15 (IANS) The leader of South Korea's main Opposition Democratic Party (DP), on Sunday, proposed forming a consultative body between the parliament and the government to stabilise state affairs, a day after President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment over his declaration of martial law.

DP leader Lee Jae-myung made the proposal after the National Assembly passed an impeachment motion against Yoon on Saturday over his short-lived imposition of martial law on December 3, suspending his duties as President. "The normalisation of the Republic of Korea is urgent," Lee said in a press conference.

"The Democratic Party will actively cooperate with all political parties for the stabilisation of state affairs and to



recover international trust."

The People Power Party (PPP), however, rejected Lee's proposal, noting that it remains the ruling party, Yonhap news agency reported.

"As the ruling party, (we) will take a responsible role through senior and working-level meetings with the government until the end of the Yoon Suk Yeol government," PPP floor leader Kweon Seong-dong told reporters.

will become the second President to be ousted after former President Park Geun-hye in

2017, triggering a snap Presidential election within 60 days.

Health

Dietary changes may slow down prostate cancer growth in some people: Study



New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) A diet low in omega-6 and high in omega-3 fatty acids, combined with fish oil supplements, can significantly reduce the growth rate of prostate cancer cells in men with early-stage disease, claims a study.

The research by the University of California - Los Angeles Health Sciences offers new evidence that changes in diet can play a crucial role in slowing down the growth of cancer cells in patients who are undergoing regular monitoring of cancer but have not yet begun medical intervention.

The findings, published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, "suggest that something as simple as adjusting your diet could potentially slow cancer growth," said Dr. William Aronson, Professor of Urology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

The dietary changes may help "extend the time before more aggressive interventions are needed", the researcher said.

To determine whether diet or supplements can play a role in managing prostate cancer, the team conducted a prospective clinical trial. They included 100 men with low-risk or favorable intermediate-risk prostate cancer who chose active surveillance.

Participants were randomly assigned to either continue their normal diet or follow a low omega-6, high omega-3 diet, supplemented with fish oil, for one year.

Participants in the intervention arm received dietary personalised counseling to create a favorable balance of their intake of omega-6 and omega-3 fats and make participants feel empowered to control how they change their behavior. They were also given fish oil capsules for extra omega-3s. The control group did not get any dietary counseling or take fish oil capsules.

The results showed that the low omega-6, omega-3 rich diet and fish oil group had a 15 per cent decrease in the Ki-67 index, while the control group saw a 24 per cent increase. The ki-67 index indicates how fast cancer cells are multiplying -- a key predictor of cancer progression, metastasis, and survival.

Aronson noted that the study shows that "dietary changes may help slow cancer growth, potentially delaying or even preventing the need for more aggressive treatments". However, he cautioned that further research is necessary to confirm the long-term benefits of omega-3 fatty acids and lowering omega-6 in managing prostate cancer.

Science / Tech

New ML-based tool 98 pc effective in detecting breast cancer early: Study



New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) New machine learning-based screening method is 98 pc effective in detecting the earliest sign of breast cancer, according to a study.

Developed by researchers at the University of Edinburgh the fast, non-invasive technique combines laser analysis with machine learning. It is the first of its kind to identify patients in the earliest stage of breast cancer, they said, noting that it may pave the way for a screening test for multiple forms of cancer.

The technique can pick up subtle changes that occur in the bloodstream during the initial phases of the disease -- known as stage 1a -- which goes undetected by existing tests.

Physical examination, X-ray or ultrasound scans, or analysis of a sample of breast tissue, known as a biopsy are standard tests currently available for breast cancer. These rely upon screening people based on their age or if they are in at-risk groups.

The pilot study, published in the Journal of Biophotonics, involved 12 samples from breast cancer patients and 12 healthy controls. In the study, the team optimised a laser analysis technique -- known as Raman spectroscopy -- and combined it with machine learning.

The team could spot breast cancer at stage 1a with 98 per cent effectiveness.

It first shines a laser beam into blood plasma taken from patients. Using a spectrometer device, the team analysed the properties of the light after it interacted with the blood. The spectrometer then revealed tiny changes in the chemical makeup of cells and tissues -- early indicators of disease.

Using the machine learning algorithm, physicians can interpret the results. Using the novel approach, the team could also distinguish between each of the four main breast cancer subtypes with an accuracy of more than 90 per cent. The team said this enabled patients to receive more effective, personalised treatment.

Anushka Shetty-starrer 'Ghaati' to release on April 18, 2025

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS) Actress Anushka Shetty is all set to portray a fiercely violent character "Ghaati", which is slated to release on April 18, next year.

The makers revealed that the film is set for a summer release on April 18. This announcement came through a fun video featuring Krish, Anushka, and the producers

The release date poster showcases Anushka in a fierce look, wearing a black hued saree. standing with a gun in one hand. In the poster, the actress has a stern gaze, with blood marks scattered across her body.

The tagline reads: "Victim, Criminal, Legend," the film promises an unconventional narrative, delving into humanity, survival, and redemption. It's set to be an intense, gripping exploration of the grey areas between right and wrong.

The film is directed by Krish Jagarlamudi. It is presented by UV Creations and produced by Rajeev Reddy and Sai Babu Jagarlamudi. "Ghaati" is the second collaboration between Anushka and Krish,



following the success of the blockbuster Vadam, and it also marks Anushka's fourth film with UV Creations.

Manojh Reddy Katasani is handling the cinematography,

Nagavelli Vidya Sagar composing the music, and Thota Tharrani as the art director.

Chanakya Reddy Toorupu and Venkat N Swamy are the editors, while Sai Madhav Burra

pens the dialogues. The film is mounted on a grand scale with a high budget and top-tier technical standards.

"Ghaati" will be released across multiple languages, including Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi.

The film is written by Krish Jagarlamudi. Produced by Rajeev Reddy and Sai Babu Jagarlamudi under the banner of First Frame Entertainment, the film is presented by UV Creations.

Anushka is known for her work majorly in Telugu and Tamil cinema. She made her acting debut with the 2005 Telugu film Super. The following year, she starred in S. S. Rajamouli's blockbuster hit Vikramarkudu. Her further releases Lakshyam, Souryam, and Chintakayala Rav.

In 2009, Shetty played dual roles in the Telugu dark fantasy film Arundhati. The following year, the actress starred in the acclaimed drama Vadam. Her portrayal of Princess Devasena in the Baahubali franchise received widespread acclaim.

Vivek Oberoi says 'bromance begins' as shooting for 'Masti 4' commences

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS) The fourth installment of the "Masti" franchise has been announced and its actor Vivek Oberoi says the "bromance begins".



Vivek on Sunday took to Instagram, where he shared a hilarious video of filmmaker-writer Milap Zaveri holding onto his co-star Riteish Deshmukh. In the clip, Zaveri is seen hilariously trying to give a kiss to Riteish and also hugging him. Vivek wrote as the caption: "Masti4 is now officially a love story... The bromance begins! 20 years of madness since the first one! Sorry, I couldn't make it for the launch boys... Will see you at the shoot super soon." Actor Aftab Shivadasani took to his Instagram, where he shared a picture of himself holding the film's clapboard. He also shared a picture posing with Riteish and Zaveri. One photograph had the cast, director and veteran star Jeetendra.

Aftab wrote: "The madness begins. The funniest of them so far #masti4."

"Masti", which first released in 2004, was a sex comedy film directed by Indra Kumar, starring Ajay Devgn, Vivek Oberoi, Riteish Deshmukh, Aftab Shivdasani, Lara Dutta, Amrita Rao, Tara Sharma, and Genelia D'Souza. The film had two more sequels, "Grand Masti", which was released in 2013 and 2016's "Great Grand Masti".

"Grand Masti" too was directed by Indra Kumar. It had the same actors, yet the film does not continue and is a new installment. The film also stars Bruna Abdullah, Karishma Tanna, Sonalee Kulkarni, Kainaat Arora, Maryam Zakaria and Manjari Fadnis.

Choreographer Rajit Dev: Taught Karan Aujla the hookstep in 10 minutes

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS) Choreographer Rajit Dev revealed that he taught the Punjabi sensation Karan Aujla the hookstep of Aaye Haaye in just a matter of 10 minutes.

"Every song I do, I treat it new and different. Everything about this song is special. We have the current hitmaker Karan Aujla and the queen of hearts Nora in the song, and that itself makes it special. As I always say, I vibe on a song and go with the feel of the song for choreography," Dev said.

"I just jammed with my team in rehearsals and we ended up making the best choreography for Aaye Haaye," he added.

The choreographer is very glad that he has associated with dancing diva Nora Fatehi on most of her music videos.

"It's very tricky to crack new things every time and it's a challenge for me and her to deliver the best every time. I know her strengths and



weaknesses. I design my movements every time."

He said: "This time it was hard for her because she had just recovered from an ankle injury. I have never seen someone so dedicated to their craft that she kept dancing in

the sand while we were shooting. Her foot was swollen but you can never make that out from her face while performing. I just admire her and always get inspired by her passion."

The dancer said that he is

always happy to choreograph Nora as he gets to experiment with a lot of stuff.

Calling her a choreographer's dream, he added: "I feel our Jodi is like how Saroj ji and Madhuri ma'am had Govinda and Ganesh masterji. My

colleagues always say and I've read the comments that when it's a Nora X Rajit combo it's going to be a banger dance song. Also, this was my first song with Karan Aujla, which is what is making it more special."

Talking about the choreography, he says, "Karan Aujla has never danced in any of his songs ever and Nora and I always make sure there's bang-on dance choreography in the whole song.

"I had an idea of making Karan do a hookstep for this song. I went to him while shooting in his vanity van and I taught him in 10 minutes. He was sweet enough to comply."

The choreographer added: "We jammed and made this hookstep look so cool. I'm hearing such praises for Karan for the way he has danced and vibed. I'm so glad we all made a great memory while shooting this song."

'Baby' Varun Dhawan meets Amit Shah, says 'absolute pleasure'

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS) Bollywood star Varun Dhawan, who is currently promoting his upcoming film "Baby John", got a chance to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his visit in the National Capital and said it was an "absolute pleasure."

Varun took to Instagram, where he shared a picture with the renowned leader. In the photograph, the two are seen looking at the camera smiling.

"Inke Saamne Toh Hum Sab 'Baby' Hai!," Varun wrote for Amit Shah, who is tagged as the Chanakya of Indian politics.

Varun expressed his gratitude on meeting the leader.

"It was an absolute pleasure to meet the Honorable Home Minister



Amit Shah ji in Delhi," he added.

Varun Dhawan had a curious encounter with Union Home Minister Amit Shah at an event in Delhi, where he posed an intriguing question: "What's the biggest difference between Ram and Ravan?"

Union Minister Amit Shah emphasized that the

key difference between Ram and Ravan lies in their distinct approaches to fulfilling their duties, or 'dharma'. He explained that for individuals like Ram, their personal interests are guided by their sense of duty, whereas others, like Ravan, prioritize self-interest over their responsibilities.

Talking about "Baby John", the action thriller film is directed by Kalees. It serves as an adaptation of Atlee's 2016 Tamil film Theri. The film stars Varun Dhawan in the title role, alongside Keerthy Suresh, Wamiqa Gabbi, Zara Zyanna and Jackie Shroff.

"Baby John" is scheduled to be released on 25 December. It tells the story of DCP Satya Verma IPS, alias Baby John, who fakes his death and goes underground to raise his daughter, Khushi, in a peaceful environment in Kerala after a personal tragedy. However, his past starts to catch up when his nemesis, Babbar Sher, a politician, figures out he is alive.

Amidst his promotions in New Delhi, Varun met rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh.

Diljit Dosanjh dedicates Chandigarh gig to youngest chess world champion Gukesh

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS) Punjabi sensation Diljit Dosanjh on December 14 dedicated his Dil-Luminati concert in Chandigarh to India's youngest World Champion, D.Gukesh.

Diljit took to Instagram, where he shared a glimpse of his Chandigarh concert, which he told the concert-goers that it would be their "best night of their life."

In the Video, Diljit first spoke about his patent line "Punjabi Aa Gaye Oye" and shared that he was proud to say it during his show at Coachella in the US.

Speaking in Punjabi, he then shared that his show is dedicated to Gukesh, who made history by becoming the youngest-ever World Champion in chess, beating Ding Liren of China in the 14-game match.

"The show today is dedicated to world chess champion Gukesh and do you know why it is dedicated to him? It is because whatever you think in life, he has already thought about becoming a world champion.



Jazzy B, Honey Singh add more power to AP Dhillon's electrifying performance in Delhi

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS) Punjabi music sensation AP Dhillon performed in the National Capital as a part of his Brownprint India Tour. He was joined by rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh and Jazzy B adding more power to the enthralling performance.

The concert took place at New Delhi's IG Stadium on December 14. It commenced with a dynamic opening set by viral sensation Josh Brar. The Punjabi hitmaker then took to the stage, delivering a high-voltage two hour performance that captivated a sea of over 20,000 attendees.

On his performance, Dhillon



said: "Coming back to India after three years felt surreal. To see so many people singing along to my songs, it was truly humbling and a moment I'll

never forget. Thank you to everyone who made this night possible."

He performed in his 25-track setlist, which seamlessly blended

favorites like 'Dil Nu', 'Desires', 'Insane' and 'Excuses' with newer hits such 'Bora Bora', 'After Midnight', 'Sweet Flower' and 'Old Money'.

AP Dhillon's performance was amplified by a stunning production design. A 360° stage, coupled with confetti, pyrotechnics, sparklers, star shaped confetti, streamers, LED ball drop, xylo bands, CO2 jets and flames.

However, the cherry on the cake was the surprise appearance of Yo Yoo Honey Singh and Jazzy B, who joined AP Dhillon and Shinda Kahlon onstage. Together they performed on 'Millionaire', 'This Party Getting

Hot', 'Dil Luteya' and '315'.

Aman Kumar, Co-Founder, White Fox India states, "The Brownprint India Tour has had an incredible start! The Mumbai and Delhi shows set a remarkably high standard, and we anticipate this momentum will carry through to Chandigarh."

The tour moves to Chandigarh as the final pit stop.

Dhillon's five singles have peaked on the Official Charts Company UK Asian and Punjabi charts, while "Majhail" and "Brown Munde" have topped Billboard charts. Dhillon, alongside his label-mates Gurinder Gill, Shinda Kahlon and Gminxr, work as a group.

3rd Test: Head, Smith centuries flatten India on Day 2



Brisbane, Dec 15 (IANS) With clear weather at the Gabba, Travis Head and Steve Smith smashed contrasting centuries to help Australia dominate proceedings against a listless India as the hosts' reached 405/7 in 101 overs at stumps on day two of third Test on Sunday.

The duo also shared a stand of 241 runs off 303 balls for the fourth wicket, and along with Alex Carey's unbeaten 45, ensured Australia had a day to remember by being in the

to cleaners easily, with no plan to counter the threat from Head, the lack of bowling depth and the absence of proactive field settings coming under the scanner yet again.

In the final session, India managed to get some late wickets, including of Smith and Head. But Carey ensured Australia went past 400-run mark, which holds huge importance considering rain is predicted for the remaining three days of the match.

The runs continued to flow for Head as he drove Reddy for four, and got a life at 112 when captain Rohit Sharma, despite going to his left at first slip, dropped the catch. Along with some loose balls from India, Smith and Head used their feet well to take boundaries off Reddy, Siraj, and Ravindra Jadeja before the second new ball was taken by India.

Despite the change in ball, there was no change in India's fortunes as Smith got his 33rd Test hundred, ending a drought of nearly 18 months to get a three-figure score in the longer format. But just after reaching his century, Bumrah found Smith's outside edge and this time Rohit caught it at first slip to dismiss him for 101.

Head went on to reach his 150, but Bumrah got India back in the match. He first had Mitchell Marsh play slightly down the wrong line and edged to a second slip, before getting some away movement as Head nicked behind to Rishabh Pant.

Carey and Cummins hit five boundaries between themselves

drivers' seat of the match. While Smith made 101, including hitting 12 boundaries, Head smashed 152, laced with 18 boundaries.

For India, Jasprit Bumrah toiled hard to pick his 12th five-wicket haul and be the standout performer with 5-72 in 25 overs. Nitish Kumar Reddy and Mohammed Siraj picked a wicket each, while Akash Deep, despite troubling Smith and Head initially, didn't get a scalp.

But overall, it was a day to forget for India who were taken

Bowlers have to work on leaking runs between 50-80 overs, admits Morkel



Brisbane, Dec 15 (IANS) India bowling coach Morne Morkel admitted that work has to be put in to improve on bowlers leaking runs when the ball is old from 50-80 overs. In day two's play at the Gabba, Travis Head and Steve Smith smashed centuries by feasting on Indian bowlers as Australia made 405/7 in 101 overs.

"First of all, we can say he's in pretty good form, guys playing like in that fashion, back-to-back innings, we can only give him a lot of credit. But for us with the ball, if you look at it from overs 50 to 80, even in the last game, at the moment it's where we sort of fall short, leaking a little bit. So that's one area I think we need to get better at."

"First up with the ball this morning, we were pretty good, at 3 for 70, but took nothing away from two world-class players. Steve Smith, we know, is a guy that can bat big and score runs, and they put a partnership and put us under pressure with a softer older ball."

"So it's definitely an area that we need to focus on, maybe deeper in the innings, in terms of game plans. Yes, we've got the game plans, but are we executing those game plans with a softer ball from both ends? That's something we need to discuss and get better at," said Morkel to reporters in the post-day press conference.

to share a 58-run stand for the seventh wicket, before the latter gave a feather edge behind to Pant off Siraj. Carey paddled and slog-swept Jadeja for four and six before curtains came on a day which totally belonged to Australia.

Brief Scores: Australia 405/7 in 101 overs (Travis Head 152, Steve Smith 101; Jasprit Bumrah 5-72, Nitish Kumar Reddy 1-65) against India.

U19 Women's Asia Cup: Sonam, Kamalini guide India to 9-wicket win over Pakistan



Kuala Lumpur, Dec 15 (IANS) Sonam Yadav and G Kamalini powered India to a massive nine-wicket win over arch-rivals Pakistan in their opening Group A match of the inaugural U19 Women's Asia Cup here on Sunday.

Pakistan won the toss and opted to bat first at Bayuemas Oval but the move backfired them as they were restricted to 67/7 in 20 overs with Sonam Yadav returning with the figures of 4-6 in her four overs.

For Pakistan, wicketkeeper-batter Komal Khan top-scored with a score of 24 studded with four boundaries as no other batter barring Fatima Khan (11) was able to reach a double-digit score.

India were completely disciplined in the bowling and bagged wickets at regular intervals to keep Pakistan at bay in the encounter.

Chasing a mere 68 total, India suffered an early hiccup as opener Gongadi Trisha was caught and bowled by Fatima Khan for a two-ball duck in the first over. However, Kamalini and Sanika Chalke scripted a match-winning 68-run partnership to take the side over the line in just 7.5 overs.

Kamalini, who was named Player of the Match, struck 44 not out off 29 balls laced with three sixes and four fours while Sanika was unbeaten for 17-ball 19 including three fours to give India a dominating start in the tournament.

India will next take on Nepal on December 17 while Pakistan will lock horns with the same opponents on December 16.

Brief scores: Pakistan 67/7 in 20 overs (Komal Khan 24; Sonam Yadav 4-6) lost to India 68/1 in 7.5 overs (G Kamalini 44 not out, Sanika Chalke 19 not out; Fatima Khan 1-22) by nine wickets.

Retired Pak pacer Amir regrets not getting to bowl to Indians at home, hosting Kohli in Lahore

Mumbai, Dec 15 (IANS) Pakistan bowler Mohammad Amir, who quit international cricket for a final time on Saturday, hung up his boots with two regrets -- not getting to bowl against India on home soil and hosting Virat Kohli at his Lahore residence. With a UK passport, Amir also hopes to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL) if he can.

Amir, who had a fairytale international debut as a 17-year-old in the 2009 Twenty20 World Cup in the UK, said India's decision not to travel to Pakistan for Champions Trophy 2025 has deprived him of the chance to bowl at the Indian cricketers like Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

"India not touring Pakistan has saddened me," Amir told Telecom Asia Sport from Sri



Lanka where he is playing in a T10 league. "Had they (Indian players) come to Pakistan they would have realised their popularity in our country. Fans

wanted to see Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Rishab Pant and Jasprit Bumrah," Amir told Telecom Asia Sport in an exclusive interview on Saturday.

Amir, who claimed the wicket of the legend Sachin Tendulkar in the Champions Trophy game in Centurion which led to Pakistan's first win over India in ICC events, has good memories of touring the neighbouring country. "I have also toured India so I know how much love I got from the fans and players there. It would have been great had Indian

players visited Pakistan. They have a huge following in Pakistan," said Amir, whose burgeoning career was halted due to a five-year ban because of his role in the spot-fixing scandal of 2010.

Amir made an immediate impact when he returned to the international stage after serving out the ban and starred in Pakistan's triumph in the final of the 2017 Champions Trophy against India, rocking them with wickets of Rohit Sharma, Kohli and Shikhar Dhawan.

He has a lot of respect for Virat Kohli and cherishes the bat that the Indian great gave him ahead of the Twenty20 World Cup match in Kolkata. "Virat is great and admires talent," said Amir. "For sure, I would have hosted him at my house."

24 countries confirm participation for inaugural KhoKho World Cup

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Australia, USA, New Zealand, Germany, England, Poland and the Netherlands are among 24 countries that have confirmed their participation in the inaugural KhoKho World Cup, to be held at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium and Noida Indoor Stadium from January 13-19, 2025.

A total of 24 countries from all six continents will have 41 international teams in the week-long mega event, said Sudhanshu Mittal, president of KhoKho Federation of India, who is also chairman of the World Cup organising committee.

As many as 21 men and 20 women teams from Europe, Oceania, Asia, Africa, North America and the South American continents will compete for the world title, which will be held on a league-cum-



knockout basis, he added.

He said that 615 players and 125 support staff will take part in the global event. Each team will comprise 15 players, one coach, one manager and international technical officials.

The USA is the sole team from North America to take part in the championship, while England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland will represent Europe. USA will send only men's team while England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland will send both men's and women's teams. Australia and New Zealand will represent Oceania, while Argentina, Brazil and Peru will represent South America. Australia will send both men's and women's teams, while New Zealand will be represented by a women's team only.

Discontent brewing in PCB over hybrid model for CT 2025: Sources

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) The Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) decision to accept to host the 2025 Champions Trophy in a hybrid format following India's refusal to travel across the border has caused discontent in the organisation with sources telling IANS that many members are unhappy with the way Pakistan has accepted the decision.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed a proposal for a hybrid model for the Champions Trophy 2025 in which India will play their matches in Dubai while Pakistan will host the rest of the tournament. As compensation, Pakistan has been allowed to play their matches in the 2026 T20 World Cup in Colombo. Pakistan has also been allotted the hosting rights for an ICC women's event after 2027.

With the PCB accepting this formula, fighting has started within the PCB over the hybrid model. Some members expressed displeasure, saying the PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi should not get carried away with ICC tactics, sources told IANS.

Rising stars shine with dominant performances

Jamshedpur Super League Matchweek 7

Jamshedpur, Dec 15: The 7th Matchweek of the Jamshedpur Super League came to a thrilling conclusion at the Archery Ground, JRD Tata Sports Complex, with young footballers showcasing their skills and determination in electrifying matches. The league, a key initiative by Jamshedpur FC to promote and develop football at the grassroots level, has been gaining momentum with each

passing week.

In one of the most dominant performances of the matchweek, Bistupur Manimela emerged victorious in a one-sided encounter against Sonari Wonder Girls, winning 7-0. The match was a testament to the team's skill and strategy, keeping spectators on the edge of their seats throughout.

Another thrilling match saw the Loyola Greek Warrior triumph over Loyola Ninja Bros with a 6-0 scoreline in the U9



category. The match was a showcase of the growing talent and competitiveness of the young players participating in the league. As the Jamshedpur Super League continues to progress, it is clear that the players are becoming more confident and skilled with each passing week. The league has provided a platform for these young footballers to hone their craft and work towards realizing their football dreams. With its

commitment to developing football for the future of Indian football, Jamshedpur FC is playing a vital role in shaping the country's football landscape.

The action will shift to the Tinplate Sports Complex next Friday, where the U5, U7, U11, and U13 players will take center stage. Fans can expect more intense and exciting matches as the league progresses. The Jamshedpur Super League is a crucial step towards nurturing the next generation of Indian footballers, and Jamshedpur FC is proud to be at the forefront of this initiative.

Sutume, Kissa win World 25K Kolkata; India's Gulveer makes course record

Kolkata, Dec 15 (IANS) Ethiopian Sutume Kebede retained the women's crown while Ugandan Stephen Kissa beat defending champion Daniel Ebenyo from Kenya for men's crown in the ninth edition of World 25K, the first World Athletics Gold Label Road Race at this distance, in the West Bengal capital on Sunday.

The Indian elite runners also returned with splendid performances, with Gulveer Singh setting a new event record and Sanjeevani taking the title in the women's category.

More than 20,500 people participated in various categories, making it one of the most popular races in the country.

Confirming her entry just two weeks before the race, Kebede recovered from a stomach ailment just in time to defend her title here in a modest 1:19:17. Having set a stand-alone World Best for 25K



here while winning last year's race with a time of 1:18:47, the Ethiopian runner started her campaign in 2024 with fantastic personal best in half-marathon (1:04:37) and marathon (2:15:55) to take the top spots in Houston and Tokyo, respectively. Incidentally, her timing in Tokyo made her the 8th fastest among women marathoners to date.

The Kenyan started fading in the waning stages of the race, thus allowing Kebede to become a clear leader after 23K. The Ethiopian runner's winning time would have been better had Chepngeno continued with her for some more time. However, Kebede signed off 2024

with another winning note.

Chepngeno finished second in 1:19:44, while Jisa finished a distant third at 1:21:29.

"I am very happy to win (here) again. I wanted to break the course record but was a little tired of travelling. I am training for the next year and will participate in the marathons," Kebede

"I am happy to come second. It was not easy to run here. Everyone was strong today. I gave my best, and this makes me very happy," Viola said while Jisa added, "I am happy to be on the podium. Thanks to everyone."

In the men's race, Kissa salvaged some pride after logging his first win in an international competition in five years. He suffered two back-to-back debacles as a non-finisher at the Olympic Games in Tokyo (10,000m) and Paris (Marathon) and took only second spots in a couple of races in

between. Hence, making a podium finish on his debut at 25K brought a happy moment for the Ugandan to cherish for a long time.

Defending champion Ebenyo looked strong, remained at the helm of affairs in the men's race, and ran neck-to-neck alongside Kissa in most parts of the race. They briefly exchanged the lead, but the gap between the duo did not go beyond a meter or two all the time. The Kenyan, who also set a stand-alone World Best for 25K (1:11:13) during last year's race, was looking to improve his time in this edition. They reached 15K in 42:56, some 30 seconds faster, with Ebenyo and Kissa still leading the pack, as the pace picked up along the tram tracks of South Kolkata. Surprisingly, Kipruto dropped off as Kissa took the lead at the 20K mark, clocking 57:50, with Ebenyo closely behind.

But he lost focus in the last two

kilometers. Instead of looking at the clock, he only focused on pulling away from the Ugandan runner. Kissa did not allow that to happen and held off the challenge to sprint out to the tape to claim the men's crown in 1:12:33 and pocket the USD 15,000 prize purse.

Ebenyo finished runner-up four seconds later, while Anthony Kipchirchir surprised everyone with a bronze position at 1:12:55.

India's Gulveer habitually broke the national record in every distance event. He has improved the national marks in 5000 and 10,000m twice this year. The Guangzhou Asian Games bronze medalist, who just eight weeks ago became the Asian cross-country champion, is now turning his focus towards road running.

Lili Das (1:30:58) and Kavita Yadav (1:32:19) took the next two spots among the Indian women.

Maharashtra: CM Fadnavis expands Cabinet; inducts 39 ministers

Nagpur, Dec 15 (IANS) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday expanded his Cabinet with the induction of 39 ministers from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) at a simple ceremony held here.

Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office and secrecy to the ministers -- 19 from the BJP; 11 of Shiv Sena and nine from the NCP. The MahaYuti partners had arrived at a 21-12-10 formula for sharing ministerial berths. Of the 39 ministers, 33 are cabinet ministers and 6 are ministers of state.

Fadnavis along with two Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar were sworn in at a grand function held on December 5 at Mumbai in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a galaxy of NDA leaders, representatives of industry and businesses and Bollywood stars.

With Sunday's swearing in, Fadnavis led Cabinet's strength is 42 against 43 which is 15 per



cent of the 288-member state Assembly permissible. BJP has dropped former ministers Sudhir Mungantiwar and Ravindra Chavan.

Similarly, Shiv Sena has denied ministerial berths to former ministers Tanaji Sawant, Abdul Sattar and Deepak Kesarkar.

Further, NCP has dropped a veteran OBC leader and former minister Chhagan Bhujbal and former ministers Dilip Walse-Patil and Dharmaraobaba Atram.

Bhujbal, who is unhappy over his exclusion, skipped the party rally organised at Nagpur few hours before the cabinet expansion.

Those who were sworn in from BJP include Girish Mahajan, Chandrakant Patil,

Pankaja Munde, Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, state unit chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Ashish Shelar, Jaikumar Rawal, Nitesh Rane, Shivendra Bhosale, Pankaj Bhoir, Ganesh Naik, Meghana Bordikar, Madhuri Misal, Atul Save, Sanjay Savkare, Akash Phundkar, Jaikumar Gore and Ashok Uike.

Shiv Sena's list comprise Uday Samant, Dada Bhuse, Sanjay Rathod, Shambhuj Desai, Gulabrao Patil, Sanjay Shirsat, Bharat Gogawale, Pratap Sarnaik, Prakash Abitkar, Yogesh Kadam and Ashish Jaiswal.

Shiv Sena ministers will be given two and half year's tenure as they will have to vacate the minister's posts

paving the way for others to get the ministerial berths. The 11 ministers have been asked to commit on oath that they will leave the ministerial posts after two and half years paving the way for others to be inducted in the Cabinet. Shiv Sena legislator Narendra Bhonekar from Bhandara constituency in Vidarbha region has resigned from all his posts protesting against not giving him ministerial berth.

This is the first case in which a three-time legislator has expressed his dissent.

The NCP has given ministerial berths to Hasan Mushrif, Aditi Tatkare, Dhananjay Munde, Dattamama Bharne, Narahari Zirwal, Makarand Patil, Babasaheb

Patil, Manikrao Kokate and Indranil Naik. It has also adopted a formula of giving ministerial berths for two and half years. This aims to avoid resentment in the party.

The list of cabinet ministers include Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Radhakrishna Vikhe-

Hasan Mushrif, Chandrakant Patil, Girish Mahajan, Gulabrao Patil, Ganesh Naik, Dada Bhuse, Sanjay Rathod, Dhananjay Munde, Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Uday Samant, Jaikumar Rawal, Pankaja, Munde, Atul Save, Ashok Uike, Shambhuj Desai, Ashish Shelar, Dattamama Bharne, Aditi Tatkare, Shivendra Bhosale, Manikrao Kokate, Jaikumar Gore, Narahari Zirwal, Sanjay Savkare, Sanjay Shirsat, Pratap Sarnaik, Bharat Gogawale, Makarand Patil, Nitesh Rane, Akash Phundkar, Babasaheb Patil and Prakash Abitkar.

The list of ministers of state comprises Madhuri Misal, Ashish Jaiswal, Pankaj Bhoir, Meghana Bordikar and Indranil Naik.

Atul Subhash suicide: Accused sent to 14-day judicial custody



Bengaluru, Dec 15 (IANS) Three accused in AtulSubhash's suicide case -- his wife, her mother and brother -- who were arrested by Bengaluru Police, have been sent to 14-day judicial custody, officials said here on Sunday.

A senior police officer said Atul Subhash's wife Nikita Singhania was arrested from Haryana's Gurugram and her mother Nisha Singhania and brother Anurag Singhania were nabbed in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

The accused persons were produced before the court and were sent to judicial custody for 14 days. After nabbing the accused persons, the Karnataka Police brought them to Bengaluru on Saturday late at night.

More details are yet to emerge in the case.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that AtulSubhash had planned to commit suicide 15 days before taking the extreme step. He had written the death note three days ago and searched legal matters on Google.

The police registered an FIR against the accused persons under Sections 108, 3 (5) of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) on December 9. Bikas Kumar, the deceased Atul's younger brother had lodged a police complaint alleging abetment to suicide with the Marathahalli police in Bengaluru.

Govt unveils 'Jalvahak' to boost inland waterways



New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Sunday unveiled a major policy for cargo promotion -- 'Jalvahak'. Jalvahak is aimed at incentivising the movement of long-haul cargo via National Waterways 1 (river Ganga) as well as for National Waterways 2 (river Brahmaputra) and National Waterways 16 (river Barak).

"The government has made a concerted effort to realise the tremendous potential of our rich network of inland waterways. With its advantage of being an economical, ecologically sound, and efficient mode of transportation, we want to boost cargo movement via waterways, to decongest the railways and roadways," Sonowal said.

"Jalvahak scheme incentivises long haul cargo on NW1, NW2 & and NW16, and provides an opportunity for the trade interests to explore the movement of cargo via waterways with positive economic value proposition.

Kejriwal to contest from New Delhi, Atishi from Kalkaji AAP releases final list of candidates for Delhi Assembly polls

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Taking a lead over rivals, the ruling AAP released its final and fourth list of 38 candidates for Delhi Assembly elections on Sunday, re-fielding Chief Minister Atishi from her Kalkaji constituency and Arvind Kejriwal from the New Delhi seat.

The party has now named 70 candidates even before the announcement of Assembly poll dates, giving its nominees almost two months for campaigning.

Controversial Uttam Nagar legislator Naresh Balyan, arrested in an alleged extortion case, has been replaced by his wife Pooja Naresh Balyan.

The AAP has also reposed faith in Mehrauli legislator Naresh Yadav, who was



attacked by the Opposition parties after his conviction in a Quran sacrilege case in Punjab.

The AAP has also backed many MLAs who have been involved in controversies over the last five years. Satyendra Kumar Jain, who remained in jail in a money laundering case, and Amanatullah Khan, who was involved in a case related to alleged Waqf Board irregularities, have been re-fielded from Shakur Basti and

123, just hours before the release of the final list of party candidates. The list, issued by AAP National General Secretary Sandeep Pathak, showed the party's belief in the performance of over three dozen sitting legislators who have again been given tickets.

Minister Gopal Rai will contest from Babarpur and his Cabinet colleague Saurabh Bhardwaj will fight the election from Greater Kailash. Former MP Mahabal

List of criminals: Delhi BJP chief on AAP panel of 38 candidates

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Sunday described the AAP's final list of 38 candidates as a "list of criminals", with many of the nominees being out on bail or involved in controversies.

"Whether it is Arvind Kejriwal, Satyendra Kumar Jain or Amanatullah Khan, this is a list of law-breakers," Sachdeva told IANS, claiming that the list showed that Kejriwal was sheltering criminals in Delhi.

Asked about the perceived delay in the announcement of BJP candidates, Sachdeva said, "The BJP doesn't need Kejriwal's approval to release names of its candidates. We know when to do it."

The Delhi BJP chief welcomed the decision by Kejriwal and Chief Minister Atishi to recontest the Assembly election from their sitting seats. "This will help hold Kejriwal accountable for the work he has done over the past 10 years," said Sachdeva.



Mishra's son Vinay Mishra has once again been fielded from Dwarka. Former Delhi Law

Minister Somnath Bharti has also been re-fielded from Malviya Nagar.

Decline in TB cases & deaths in India 'remarkable', shows 'political commitment', says former WHO Director

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) The significant drop in tuberculosis (TB) cases and deaths in India is "remarkable", said Mario C. B. Raviglione, former Director of the Global Tuberculosis (TB) Programme at the World Health Organization (WHO) on Sunday.

Speaking exclusively to IANS, Raviglione noted that this indicates a "high level of political commitment."

"There has been major progress in India in the last 25 years. The 18 per cent decline is about 2 per cent per year in the last decade. It is something remarkable for a country like India which is the number one contributor to the global TB epidemic with an estimated 2.8 million people getting TB every year," said Raviglione, a Professor of Global Health at the University of Milan, Italy.

As per recent government data, the incidence rate of TB witnessed a 17.7 per cent decline from 237 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 195 per 100,000 population in 2023. Similarly, deaths due

to TB have reduced by 21.4 per cent from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 22 per lakh population in 2023.

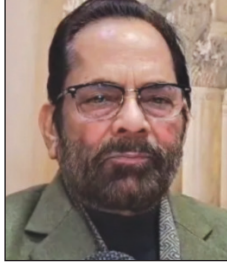
"Having achieved this incidence decline in a country as massive as India is certainly a sign that something good has been done," said Raviglione.

"I think that the high level of political commitment that has been seen in India over the past few years is absolutely remarkable. It is almost unique in the world. I've not seen many heads of state going loudly like Prime Minister NarendraModi" on tackling diseases, he added, noting that it must be "absolutely maintained" to help the country fight the deadly infectious disease.

While the "decline is still remarkable, it is far too slow to achieve anything, such as ending an epidemic like that of TB," Raviglione said, about India's aim to eliminate TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global target of 2030.

The Professor called on the need to boost rapid molecular testing.

One nation, one election need of the hour: Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi



New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) As one nation, one election is once again in the news, BJP leader and former Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Sunday that simultaneous polls are the need of the hour.

Speaking to IANS, he said, "During the tenure of PM Narendra Modi, many important constitutional reforms have taken place in the last 10 years. And I believe that these reforms were pending for decades. This is the result of strong thinking. And that is why one nation, one election is the need of the hour."

"...And this reform will strengthen our constitutional values and dignity. On the other hand, it will be very helpful for people to understand the election system in a simple and very smooth manner. Because on and off Assembly elections are being held somewhere, Lok Sabha elections are being held somewhere, Panchayat elections or local body polls are being held somewhere, and the country remains trapped in the elections. That's why it is important," the BJP leader added.

Kerala Hindu leader gifts Rig Veda to Pope Francis



Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 15 (IANS) P. Sree Kumar, Kerala State Coordinator of Hindus of America and a senior leader of the RSS-affiliated Hindu movement in Kerala, has presented a copy of the Rig Veda to Pope Francis at the Vatican in Rome. Sree Kumar handed over the sacred text during his visit to the

Vatican, where he attended the World Religious Convention. The event featured Pope Francis as a keynote speaker.

Sree Kumar told IANS: "If you recall, former Kerala Chief Minister and late CPI-M leader E.K. Nayanar gifted a copy of the Bhagavad Gita to Pope John Paul II during his Vatican visit in 1997. I felt the most appropriate gift this time would be the Rig Veda itself." He emphasised that the late Swami Satyananda Saraswati, a renowned Kerala Hindu leader and saint, had often highlighted the importance of the Vedas as the foundational scripture of Hinduism, advocating that every Hindu household should possess a copy.

Building on this vision, Kerala Hindus of North America initiated the distribution of Rig Veda copies.

Punjab DGP, MHA official request farmer leader Dallewal to end 20-day fast



Chandigarh, Dec 15 (IANS) Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav along with Union Ministry of Home Affairs Mayank Mishra on Sunday met farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on fast unto death to press the Centre in

support of their demands, enquired about his health and requested him to end his 20-day-long fast.

This has been the first meeting between the Union government and a farm leader since talks with farmers remained inconclusive in February.

The 70-year-old cancer patient Dallewal has been fasting at Khanauri, the border point between Punjab and Haryana, since November 26 in support of their long-pending demands, including a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) for crops, loan waiver and reforms to improve conditions in the agricultural sector.

After meeting the farmer leader, Yadav told the media, "We came to enquire about the health of Dallewal."

Without mincing words, he said, "We have heard whatever his (Dallewal) demands are. There was no proposal of any kind (over the demands). I came here to hear him and also for implementation of the Supreme Court order."

Savarkar's great-grandson counters Rahul Gandhi on who actually 'compromised'

New Delhi, Dec 15 (IANS) Ranjit Savarkar, the great-grandson of 'Veer' Savarkar, on Sunday, shared his views regarding the mention of freedom fighter and nationalist Veer Savarkar by Rahul Gandhi in Lok Sabha. He also opened up on "the world's greatest honey trap."

Given that Rahul Gandhi has been lately repeatedly making personal comments on Savarkar, Ranjit Savarkar said that he does it to polarise Muslim votes as Savarkar was a pioneer of Hindutva. "He wants to prove that Savarkar was a Manuvadi. He thinks if he talks bad about Savarkar, Muslims will vote for him," he said, adding "I think the comments and false narratives will continue."



Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha had said in the House on Saturday, "When you speak about defending the Constitution, you are ridiculing Savarkar, you are abusing Savarkar,

you are defaming Savarkar."

Speaking about who struck a deal with the British, Savarkar or Nehru, he maintained that it was Nehru who compromised for power and to keep relations cordial with Britain, before recounting the course of events on the eve of Independence. "It's about being an agent [of the British]" he said, adding that Nehru betrayed the nation for power.

Explaining further, he pointed to letters in the book 'Daughter of Empire: My Life as a Mountbatten', written by Lord Mountbatten's daughter Pamela Hicks. The book contains letters exchanged between her mother Lady Mountbatten and Nehru for 11 to 12 years after Independence.