

## GBPH FEELS THE PINCH THE HARD WAY

### HEALTH FACILITY REELING UNDER SHORTAGE OF NURSING STAFF



ROOPA LALL

**PORT BLAIR, JAN 12/--** Even as the UT Administration boasts of improved health services in GB Pant Hospital, shortage of at least 50% Nursing staff is adversely affecting services and patients care, besides putting extra workload on the current staff. Staff shortage has emerged as a major concern for patients at the lone referral hospital of these islands. According to sources, 130 posts of Nurses are lying vacant at the Directorate of Health Services. Presently 150 nursing staff are engaged in the health department. Out of the 150 nursing staff providing their services in various health centres, including GB Pant Hospital, 63 nursing staff are from ANIIMS while 87 nurses are from

Directorate of Health Services. Extension of contract for nurses engaged on contractual basis has been stopped leading to the department facing a lot of difficulties in running health centres effectively, across the islands. One can easily imagine the situation in other important Units of the hospital. Expectations were high of improved services in the GB Pant Hospital after the establishment of the Medical College, but sadly drawbacks continue to plague the hospital. Acute shortage of Nursing and other staff is hampering the effective delivery of services to the patients. The top brass of the Health Department should address the matter on priority by filling up all vacant posts in a time bound manner.

(Contd. on page-6)

## IWC donates diapers to Ferrargunj Old age home, children with special needs

**PORT BLAIR, JAN 12/--** 10th January every year is celebrated as Inner Wheel Day which holds great meaning to all those committed members of Inner Wheel Club. As part of the celebration to mark this occasion, the Inner Wheel Club of Port Blair donated diapers to the Ferrargunj Old age home for elderly persons and children with special needs, in the presence of Mrs Iti Agarwal, Director of Social Welfare Department, Mr. A K Biswas, Probation officer, Social Welfare department, Mrs Komal Anand, Vice-President of the Inner Wheel Club, Mrs Raj Mahajan, Charter member of the Inner Wheel Club, Mrs Bakhtawar, Noble Secretary of the Inner wheel club. A small initiative taken by the club to mark this occasion in all, a memorable day well spent. Inner Wheel Club, founded by Mrs. Oliver Golding in 1924, is the world's largest voluntary women service organization consisting mainly of women. IWC clubs are in over 100 countries with over 100,000 members.



## MP demands to conduct regular recruitment drives of Army, Navy and Air Force in ANI

**PORT BLAIR, JAN 12/--** The Member of Parliament, Mr Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Defence Minister of India to conduct regular recruitment drives of Army, Navy and Air Force in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, so that Islands youths, who grow up with the dream of serving our Nation can join Indian Armed Forces and serve our country. In a letter addressed to the Defence Minister of India, New Delhi, he mentioned that this is a matter of extreme pride that a large number of youths from Andaman and Nicobar Islands are either serving the armed forces in different ranks or have retired after serving 15 to 20 years in Defence Services. "Many youths of these Islands have raised to very high rank in Defence Forces to make Andaman proud while there are many Heroes of Andaman, who have made supreme sacrifice while protecting our country," he added. The Member of Parliament added that for



youths of Andaman and Nicobar Islands a job in Defence is not only a source of income but also a passion, for which they are highly motivated. He pointed out that before 2019 Andaman and Nicobar Islands used to witness various recruitment drives in Andaman and Nicobar Islands conducted by Army, Air Force and sometime Indian Navy but since 2019 Islanders have not seen any 'major' recruitment drive for Army, Navy or Air Force. The Member of Parliament informed the Hon'ble Defence Minister that the youths of Andaman and Nicobar islands are

anxiously waiting for a job in the Defence Forces. He added that unemployment is a major issue in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and regular recruitment drives by Armed Forces can solve this problem to a great extent.

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# India committed to tackling climate change impact, supporting developing nations: Environment minister

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/ India is committed to tackling the impact of climate change and supporting the efforts of developing countries in achieving their development goals through necessary technical assistance, Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav said Thursday.

Addressing a two-day Voice of Global South summit, Yadav said the developed world has already consumed its share of climate resources and it is time that they accept responsibility for past actions. Asserting that India understands the vulnerability of developing nations and small island developing states, the minister said urgent global climate action is indeed the need of the hour. This must be guided

by the principles of climate justice, including equity and common but differentiated



Bhupender Yadav

but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, the Union minister said. Equity essentially means that each country's share of carbon dioxide emissions is equal to its share of the global

population. The Common but Differentiated

responsibilities as they account for most of the historical and current greenhouse gas emissions. "India is committed to tackling the impact of climate change and supporting the efforts of developing countries to achieve their developmental goals through necessary developmental and technical assistance. India has always encouraged a global initiative that champions the interest and concerns of developing countries," he said. While economic growth since the industrial revolution has granted countries greater prosperity, it has come at a huge cost to the environment, Yadav said.

"The developmental path followed by most developed nations during the course of history has been ruthless. It led to

excessive consumption of resources both at home and subjugate colonies." Serious impacts of climate change are looming large over many developing nations that have contributed little to it, he remarked at the virtual summit of leaders of the Global South hosted by India.

Yadav said the solution to climate change and environmental degradation is possible only when "we work together towards a common goal".

Leaders of several countries including Bangladesh, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Guyana, Mozambique, Mongolia and Senegal were among those who attended the summit. The 'Global South' largely refers to developing countries, especially those in Asia, Africa and South America. (PTI)

## A powerful India can never be a threat to the world: Kerala Guv

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN 12 /--/ Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Thursday said a powerful India can never be a threat to the world as its cultural values do not allow it to think in terms of dominating over others. The Governor inaugurated the International Youth Summit India-2023 organised here as part of National Youth Day and G-20 Presidency of India. "...Everybody in the world can rest assured that a powerful India can be only of help to other countries, to humanity. A powerful India can never become a threat to anybody in the world. Never...Because our cultural values do not allow us to think in terms of dominating over others," Khan told the gathering. He said one can enjoy the freedom of pursuing their belief but no right to impose it on others.

"I have every freedom, every right to pursue my belief. But I have no right to try to impose my belief on others. That is the basic salient features of the Indian civilisation," Khan said. At the summit, also attended by the representatives of the youth from various other countries, the Governor expressed hope that those who are pursuing their education in India would become ambassadors of Indian culture and way of life in their respective countries. (PTI)

# Varanasi's Tent City to offer front-row view of Ganga aarti, live music, yoga sessions

VARANASI, JAN 12 /--/ On the sandy banks of the Ganga in Varanasi, over 200 tents offer tourists a panoramic view of the famed ghats of the holy city on the other side of the river along with live classical music, 'aarti' in the evening and yoga sessions.

The 'Tent City', to be inaugurated virtually by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, has been developed on the lines of similar setups in Gujarat's Kutch and Rajasthan. Three clusters of 10 hectares each comprise the Tent City and are expected to give a fillip to the city's tourism potential, said Kaushal Raj Sharma, the divisional

commissioner of Varanasi. Vice-chairman of Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) Abhishek Goyal said the Tent City will be a confluence of religion, spirituality and culture. "Guests at the Tent City will experience the sunrise, live music events in the morning, yoga session by the river as well as boat tours. Special care has been taken for the comfort, convenience and safety of all tourists," he said.

Goyal said the three clusters of tents include villas of 900 sq ft each, super deluxe accommodation of 480 to 580 sq ft each and deluxe accommodation of 250 to

400 sq ft each. The tent city is complete with Swiss Cottages, a reception area, a gaming zone, restaurants, dining areas, conference venues, spa and yoga



centres, a library and an art gallery. It will also offer water sports, and camel and

horse riding on the sandy banks of the Ganga, he said. Neeraj Upadhyay, the designer of the Tent City, said it has been given the shape of temple spires. The

tents will give the feel of luxury and offer the facilities of a hotel, he said. (PTI)

# Land subsidence: Karnaprayag, Landour staring at disaster

D E H R A D U N / GOPESHWAR, JAN 12 /--/ The crisis in Joshimath has brought into focus the issue of land subsidence which has for years been threatening several places of Uttarakhand, including the pilgrim town of Karnaprayag and Landour.

Around 80 km from Joshimath, at least 50 houses at Bahuguna Nagar in Karnaprayag have been developing cracks since 2015. Locals hold gradual land subsidence responsible for the fissures and attribute it to the widening of the national highway, violation of norms in construction works related to mandi parishad, erosion caused by the Pindar river and unsystematic flushing out of rainwater. Debris brought down by a landslide from above Bahuguna Nagar first inflicted damage to houses in 2015, former chairman of Karnaprayag municipal council Subhash Gairola said. The municipal council had intervened immediately and the damage was restricted. It, however, started aggravating with the widening of the national highway in recent years and the unsystematic flushing out of rainwater in absence of a drain along the Karnaprayag-Kankhool road.

Gairola said that Karnaprayag, being situated at the confluence of the Alaknanda and the Pindar rivers, suffers

regular and heavy soil erosion during monsoon. Water also gushes into homes during monsoon, further weakening their foundations, he said. "The mandi parishad also excavated the area with the help of JCBs during the construction of its buildings which may have further worsened the situation," Gairola added. Pictures of half-tilted houses at Bahuguna Nagar with huge cracks on their walls grabbed people's attention only after the land subsidence in Joshimath hit national headlines. Asked about the houses in Karnaprayag developing crack, chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who is in Joshimath, said: "It has been there for some time. But it will be discussed in the meetings over land subsidence to be held during the day."

Parts of Chamoli district headquarters in Gopeshwar and Semi village near Guptkashi on the Kedarnath national highway face a similar situation, Gairola said, and demanded immediate assistance for the affected people as well as developing long-term plans to ensure the safety of locals.

Chamoli district magistrate Himanshu Khurana said: "Families living in at-risk houses in Karnaprayag have been shifted to safety. We are taking the help of experts from IIT-Roorkee to solve

the problem in Karnaprayag. They are studying the problem and preparing a detailed project report based on which remedial measures will be taken." Land subsidence has also been reported from Landour in Mussoorie and Atali village near Rishikesh.

A 100-metre stretch of the road from Landour Chowk to Kohinoor building in Mussoorie has been sinking slowly for the past 30 years, public representatives from the area said and attributed it to heavy construction activities in the hill town and a poor drainage system which causes waterlogging. Mussoorie SDM Shailendra Singh Negi, who recently visited Landour to inspect the cracks, said land subsidence in the area is currently minor in nature. But in the larger public interest, the factors that have led to the situation are being studied so that corrective steps could be taken, he said.

In Atali village near Rishikesh, fissures have developed in the ground. Villagers claim that a railway tunnel being built in the area has caused the crack with Neighbouring Singtali, Lodsi, Kaudiyala and Bavani villages also affected. SDM Devendra Negi said a team of experts has been constituted which will do an on-the-spot inspection of the affected villages on January 15. (PTI)

# Ludhiana can compete with China if small, medium businesses get support: Rahul

LUDHIANA, JAN 12 /--/ Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said Ludhiana's small and medium businesses can compete with China if they are given adequate support even as he attacked the Punjab government and the Centre for not supporting them.

Rahul, who is currently undertaking the Punjab leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, charged that hatred, violence and fear were being spread in the country as he sought to hit out at the BJP. "There should be no place for hatred and violence in the country. It is a country of brotherhood, love and respect," he said while addressing a gathering in Ludhiana.

The Congress leader also targeted the BJP-led Centre over the issue of demonetisation, saying it hit the small and medium enterprises hard. "How Ludhiana (small and medium businesses) was hit? Prime Minister ji implemented demonetisation and wrong GST," he alleged.

"Demonetisation and 'wrong' GST are not policies. Demonetisation and 'wrong' GST are weapons to end the small and medium enterprises. This is the truth,"

said Rahul. "The country's 'arabpatis' (billionaires) cannot give employment to the country. Ludhiana's small and medium businesses can give employment in the country. If they are

Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, MPs Amar Singh, Gurjit Singh Aujla, former MLA Gurkirat Kotli, Punjab Youth Congress chief



strengthened and given support, Ludhiana can compete against China. This is the truth. "But nobody supports you. There is no vision. Be it is the Punjab government or the government of India," he said. Ludhiana is the industrial hub of Punjab. The march resumed Thursday morning from Doraha in Ludhiana here as part of its Punjab leg. The Punjab leg of the foot march began on Wednesday from Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib.

During the yatra, Punjab

Brinder Singh Dhillon and several other party leaders accompanied party's former president. The Yatra, which started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu on September 7, will conclude in Srinagar by January 30, with Gandhi hoisting the national flag in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

The march has so far covered Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. (PTI)

# Centre cracks down on 6 YouTube channels for 'spreading fake news'

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/ The Union government has cracked down on six YouTube channels that were found to be spreading fake news to its nearly 20 lakh subscribers, an official statement said on Thursday.

The Fact Check Unit of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the ministry of information & broadcasting said these six channels were working in a coordinated manner and spreading false information and their videos had over 51 crore views. The YouTube channels were found to be spreading fake news about the elections, proceedings in the Supreme Court and Parliament, and the functioning of the government, the statement

said. The channels are - Nation TV with over 5.57 lakh subscribers, Samvaad TV with 10.9 lakh subscribers, Sarokar Bharat (21,100), Nation24 (25,400), Swarnim Bharat (6,070) and Samvaad Samachar (3.48 lakh), the statement said.

A senior official said that the channels Samvaad Samachar, Samvaad TV and Nation TV changed their names to Inside India, Inside Bharat and Nation Weekly respectively, after being "busted" by the Fact Check Unit of PIB. The videos on the channels in question included false claims regarding ban on electronic voting machines, and false statements attributed to senior constitutional functionaries

including the President and the Chief Justice of India. "The channels are part of a fake news economy that thrives on monetization of fake news," the statement said.

It said that the channels use fake, clickbait and sensational thumbnails and images of television news anchors of TV channels to mislead the viewers to believe that the news was authentic and drive traffic to their channels to monetize the videos published by them. This is the second such action by the Fact Check Unit of the PIB. Last month, the unit had exposed three channels peddling fake news and written to YouTube to take them down. (PTI)



# Annual athletic meet of RGT Public Vidyalaya held



PORT BLAIR, JAN 12/--/ As part of celebration of Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda and National Youth Day the RGT Public Vidyalaya conducted its 12th Annual Athletic Meet 2022-23 on Thursday. Smt. Sangeeta Chand, Deputy Education

Officer, South Andaman was the chief guest and declared the meet open. Mr. Karma Toppo, an International Sports person was the guest of honour. The meet started with the march past followed by hoisting of the school flag and declaring the meet open by the

chief guest. The students presented a colorful mass physical display consist of Mass P.T., Dumble Drill, Dance and Yoga. Earlier, Smt. Rita Banerjee, Principal welcomed the gathering. Mr. Joy Kumar Roy, Retd. Deputy Director SAI distributed the

Champion Trophy to Winning House and declared the meet closed. Members of the School Management Committee and parents in large numbers witnessed the day-long programme. Smt. Waheeda Ali, Headmistress, In-charge proposed vote of thanks.

# BJP making 'illegitimate' use of Delhi officers to target AAP: DY CM Sisodia

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 --/ Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday accused the BJP of wielding unconstitutional control over officials in the national capital to target the city government and its ministers. In a related development, AAP's national secretary Pankaj Kumar Gupta has written to DIP stating that the demand of Rs 163.62 crore is 'arbitrary' and 'perverse' as he sought the copies of advertisements whose costs are to be recovered. Addressing a press conference, following the issuance of a notice to AAP to pay Rs 163.62 crore for its

political advertisements allegedly published in the garb of government advertisements, Sisodia said even advertisements of BJP chief ministers are published in Delhi's newspapers. "Will BJP also recover money from them? I want to tell BJP to stop misusing Delhi's officials to target Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and the ministers of Delhi government," the deputy CM told reporters.

Sisodia also said the party has sought a list of advertisements from the

DIP secretary to see what is illegal in them. "Look at the illegitimate use of the government's Directorate of Information and Publicity Secretary Alice Vaz (IAS) to issue a notice to recover the cost of advertisements given in outside states from chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. "In Delhi's newspapers, the advertisements of several BJP CMs of other states are

published and hoardings of their CMs are all over Delhi. Will costs of those be recovered from BJP CMs? "Is it for this reason that BJP wants to keep unconstitutional control over Delhi officers," Sisodia had said earlier in the day in a series of tweets in Hindi. The development of the recovery notice came nearly a month after Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena directed the chief secretary to recover Rs 97 crore from the AAP for political advertisements it published under the veneer of government advertisements. "The recovery notice issued by the Directorate of

Information and Publicity (DIP) also includes the interest on the amount and makes it mandatory for the ruling party in Delhi to pay the whole amount within 10 days," sources had said on Wednesday. "If the AAP convenor fails to do so, all consequential legal action including attachment of the properties of the party shall be taken in time bound manner, as per the earlier order of the Delhi LG," a source had said. (PTI)



# Discussions on Kerala CM candidature irrelevant at present: Tharoor

MALAPPURAM, JAN 12 --/ Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Thursday termed as irrelevant the discussions regarding his chief ministerial candidature and said the next Kerala Assembly election would be held only after three years. Tharoor added that at present, Kerala has a chief minister and an elected government with a good majority. Amid reported discontent within the Congress party over him reaching out to influential religious and community leaders, Tharoor made it clear that he never sought appointment to meet any of them. The Thiruvananthapuram MP said he met some of them recently as they called him and expressed interest to meet him. Tharoor's statement also came a day after the Congress central leadership clarified that it was not proper for any MPs to make statements on their candidature and the Congress has

its own organisational mechanism to choose its candidates. "I don't understand why you (media) are discussing about the chief ministerial candidature now. From the very beginning itself, I have made it clear that there is no relevance for such discussion at present. You have to wait till 2026 (for the next Assembly polls)," the Congress MP told reporters here. The Assembly poll is three years away, there is Lok Sabha polls in 2024 and the party and the people will decide what to do, he said. "As a political representative, we have to be ready for everything," the Lok Sabha member explained. Asked whether he is waiting till 2026 (for asserting his role as the chief minister candidate of the Congress-led UDF), the leader, in a diplomatic manner, said let him live in the present year, then in 2024 and 2025 and then one can think about 2026. (PTI)



# Uphaar fire tragedy: HC declines to stay web series 'Trial by Fire', to be released today

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 --/ The Delhi High Court Thursday declined a plea by Sushil Ansal, convicted in the 1997 Uphaar cinema fire case, to stay the release of web series 'Trial by Fire' said to be based on the incident and scheduled for release on Netflix on January 13. Justice Yashwant Varma denied the interim relief to Ansal and said a detailed order will be uploaded on the court's website later. A massive fire had broken out at the Uphaar cinema during the screening of the Hindi film 'Border' on June 13, 1997, claiming 59 lives. Ansal, who alleged defamation, had urged the court to grant an injunction against the release of the web series, saying even its teaser got 1.5 million views in four days which shows the immediate impact it has. The lawsuit by the 83-year-old Ansal also sought to restrain the circulation and publication of a book titled 'Trial by Fire- The tragic

tale of the Uphaar Tragedy' which was launched in 2016. Ansal claimed the web series directly attacks his personality. Ansal's plea was



vehemently opposed by the counsel for the producers of the web series, Netflix and authors of the book -- Neelam and Shekhar Krishnamoorthy -- who lost their two children in the fire tragedy. In his plea, Ansal said he has been "punished both legally and socially" and the release of the series, based on

the book written by a couple who lost their two children to the fire, will cause irreparable harm to his reputation and breach his right to privacy. "The events are causing and will cause loss of reputation of the plaintiff, public trial, humiliation, stigmatisation and irreparable injury along with causing grave prejudice to the revision petitions pending before this court arising out of the (evidence) tampering case," the suit said. In 2017, the Supreme Court had finally decided the Uphaar cinema blaze case and directed the now 83-year-old Sushil Ansal and his brother Gopal Ansal (74) to pay a fine of Rs 30 crore each. The apex court had then released Sushil Ansal taking into account the period he had already spent in jail. The Ansal brothers and two others were later held guilty of tampering with the evidence related to the trial. (PTI)

# Tribal Chief meets CS



PORT BLAIR, JAN 12/--/ Tribal Chief Smt. Aysha Majid, along with Mr. Rayhaan Pasha called on the Chief Secretary, Mr. Keshav Chandra to brief him about the developmental issues of the Tribal. Mr. Aysha Majid expressed her gratitude to the Chief Secretary for his ever-sympathetic approach towards tribal issues. It is only because of his support the tribal

community, now with a new ray of hope is able to dream of their prosperous future. Smt. Aysha Majid also appreciated the Chief Secretary for his sympathetic hearing to the tribal concerns that under his kind leadership the A&N Administration have been always supportive/ positive towards the tribal community in every field of development.

# ACTA team meets CS



PORT BLAIR, JAN 12/--/ The Office Bearers of Andaman College Teachers Association (ACTA) led by Mr. N. Balakrishnan, President, Dr. K. Venkatesan, Secretary, Dr. Vivek Kumar Sahu, Treasurer and Ms. Jochibed Vincent, Executive

Member met Mr. Keshav Chandra, Chief Secretary, A & N Administration. Issues such as decentralization of power to concerned Principal's to Sanction CL at College level, time bound promotion and regularisation of Leave for the faculties were discussed.

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## Spl focus on NE under PM Modi’s leadership

The Government has accorded a cardinal priority to the development of North East, if the massive jump in budgetary allocations and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the region more than 50 times in the last 8 years are any indication. The North East was previously known for unrest, bandhs and insurgency, but in the last eight years, peace has been established under the leadership of PM Modi. There has been a 74% reduction in insurgency incidents, 60% drop in incidents of attacks on security forces and 89% fall in civilian deaths. About 8,000 misguided youth have surrendered and joined the mainstream, selecting a better future for themselves and their families. Agreements were concluded with the National Liberation Front of Tripura in 2019, The Bru and Bodo in 2020, while the Karbi Agreement was inked in 2021. Besides, the Assam-Meghalaya and Assam-Arunachal border disputes have almost ended, and with the restoration of peace, the north-east region has moved on the path of development. Since 2014, a massive increase in the budgetary allocations to the region has been witnessed. Since 2014, more than 4 lakh crores under 10% Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) have been allocated for the region.

At its recent meeting chaired by the prime minister, the Union Cabinet approved schemes of Ministry Of Development Of North Eastern Region, with an outlay of Rs 12,882.2 crore, for the balance period of the 15th Finance Commission (2022-23 to 2025-26). The actual expenditure in last four years under MDoNER schemes was Rs 7,534.46 crore, whereas the fund available for expenditure in next four years till 2025-26 is Rs 19,482.20 crore (2.60 times more approximately). Massive efforts have been undertaken for infrastructure development in the region and improving connectivity has been the prime focus. For improving Railway connectivity, Rs. 51,019 crore have been spent since 2014. As many as 19 new projects worth Rs. 77,930 crore have been sanctioned. For railways, in comparison to average annual budget allocation of Rs. 2,122 crore during 2009-14, in the past 8 years, there has been a 370% increase in average annual budget allocation totalling Rs. 9,970 crore. For improving road connectivity, 375 projects worth Rs. 1.05 lakh crore are under way. In the next three years, the government 9,476 km roads will be laid under 209 projects. For this the central government is spending Rs. 1,06,004 crore. Air connectivity has also improved massively. In 68 years north east had only nine airports, but it jumped to 17 in a short span of eight years. Air traffic movement in north east has increased 113% since 2014 (weekly basis). To give a boost to air connectivity, Rs. 2,000 crore will be invested in civil aviation in North East region. For improving telecom connectivity, from 2014, Rs.3,466 crore have been spent under 10% GBS. Cabinet has also approved 4G connectivity in 4,525 villages in NE region. The Central government has set a target of 500 days to provide complete telecom connectivity in the region by end of 2023. Waterways are integral to life and culture of North East. The government is undertaking all efforts to develop this important sector in the NE region. Before 2014 there was only 1 national waterway in NE region. Now 20 waterways are declared as national waterways in the region. Recently around Rs. 600 crore have been sanctioned for the development of national waterway 2 and national waterway 16. Improving health infrastructure has remained a key focus over the last eight years. The Government has spent Rs. 31,793.86 crore since 2014-15 in the health sector.

# Centre is making use of LG to get control of MCD

## REFLEX ACTION

Sushil Kutty

The Lt. Governor, Delhi, VK Saxena, acts as if he’s a power unto himself. But everybody knows his loyalty to the Union Ministry of Home is absolute. The Delhi Government is at the mercy of frequent interventions, call them interferences. And if Delhi is suffering, it is because of this unwavering subservience to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the relentless assaults on federalism. If left unchecked, the Lt. Governor’s actions will be the death of governance, if it isn’t already.

The list of the Lt. Governor messing up legitimate situations by poking his nose into affairs that do not fall in his domain is long, but the latest is in a class of its own--the election of the Delhi Mayor, and the Deputy Mayor, which descended into chaos and senseless violence thanks to this proxy of the Centre, the Lt. Governor, much to the disgust of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Things went completely out of hand, and the MCD House had to be adjourned following differences over administration of oath to 10 nominated members, with a sleight of House rules engineered to benefit the BJP’s Mayor, and Deputy Mayor, candidates.

Thereafter, CM Kejriwal wrote a letter to Saxena stating that Article 243R of the Constitution prevented nominated members from taking part in MCD elections. And, if allowed to go through, as the BJP members wanted, the administration of the oath to the 10 nominated members would have helped the BJP in getting their mayor and deputy mayor candidates elected. Following the nefarious attempts to gain backdoor control of the MCD House, Kejriwal wrote the 3-page letter, pointing out to Saxena previous “incidents” of flagrant flouting of MCD rules by bypassing the Delhi government. Among

them the foisting of favoured names on the Haj Committee, and refusing to nominate the senior-most member as the presiding officer.

Directions from the Lt. Governor of Delhi have a history of being “bizarre” forcing “administration officers” to silently protest even as they were scared of the consequences. This is because the Lt. Governor is not beyond using his post to “control the bureaucracy through services”, and not shy of misusing his powers. In the latest case of misuse of power, the MCD House had to be adjourned and the election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor put on hold. The BJP insisted that the nominated members should get precedence and take the oath before the elected members so that they could vote first. Basically it is a power tussle. The Centre versus the Delhi Government. For more than eight years, Chief Minister Kejriwal has had a hostile Lt. Governor to deal with, one Lt. Guv after another. There was Najeeb Jung, then Anil Bajjal, and now VK Saxena, who happens to be the most belligerent.

The Delhi Lt. Governor mandate under the Modi Government appears to make life miserable for Kejriwal and his Council of Ministers. The Lt. Guv of Delhi revels in undermining the Kejriwal government. The Lt. Guv’s jurisdiction appears to be extremely flexible. Lt. Governor Saxena has often suspended officers and bypassed the Delhi government. This despite the Constitution of India demarcating separate powers for the elected

government and the Lt. Governor. Leaving out police, public order and land, the elected AAP government has control of concurrent and State lists. But the Lt. Governor has been flagrantly flouting the rules and directly issuing orders regardless of whether the subject fell under his jurisdiction or not, if he had the powers or not. Saxena bypasses the Council of Ministers and deals directly with the Chief Secretary.

Kejriwal alleged in his letter to the Lt. Governor that the Chief Secretary was no less a power unto himself and like the Lt. Guv the Chief Secretary also completely bypassed the elected government. Apparently, the powers enjoyed by the Lt. Governor are skewed. Saxena can transfer and suspend any officer of the Delhi government. This places the officers completely under the control of the Centre; their present status and their future standing. They are easily intimidated. They are sheep to the Centre’s wolf. The Lt. Governor has been targeting the Delhi government relentlessly with probes and inquiries; amidst charges of corruption against individual ministers. Meddling is the Centre’s most favourite word. Second only to the term ‘Operation Lotus’, which is what the central agencies’ are up to with their actions against Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

The BJP after losing the Delhi MCD to the AAP after 15 years of holding on to power cannot stomach the loss of power at grassroots level. Now, the world’s largest party wants a backdoor entry, its chosen avenue whenever the electors deny them the front-door. Bottom-line: Federalism to the Modi government is just a word, useless, and worthless, what Shashi Tharoor calls ‘flocinaucinihilipilification’. (IPA)



School children visiting Rashtrapati Nilayam, in Secunderabad

# Gold appears to be in its march towards a historical high

2023 may well be a year of gold. This is because despite several negatives the yellow metal has outperformed everything else. And with the New Year expected to unravel all that traditionally has worked in favour of gold, this asset class appears to be non-stoppable right now.

IMF has warned that a third of the global economy is likely to fall into recession this year. Eurozone and Britain have already shown signs of such a crisis. And this is very much the likely scenario in the United States. Stock markets have already seen a blood bath and further falls are indicated in the days to come. Central banks persisting with their tightening plans and more uncertainties are staring at the world as it descends deeper into recession. These are conditions that gold feasts on.

There were a series of negatives for gold, specifically, in 2022. Fed raised rates at the second most aggressive pace last year; the US dollar index surged 30 percent in 17 months. Most significantly, the rise in the US dollar and real interest rates was much greater than that recorded for 2013 and even larger than in 2008, the year when global financial crisis struck hard. But last year gold declined only 19 percent compared to 30 percent and 34 percent in 2008 and 2013 respectively. Gold enthusiasts revel at the performance of gold despite strong bearish

fundamentals and aver that the yellow metal is only roughly 10 percent away from its historical high despite heavy headwinds of the past nine months and nothing seems to be capable of stopping it from breaking out to a new all-time high. That would be the most remarkable breakout in half a century’s time.

The World Gold Council notes in its outlook for 2023 that the global economy is at an inflection point after being hit by various shocks over the past year and going forward, this interplay between inflation and central-bank intervention will be key in determining the outlook for gold’s performance.

The council cites economic consensus that calls for weaker global growth akin to a short, possibly localised recession; falling – yet elevated – inflation; and the end of rate hikes in most developed markets. The environment carries both headwinds and tailwinds for gold. It notes that a mild recession, coupled with weaker earnings, has historically been gold-positive while further weakening of the dollar as inflation recedes could also provide support for gold. Additionally,

geopolitical flare-ups should continue to make gold a valuable tail risk hedge. Also, a likely improvement in Chinese economic growth should boost consumer gold demand.

Elaborating on the bumpy economic ride ahead, the council warns about many signs of weakening output due to the speed and aggressiveness of hiking moves by central banks, with consensus forecasts putting global GDP to rise by just 2.1 percent this year. Excluding the global financial crisis and Covid, this would mark the slowest pace of global growth in four decades and meet the IMF’s previous definition of a global recession – i.e. growth below 2.5 percent. The council lists four key factors which will have a bearing on gold’s performance, at least two of which are positive for the metal. These include economic expansion, which is positive form the point of view of consumption and risk and uncertainty, both of which are positive for investment in gold. The other factors are opportunity cost, which is negative for investment and momentum, which is contingent on price and positioning. It has been found that gold typically does well during times of recession.

Delivering positive returns during five of the seven recessions in the past. A sharp retrenchment in growth is sufficient for gold to do well, particularly if inflation is also high or rising. A dollar peak has historically been good for gold, yielding positive gold returns 80 percent of the time.

The council’s latest Gold Demand Trends report reveals that gold demand in the third quarter of 2022 hit 1,181 tonnes, up 28 percent year-on-year. Strong demand pushed the year-to-date total to its pre-Covid levels. Gold demand was bolstered by consumers and central banks, although there was a notable contraction in investment demand.

Jewellery consumption continued to rebound and is now back to pre-pandemic levels, reaching 523 tonnes, 10 percent higher compared to the third quarter of 2021. Much of this growth was spearheaded by India’s urban consumers who drove up demand 17 percent to 146 tonnes. Similarly impressive growth was also seen in much of the Middle East, with Saudi Arabian jewellery consumption up 20 percent since the third quarter of 2021, and United Arab Emirates up 30 percent for the same period. Chinese jewellery demand also saw a modest 5 percent increase, driven by improved consumer confidence and a dip in the local gold price, prompting the release of some pent-up demand. (IPA)

| Conventional Crossword |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |
|------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|
| 1                      | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7 | 8  |
| 9                      | 10 |    |    |    | 11 |   |    |
| 12                     |    |    |    |    | 13 |   |    |
|                        |    |    | 14 | 15 |    |   |    |
| 16                     | 17 |    |    |    |    |   |    |
|                        |    |    | 18 |    | 19 |   | 20 |
|                        | 21 | 22 |    |    |    |   |    |
| 23                     |    |    |    | 24 | 25 |   |    |
| 26                     |    |    | 27 |    |    |   |    |
| 28                     |    |    |    | 29 |    |   |    |

- ACROSS
- 1 Slender support
- 5 Pretend
- 10 Flower
- 11 Greek letter
- 12 Saturn's largest satellite
- 13 Decay
- 14 Colour
- 16 Threefold
- 18 Show clearly
- 21 American elk
- 23 Fish
- 24 Proportion
- 26 Consumed
- 27 Climbing plant
- 28 Examine
- 29 Whirlpool
- DOWN
- 2 Tenth part
- 3 Period of time
- 4 Becomes united
- 6 Hither
- 7 Unaccented
- 8 Floor covering
- 9 Let it stand
- 15 Daydream
- 17 Far apart
- 19 Famous
- 20 Love god
- 22 Lyric poems
- 23 Domestic animal
- 25 Also

| SUDOKU:3755 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|             |   |   |   | 9 |   |   | 3 | 2 |
|             |   | 3 | 8 |   |   | 9 |   | 7 |
|             |   |   | 3 |   |   |   | 5 |   |
|             | 6 |   |   | 2 |   | 1 |   |   |
|             | 9 | 5 |   |   |   | 4 | 2 |   |
|             |   | 1 |   | 3 |   |   | 8 |   |
|             | 8 |   |   |   | 7 |   |   |   |
| 6           |   | 2 |   |   | 9 | 7 |   |   |
| 1           | 7 |   |   | 6 |   |   |   |   |

| Yesterday's Solution 3754 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3                         | 6 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
| 4                         | 1 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 2 |
| 8                         | 7 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 5 |
| 1                         | 8 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 6 |
| 5                         | 9 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 7 |
| 6                         | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 3 |
| 7                         | 5 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 |
| 2                         | 3 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 9 |
| 9                         | 4 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 |

| Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1763 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R                                    | E | S | I | S | T |   | S | E |
| I                                    |   | T |   | T | O | T | E | M |
| F                                    | R | A | C | A | S |   | C | U |
| T                                    |   | T | O | T | S |   |   | A |
|                                      |   | I | R | E |   | P | A | C |
| P                                    | U | C | E |   | T | A | T |   |
| O                                    |   |   |   | P | E | R | T | B |
| P                                    | E | N |   | E | N | T | I | C |
|                                      | T | A | M | E | S |   | R | N |
| G                                    | A | P |   |   | L | E | G | E |

**DISCLAIMER**

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## KCR makes veiled attack on BJP, deplores religious fanaticism, divisiveness

**HYDERABAD, JAN 12 /--/** In a veiled attack on the BJP, ruling BRS president and Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, also known as KCR, on Thursday said stoking religious and caste fanaticism and divisiveness in society would lead to undesirable circumstances and a "Taliban-like situation." Rao, who addressed a public meeting after inaugurating an integrated district Collectorate at Mahabubabad, said peace, tolerance and wishing for the welfare of all are important if society is to make great progress. "If religious and caste fanaticism are promoted, people are divided, such are the policies followed, it will become like hell. It will become like a Taliban-like affair, like Afghanistan, and lead to a terrible situation. Due to this hatred, circumstances in which the country's lifeline itself would get burnt would arise. So, especially, youth should be alert," he said.

Saying that the country and State can achieve progress only if there is a progressive-minded and "impartial" government at the Centre, KCR said he favoured Telangana showing the way forward to the entire country in future politics. The Telangana chief minister alleged that the GSDP of Telangana did not grow as it should have as the incumbent government at the Centre failed to perform on par with the State government. The GSDP of Telangana was Rs 5 lakh crore at the time of State formation in 2014 and it rose to Rs 11.50 lakh crore today, Rao said. "Due to the Centre's inefficient policies, Telangana alone lost Rs 3 lakh crore," he said. These figures are given by economists, RBI and CAG, he claimed. The GSDP should have been Rs 14.50 lakh crore, but it stood at Rs 11.50 lakh crore due to the Centre's policies, Rao alleged. (PTI)

## Bird flu outbreak in state-run poultry farm in Kerala, 1800 birds dead

**KOZHIKODE, JAN 12 /--/** A bird flu outbreak has been reported in a state-run poultry farm in Kozhikode district of Kerala as around 1,800 chickens have died of the infection, official sources said. The presence of H5N1 variant, which has an additional proliferative capacity, was confirmed among the poultry in the local farm managed by



the district panchayat here on Wednesday, the sources said. J Chinchu Rani, Kerala minister for animal husbandry, gave instructions to take urgent preventive measures as per the Centre's guidelines and protocol in this regard, they said.

As initial tests indicated the outbreak of bird flu, the samples were sent to the high security lab in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) for accurate diagnosis which confirmed the avian influenza, a government statement said. There were over 5,000 chickens in the farm and of them 1,800 died so far due to the infection. The culling and other further procedures would be done with the coordination of various government departments under the aegis of the district authorities, it added. (PTI)

## 'Haath Se Haath Jodo' campaign will reach out to people at block, district levels in Delhi: Cong

**NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/** 'Haath Se Haath Jodo' campaign, an extension of Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra, will reach out to people at block and district levels in the national capital, Congress leaders said here on Thursday. "Haath Se Haath Jodo Abhiyan is the next step after the Bharat Jodo Yatra and the purpose of these campaigns is to end hatred among people across the country. We got a lot of support from people of Delhi during Bharat Jodo Yatra and hope to receive the same response for this campaign as well," former Congress MLA Anil Bhardwaj said. The Congress will start 'Haath Se Haath Jodo' campaign from January 26 to March 26 in order to spread the message of the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra across the country. Former Bihar Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha, who will head the 'Haath Se Haath Jodo' campaign in Delhi, said that the party will reach out to people at block and district levels first in the national capital. "We will meet various leaders of Congress in Delhi. We will also meet the candidates who lost in recently concluded MCD elections. The campaign will be held at three levels - block, district and state," Jha said. The Congress leader further said that foot marches and public meetings will be organised by the party and the campaign will be concluded with a rally by senior leader Rahul Gandhi. (PTI)

## Uphaar fire tragedy: HC declines to stay web series 'Trial by Fire', to be released today

**NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/** The Delhi High Court Thursday declined a plea by Sushil Ansal, convicted in the 1997 Uphaar cinema fire case, to stay the release of web series 'Trial by Fire' said to be based on the incident and scheduled for release on Netflix on January 13. Justice Yashwant Varma denied the interim relief to Ansal and said a detailed order will be uploaded on the court's website later. A massive fire had broken out at the Uphaar cinema during the screening of the Hindi film 'Border' on June 13, 1997, claiming 59 lives. Ansal, who alleged defamation, had urged the court to grant an injunction against the

release of the web series, saying even its teaser got 1.5 million views in four days which shows the immediate impact it has. The lawsuit by the 83-year-old Ansal also sought to restrain the circulation and publication of a book titled 'Trial by Fire- The tragic tale of the Uphaar Tragedy' which was launched in 2016. Ansal claimed the web series directly attacks his personality. Ansal's plea was vehemently opposed by the counsel for the producers of the

web series, Netflix and authors of the book -- Neelam and Shekhar Krishnamoorthy -- who lost their two children in the fire tragedy.

In his plea, Ansal said he has been "punished both legally and socially" and the release of the series, based on the book written by

a couple who lost their two children to the fire, will cause irreparable harm to his reputation and breach his right to privacy. "The events are causing and will cause loss of reputation of the



Tourists purchasing famous Kashmiri wood carving items from a vendor at outside the Nishat Garden in Srinagar

# BJP making 'illegitimate' use of Delhi officers to target AAP: DY CM Sisodia

**NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/** Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday accused the BJP of wielding unconstitutional control over officials in the national capital to target the city government and its ministers.

In a related development, AAP's national secretary Pankaj Kumar Gupta has written to DIP stating that the demand of Rs 163.62 crore is 'arbitrary' and 'perverse' as he sought the copies of advertisements whose costs are to be recovered. Addressing a press conference, following the issuance of a notice to AAP to pay Rs 163.62 crore for its political advertisements allegedly published in the garb of government advertisements, Sisodia said even advertisements of BJP chief ministers are published in Delhi's newspapers. "Will BJP also recover money from

them? I want to tell BJP to stop misusing Delhi's officials to target Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and the ministers of Delhi government," the deputy CM told reporters.

Sisodia also said the party has sought a list of advertisements from the DIP secretary to see what is illegal in them. "Look at the illegitimate use of the unconstitutional control over Delhi's officers -- BJP asked Delhi government's Directorate of Information and Publicity Secretary Alice Vaz (IAS) to issue a notice to recover the cost of



advertisements given in outside states from chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. "In Delhi's newspapers, the advertisements of several BJP CMs of other states are published and hoardings of their CMs are all over Delhi. Will costs of those be recovered from BJP CMs?" Is it for this reason that BJP wants to keep unconstitutional control over Delhi's officers," Sisodia had said earlier in the day in a series of tweets in

Hindi. The development of the recovery notice came nearly a month after Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena directed the chief secretary to recover Rs 97 crore from the AAP for political advertisements it published under the veneer of government advertisements.

"The recovery notice issued by the Directorate of Information and Publicity (DIP) also includes the interest on the amount and makes it mandatory for the ruling party in Delhi to pay the whole amount within 10 days," sources had said on Wednesday. "If the AAP convenor fails to do so, all consequential legal action including attachment of the properties of the party shall be taken in time bound manner, as per the earlier order of the Delhi LG," a source had said. (PTI)

## Discussions on Kerala CM candidature irrelevant at present: Tharoor

**MALAPPURAM, JAN 12 /--/** Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Thursday termed as irrelevant the discussions regarding his chief ministerial candidature and said the next Kerala Assembly election would be held only after three years.

Tharoor added that at present, Kerala has a chief minister and an elected government with a good majority. Amid reported discontent within the Congress party over him reaching out to influential religious and community leaders, Tharoor made it clear that he never sought appointment to meet any of them. The Thiruvananthapuram MP said he met some of them recently as they

called him and expressed interest to meet him. Tharoor's statement also came a day after the Congress leadership clarified that it was not proper for any MPs to make statements on their candidature and the Congress has its own organisational mechanism to choose its candidates. "I don't understand why you (media) are discussing about the chief ministerial candidature now. From the very beginning itself, I have made it clear that there is no relevance for such discussion at present. You have to wait till 2026 (for the next Assembly polls)," the Congress MP told reporters here. The Assembly poll is three years away, there is Lok Sabha polls in 2024 and the party and the people will decide what to do, he said.

"As a political representative, we have to be ready for everything," the Lok Sabha member explained. Asked whether he is waiting till 2026 (for asserting his role as the chief minister candidate of the Congress-led UDF), the leader, in a diplomatic manner, said let him live in the present year, then in 2024 and 2025 and then one can think about 2026. While pointing out the criticisms from within the party about him meeting some religious and community leaders recently, Tharoor said he always maintains a good relationship with everyone and he won't say no when they invite him for a meeting. "I have not sought an appointment to meet any individual. In the case of all community leaders whom I have met, they called me and wanted me to meet them," he added.

Amidst reported indication of several party MPs including Tharoor shifting their focus to state politics, AICC general secretary in-charge of Kerala, Tariq Anwar on Wednesday had said it was not proper for the MPs to make statements about their candidature on their own. (PTI)

## Minimum temps rise slightly in many northern states, return of cold wave in northwest India predicted next week

**NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/** A fresh spell of cold wave in northwest India next week would see mercury dropping by three to five degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department said on Thursday even as the chilly conditions abated slightly in many states providing relief to people.

Western disturbance and consequent stronger surface winds have significantly improved fog conditions over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, and western Uttar Pradesh.

However, dense to very dense fog continues over eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Delhi witnessed light rainfall on Thursday and recorded a minimum temperature of 9.3 degrees Celsius -- two notches above the season's average -- with the weather department predicting a return of cold wave conditions in the city next week. The national capital recorded a cold wave spell from January 5 to January 9, the longest in

the month in a decade, according to IMD data. In Rajasthan, Fatehpur in Sikar and Churu recorded

minimum temperatures of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius and minus 1.5 degrees Celsius on January 5. (PTI)

## Rajasthan CM reiterates suggestion to implement Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme across nation

**JAIPUR, JAN 12 /--/** Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday reiterated that the state government's Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme should be implemented across India.

The Centre should also take the initiative to make a social security act and implement the Old Pension Scheme for government employees, Gehlot said at the closing ceremony of the All India Presiding Officers' Conference at the Rajasthan Legislative



Assembly here. Claiming that he had already requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gehlot said he was reiterating that his government's Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme should be implemented in the whole country.

As part of the scheme, the Rajasthan government provides health insurance of Rs 10 lakh and also bears the expense for organ transplants. Treatments in in- and out-patient departments at government hospitals are also free, he said.

Laying stress on the need for social security for the needy, Gehlot said the Centre should make a social security act. "Social security should be compulsory. It is the responsibility of the government to look after the needy families," he said.

The chief minister added that Rajasthan was providing social security to one crore people, including the elderly, widows and single women. Adding that Rajasthan had revived the Old Pension Scheme for state government employees on humanitarian grounds, he said the move was criticised but the decision was taken after doing all the calculations.

The Old Pension Scheme should also be implemented across India, he said. (PTI)

### AFFIDAVIT

I, No. 14648478H Rank NK Name CHANDAN BHUNIA presently residing at Military Station, Brichgunj, Port Blair, South Andaman- 744103, A & N Islands do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as follows:

1. That I am a citizen of India and residing at the above mentioned address.
2. That ANITA BHUNIA is my wife and her correct date of birth is 05.02.1987.
3. That in my service records my wife's date of birth has mentioned as 15.02.1987 which is her incorrect date of birth, whereas in her Matriculation certificate, her Aadhar Card and Pan Card her date of birth mentioned as 05.02.1987 which is her correct date of birth.
4. That kindly consider my wife's correct date of birth as 05.02.1987 for all future purposes.
5. That I shall be responsible if my above statement is found to be untrue at a later stage.
6. That it is my true and correct statement.

DEPONENT

### VERIFICATION

Verified at Port Blair on this Tuesday, January 2023 that the contents of the above said affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing material has been concealed there from.

DEPONENT



## Boy breaks security cordon at PM roadshow, being questioned

### Yuva Shakti is country's driving force, Modi says at National Youth Festival

**HUBBALLI, JAN 12 /--/** A young boy, not even in his teens, who cut through the security cordon and tried to hand over a garland to Prime Minister Modi during a roadshow here on Thursday, was taken away from the scene and is being questioned by the local police. According to police officials and grabs from the live video streaming of the event, the boy, who was seen rushing towards Prime Minister Modi's motorcade with a garland in hand, managed to reach very close to Prime Minister Modi. The Prime Minister extended his hand to accept the garland from above the car door but could not reach the boy. The Special Protection Group (SPG) personnel got hold of the garland before local police secured the boy and removed him from the scene. SPG passed on the boy's garland to the Prime Minister who then put it inside his vehicle. The incident happened during a road show by the Prime Minister as he was reaching the venue for inaugurating the 26th National Youth Festival here. PM Modi was

standing on the 'running board' of his moving car and waving at an enthusiastic crowd that lined up the route in large numbers as he headed to Railway Sports Ground from the airport, when the incident occurred. Senior police officials told PTI that the boy who was whisked away from the spot was being questioned. Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner Raman Gupta said the incident cannot be called a security breach as everyone (allowed to wave at the PM and greet him from both sides of the road) had been frisked and checked. "We cannot call it a security breach because we had frisked and checked everybody who stood on both sides of the road. Even the garlands were thoroughly inspected," Raman Gupta told PTI. Gupta added that over 3,000 policemen were deployed as part of the security arrangements and the entire road was barricaded. "But suddenly this child jumped and rushed towards the Prime Minister unexpectedly. This was despite us thoroughly telling every participant of the event about the dos and don'ts," the Police



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waving at people during the road show, in Hubballi on Thursday

Commissioner said. As live pictures showed, along the route, PM Modi was greeted by waving at the crowd, many of whom were seen chanting 'Modi, Modi' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' slogans. At some places, people showered flower petals as the motorcade passed through the stretch slowly. The Prime Minister inaugurated the National Youth Festival here on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Yuva Shakti is India's driving force and the country's economic growth provides great opportunity to the youth, the Prime Minister said here on Thursday. "Yuva shakti is the driving force of India's journey, the next 25 years are important for building the nation. Yuva Shakti's dreams decide India's direction. Yuva Shakti's aspirations decide India's destination. Yuva Shakti's passion decides India's path," Modi said. The Prime Minister further said that to harness the Yuva Shakti we need to be young with our thoughts and efforts. "To be young is to be dynamic in our efforts, to be

panoramic in perspective, to be pragmatic. If the world looks to us for solutions it is because of the dedication of our Amrit generation (the youth)," he added. The 26th edition of the festival, which will be held till January 16 at Hubballi-Dharwad, is being organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the Government of Karnataka. The Prime Minister said from toys to tourism, defence to digital, the nation is making headlines across the world. "Today there are global voices saying this century is India's century. It is your century, century of India's youth," Modi said. The Prime Minister underscored the need for positive disruption to overtake even the most advanced country in the world. "This is a special time in history. You are a special generation. You have a special mission of making an impact for India on the global scene. Yuva Shakti (youth power) is the nation's driving force and the country's economic growth provides great opportunity for its youth," he added. (PTI)



Kuldeep Yadav celebrating after bowling Dasun Shanaka out. KL Rahul scored unbeaten 64 as India defeated Sri Lanka by 4 wickets in the second ODI at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Thursday. With the win, India also gained an unassailable lead of 2-0 in the three-match series. India had won the first game by 67 run — Photo : Shyamal Maitra

(Details on page-12)

## Joshimath: Market rate of compensation will be decided keeping stakeholders' ineterst in mind, says Uttarakhand CM

### Demolition of 2 'unsafe' hotels begins

**DEHRADUN, JAN 12 /--/** Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Thursday said a committee would decide the market rate for compensation to be paid to the families affected in Joshimath by keeping in mind the interests of stakeholders. A 19-member committee headed by Chamoli district magistrate Himanshu Khurana was set up on Wednesday to distribute an interim assistance of Rs 1.50 lakh among each affected family and decide the rate at which compensation is to be paid. "People will get the best compensation possible. The state government will do all it can to properly rehabilitate them. Protecting their life and property is our top priority," Dhami said at a meeting with the committee. On the Rs 1.50 lakh being paid immediately to each affected family for which Rs 45 crore has

already been released, the chief minister said: "It is only an interim relief. Details of the final compensation and rehabilitation are being worked out." Dhami said a wrong impression was being created about Joshimath that could hit the livelihoods of the local people. "The winter games in Auli are beginning in February and the Char Dham Yatra in a few months. Sending a message outside Joshimath that the entire town is sinking is wrong. It will adversely impact the local economy," the CM said. He also said only 20-25 per cent houses in Joshimath were affected by land subsidence and not the whole town -- an impression being wrongly created by some. "The disaster has hit 600-700 houses, which is only 20-25 per cent of the town's entire area. But an atmosphere is built around Joshimath that the whole town is sinking, which is not true," the

chief minister added. According to him, creating an impression like this could harm the local people's livelihoods, which are based on tourism and pilgrimage. Dhami said the interim assistance would reach the bank accounts of the families affected by this evening or Friday. He also called for a collective effort to strengthen the morale of people to overcome this phase. The chief minister also held a meeting with Indo-Tibetan Border Police and National Disaster Response Force personnel deployed on the ground and scientists from different organisations studying the land subsidence problem in Joshimath. Dhami began his day in Joshimath by offering prayers at the Narsingh temple. "I performed a puja at the Narsingh temple this (Thursday) morning and prayed to the lord, seeking His blessings for the safety and

security of this town and its residents," Dhami, who has been in Joshimath since Wednesday, said. Several meetings are lined up for the day in which all matters related to Joshimath will be discussed, he added. When told of reports about cracks appearing in houses in Karnaprayag, he said these had been there for some time but still they would also be discussed. Meanwhile, the process of demolishing two "unsafe" hotels in subsidence-hit Joshimath began on Thursday evening with an agreement between the administration and the property owners who had stalled the exercise for the last two days demanding compensation. Hotels Malari Inn and Mount View had developed cracks and were precariously leaning towards each other posing a threat to the settlements around them, officials said. The exercise has begun under

the technical supervision of Roorkee-based Central Building Research Institute with Hotel Malari Inn, disaster secretary Ranjit Sinha told reporters here. The demolition of the hotels was scheduled to be undertaken on Tuesday and all preparations had been done. However, the process could not start as their owners staged a dharna demanding compensation along the lines of what was offered to those displaced by the Badrinath renovation masterplan. "First, the iron sheets shading the hotel's roof will be removed. JCBs will also be used wherever needed. But everything will be done under the technical supervision of CBRI," an official engaged in the operation said. "It will be dismantled in such a manner that no harm is caused to the structures nearby," he said, adding that the process will take time. (PTI)

### AT A GLANCE

I-T dept recovers

**Rs 11 cr after raids at state 'beedi' firms linked to politician**

**NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, JAN 12 /--/** The Income-tax department has recovered over Rs 11 crore in cash after it conducted raids at various locations and businesses in West Bengal linked to a politician and some others, official sources said. The raids were launched on Wednesday at about two dozen locations in state capital Kolkata and Murshidabad and covered some 'beedi' manufacturing companies and some other businesses. The 'beedi' factories are linked to a local politician and the I-T teams have recovered more than Rs 11 crore in cash till now, they said. (PTI)

## Extraordinary attack on judiciary: Cong on Vice-Prez's Kesavananda Bharati case verdict remarks

**NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/** The Congress on Thursday described Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar's remarks questioning the landmark 1973 Kesavananda Bharati case verdict as an "extraordinary attack on the judiciary", and said that a "no-holds-barred assault" on one constitutional institution by another was quite unprecedented.

Vice-President Dhankhar had on Wednesday criticised the scrapping of the NJAC Act in 2015 and also questioned the Kesavananda Bharati case verdict, saying it set a wrong precedent and that he disagrees with the Supreme Court ruling that Parliament can amend the Constitution but not its basic structure. "In my 18 years as an MP, I've never heard anyone criticise the 1973 Kesavananda Bharati judgment of the Supreme Court," Congress general secretary in-charge Jairam Ramesh said in a tweet. "In fact, legal luminaries of BJP like Arun Jaitley hailed it as a milestone. Now, the Chairman of Rajya Sabha says it was wrong. Extraordinary attack on the

judiciary!" he tweeted. It also bears mention that a "no-holds-barred assault" on one Constitutional institution by another is quite unprecedented, Ramesh said in another tweet.

"Having different views is one thing, but the Vice President has taken the confrontation with the Supreme Court to an altogether different level!" he said. Earlier, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram said Dhankhar is "wrong" in stating that Parliament is supreme and his views should warn every Constitution-loving citizen to be alert to the dangers ahead. Reacting to Dhankhar's remarks, Chidambaram, a lawyer, said on Twitter, "The Hon'ble Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is wrong when he says that Parliament is supreme. It is the Constitution that is supreme." The "basic structure" doctrine was evolved to prevent a majoritarian-driven assault on the foundational principles of the Constitution, the former Union minister said. "Suppose Parliament, by a majority, voted to convert the parliamentary system into a

Presidential system. Or repeal the State List in Schedule VII and take away the exclusive legislative powers of the States. Would such amendments be valid," former Union minister said in a series of tweets.

After the NJAC Act was struck down, nothing prevented the government from introducing a new Bill, the senior Congress leader said. "The striking down of one Act does not mean that the 'basic structure' doctrine is wrong," he added. "In fact, the Hon'ble Chairman's views should warn every Constitution-loving citizen to be alert to the dangers ahead," Chidambaram said. At a press conference here, Congress' media department head Pawan Kherra also hit out at Dhankhar's remarks. "With due respect to the office of the vice president and the gentlemen who occupy that office, I think he needs to go back to his textbooks. The Constitution of India is supreme, not the legislature. The Constitution is bigger than all of us. That is the supreme guiding principle we need to follow and we follow," he said. (PTI)

## Amid calls for recalling Guv Ravi, TN govt apprises Prez

**NEW DELHI/CHENNAI, JAN 12 /--/** Amidst the intense tussle between the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu and Governor RN Ravi, the state government on Thursday apprised President Droupadi Murmu over the issue and submitted a memorandum, the content of which was not disclosed immediately. DMK Parliamentary Party leader T R Baalu told reporters in New Delhi that Tamil Nadu law minister S Regupathy, who led a delegation, handed over to the President what state Chief Minister M K Stalin has "written", but repeatedly insisted the content of the communication was only known to the chief minister. Stalin's communication was submitted to the President in a sealed cover, he added. In his brief interaction in Tamil with reporters at the national capital, Baalu refused to divulge the content of the letter submitted to the President, but only kept saying it was on behalf of the government and handed over by the TN law minister.



He indicated it could be 'presumed' the ongoing issues concerning the Governor, his 'departure from traditions' could have been included. "We don't know what is the conclusion portion as it is between the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the President of India... What the TN CM said has been conveyed to the President," he said, flanked by Regupathy and Lok Sabha member A Raja. "We have told the President to go through (the memorandum) and take appropriate action as you

(she) may deem fit," he added. Ravi deviating from his customary address to the state Assembly on Monday and Stalin piloting a resolution against it had deepened the already strained relations between the state government and the Raj Bhavan, who have been at loggerheads over a number of issues including the NEET exemption to Tamil Nadu. The chorus for Ravi's recall have since grown stronger in the state, especially from DMK's allies, although the BJP has backed the Governor. (PTI)

### Not fair to comment: Army Chief on his predecessor's remarks on theaterisation

**NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/** Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande on Thursday chose not to respond to recent comments by his predecessor Gen MM Naravane that framing a national security strategy was a prerequisite to take forward the ambitious theaterisation plan. Gen Pande said an integrated and tri-services response to meet future security challenges is an "imperative" and that there was a need to get "right joint tri-services structures in place". "It is not fair for me to comment (on Gen Naravane's remarks). But I think in the future, integrated and tri-services response to meet future security challenges is an imperative and towards this, I think, we need to get right joint tri-services structures in place," Gen Pande said at a press conference. He was asked to comment on the former Army Chief's remarks. "Just to elaborate, we are looking at theatre command as a single entity looking after all security aspects and issues in a geographical area under one general commander. So I leave it here just highlighting the importance of theatreisation but stop short of commenting on what my predecessor's views were," Gen Pande said. The Army Chief said the process of



Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pande addressing a press conference ahead of the Army Day, in New Delhi on Thursday

consultations and deliberations among the three services on the theaterisation plan was underway. Delivering a talk on theaterisation at the 4th General KV Krishna Rao Memorial Lecture last December, Gen Naravane had said, "Theaterisation is not an end, it is only a means to an end. And that end has to be specified first in the form of a national defence strategy. That defence strategy, in turn, has to flow out of a national security strategy." "Unless there is a national security strategy in place, to just keep talking about theaterisation is actually putting the cart before the horse," he said. Gen Naravane was the Chief of Army Staff from December 31, 2019 to April 30, 2022. According to the theaterisation plan, each of the theatre commands will have units of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after security challenges in a specified geographical territory under an operational commander. At present, the Army, Navy and the Air Force have separate commands. Initially, a plan was firm up for the creation of an Air Defence Command and Maritime Theatre Command. (PTI)

## GBPH FEELS THE PINCH THE HARD WAY

From page-1

The current nursing staff is not sufficient to handle the increased workload. As a result of shortage of nurses in the hospital, critical areas like the Dialysis unit have been facing a lot of difficulties. Two nurses have been handling about 6-7 Dialysis machines. Patients have been complaining about this problem for a long time. In the same manner, various other units which require the services of nurses are also facing problems due to shortage of nursing staff. Nurses are the backbone of the healthcare system of any country and shortage of nurses has resulted in negative impact in smooth delivery of health care services to the patients. GB Pant Hospital having 500 bedded capacity and a number of health centres located across the islands, providing the required Nursing staff in these health centres has emerged as a challenge to the Directorate of Health Services.



## Minimal airline delays, cancellations a day after US system breakdown

WASHINGTON, JAN 12 /--/ Delays and cancellations among flights across the United States were minimal on Thursday, a day after a system that offers safety information to pilots failed, grounding US air traffic and leading to thousands of stranded travellers.

There were 636 delays into, within or out of the US as of Thursday morning, according to flight-tracking website Flight Aware. There were 82 cancellations. The Federal Aviation Administration said Wednesday that preliminary indications "traced the outage to a damaged database file." The agency said it would take steps to avoid another similar disruption. The breakdown showed how much American air travel depends on the computer system that generates alerts called NOTAMs or Notice to Air Missions. Before a plane takes off, pilots and airline dispatchers must review the notices, which include details about bad weather, runway closures or other temporary factors that could affect the flight. The system was once telephone-based but moved online years ago. The system broke down late Tuesday and was not fixed until midmorning Wednesday. The FAA took the rare step of

preventing any planes from taking off for a time, and the cascading chaos led to more than 1,300 flight cancellations and 9,000 delays by early Wednesday evening on the



East Coast, according to FlightAware. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg told a news conference that the problems "led to a ground stop because of the way safety information was moving through the system." After the failures were fixed, he warned that travellers could continue to see some effects "rippling through the system." Buttigieg said his agency would now try to learn why the system went down. Longtime aviation insiders could not recall an outage of such magnitude caused by a technology failure. Some compared it in scope to the nationwide shutdown of airspace after the 2001 terrorist attacks. (AP)

## UAE names oil company chief to lead UN climate talks COP28 Decision draws immediate criticism

DUBAI, JAN 12 /--/ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Thursday named a veteran technocrat who both leads Abu Dhabi's state-run oil company and oversees its renewable energy efforts to be the president of the upcoming United Nations climate negotiations in Dubai, highlighting the balancing act ahead for this crude-producing nation.

Authorities nominated Sultan al-Jaber, a trusted confidant of UAE leader Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who serves as CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. That firm pumps some 4 million barrels of crude a day and hopes to expand to 5 million daily. Those revenues fuel the ambitions of this federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula as well as the production of more of the heat-trapping carbon dioxide that the UN negotiations hope to limit. But al-Jaber also once led a once-ambitious project to

have a 22 billion "carbon-neutral" city on Abu Dhabi's outskirts an effort later pared back after the global financial crisis that struck the Emirates hard beginning in 2008. Even today, he serves as the chairman of Masdar, a clean energy company that grew out of the project.

"Sultan al-Jaber has the credentials and background to lean into trends that are already on going," said Ryan Bohl, a Mideast analyst for a risk-intelligence firm called the RANE Network. "Him being an oilman, I don't think that will be that big of a risk for him." The Emirates' state-run WAM quoted al-Jaber, a climate envoy for years, as saying that it "will be a critical year in a critical decade for climate action." He called for "a pragmatic, realistic and solutions-oriented approach" to limit global warming to just 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by 2050. Scientists say that limit can avoid or at least lessen some

of the most catastrophic future climate change harms. Al-Jaber's nomination, however, drew immediate criticism. Harjeet Singh, who is the head of Global Political Strategy at Climate Action Network International, said al-Jaber holding the CEO title at the state oil company posed "an unprecedented and alarming conflict of interest." "There can be no place for polluters at a climate conference, least of all presiding over a COP," Singh said. Alice Harrison of Global Witness put it even more bluntly: "You wouldn't invite arms dealers to lead peace talks. So why let oil executives lead climate talks?" Greenpeace said it was "deeply alarmed" by al-Jaber's appointment, adding: "This sets a dangerous precedent, risking the credibility of the UAE and the trust that has been placed in them." COP28 will be held at Dubai's Expo City from November 30 through December 12. (AP)

## UAE to rollover USD 2bn loan, give additional USD 1 bn: Pak PM Office

ISLAMABAD, JAN 12 /--/ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Thursday agreed to extend an existing loan of USD 2 billion and provide an additional loan of USD 1 billion to help cash-strapped Pakistan tackle its economic woes, including the fast depleting foreign exchange reserves.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Office made the announcement after his meeting with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi. "The President of the UAE agreed to roll over the existing loan of USD 2 billion and provide USD 1 billion additional loan," the statement said. It said the two leaders discussed bilateral relations and explored ways to further strengthen these ties, especially in the fields of trade, investment and energy. They also had an exchange of views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. "Both sides agreed to deepen the investment cooperation, stimulate partnerships and enable investment integration opportunities between the two countries," it said. Prime Minister Sharif also invited Bin Zayed for a state visit to Pakistan to which he agreed. The dates will be decided through diplomatic channels, it added.

Sharif travelled to the UAE on

Thursday on a two-day visit aimed at ramping up bilateral economic and trade ties, just days after the country's powerful Army chief General Asim Munir concluded his trip to the Gulf emirate. The UAE trip comes on the heels of the Geneva Conference on Monday where the international community pledged to provide nearly USD 10 billion to help Pakistan rebuild from the summer's devastating catastrophic floods. Sharif is leading a delegation of key ministers on his third visit to the UAE since becoming prime minister in April last year. He was earlier received by UAE's Minister for Economic Affairs Touq Al Mari at Abu Dhabi airport.

"My visit to the UAE is aimed at building on the conversation I have had with H.H. President Sheikh @MohamedBinZayed. We share a resolve & understanding that the continuous efforts need to be made to further strengthen trade, investment & economic relations," Sharif tweeted after landing in the UAE, which hosts some 1.7 million Pakistanis who are a key source of remittances. He will also meet UAE's Vice President Mohammad bin Rashid Al Makhtoum, who is also the Prime Minister and the ruler of Dubai. (PTI)

watchdog said in a statement. It identified the cable operators M/s Sharjah Cable Network, M/s Karachi Cable Services, M/s New Satellite Communication and M/s Star Digital Cable Network in Karachi. During the raid, the regulatory body seized illegal equipment and issued show cause notices to the violators, the statement said. The PEMRA has launched an operation in the

country on reports of deliberate violations of the Supreme Court order by the cable operators, it said.

It warned all cable TV operators of the country to "immediately stop" airing Indian channels/content which are otherwise illegal or proscribed by the authority. "No channel other than PEMRA licensee would be allowed for distribution on cable

TV networks and any operator found defying the orders henceforth would be dealt strictly in accordance with PEMRA laws," it warned.

In 2016, PEMRA imposed a complete ban on airing Indian content on local television and FM radio channels. However, the Lahore High Court lifted the ban in 2017, declaring it null and void as the Pakistan government had

no objections regarding the same. In 2018, Pakistan's Supreme Court reinstated a ban on airing Indian content on TV channels in the country, overturning the Lahore High Court's order. The decision was largely seen as a tit-for-tat move after similar actions were taken by some channels and the entertainment industry in India against Pakistani content and artists. (PTI)

# Lanka's former Prez ordered to pay SLRs 100 m in compensation for failing to prevent Easter attacks

COLOMBO, JAN 12 /--/ Sri Lanka's former President Maithripala Sirisena was on Thursday ordered by the apex court to pay SLRs 100 million as compensation to victims of the 2019 Easter attack for his negligence in preventing the country's one of the worst terror strikes despite having credible information of an imminent attack.

In its verdict, a seven-member bench of the Supreme Court ruled that the respondents named in the petitions for failing to prevent the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks had violated the Fundamental Rights of the petitioners. The court said top officials failed to act on the detailed intelligence information shared by India to avert the deadly suicide bombings. The court ordered Sirisena to pay a compensation of SLRs. 100 million, former police chief Pujith Jayasundara and former state intelligence services chief Nilantha Jayawardene to pay a

compensation of SLRs. 75 million each, former defence secretary Hemasiri Fernando to pay a compensation of SLRs. 50 million. Former national intelligence service chief Sisira Mendis was ordered to pay a compensation of SLRs. 10 million.

They have been ordered to pay from their personal funds to the victim fund maintained by the office of reparations. The apex court must be reported within six months on the payment of compensation. The bench hearing the case said Easter Sunday was just a few weeks away when the intel about the imminent attack came from India. Still, the officials failed to show alertness or

perceptiveness to carry out any measures to safeguard churches across the country. The bench also



asked the state to take disciplinary action against Jayawardena. Nine suicide b o m b e r s belonging to local Islamistextremist group National T h a w h e e d Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS carried out a series of d e v a s t a t i n g blasts that tore through three Catholic churches and as many luxury hotels on April 21, 2019, killing nearly 270 people, including 11 Indians, and injuring over 500.

The attack stirred a political storm as the then President Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil

Wickremesinghe were blamed for their inability to prevent the attacks despite prior intelligence being made available. As many as 12 petitioners, including the kin of the victims, the Catholic clergy, and the lawyers' body Bar Association of Sri Lanka, filed the fundamental rights petition against the then president for his negligence in preventing the attacks that proved fatal for the island nation's economy primarily dependent on tourism. A Presidential panel of inquiry appointed by Sirisena after the attacks ironically found the then-president guilty of his failure to prevent the attacks. Sirisena, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge in the case filed after the panel's findings.

The head of the local Catholic Church, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, continued to express his dissatisfaction over the probe in the matter, claiming that the investigation was a cover-up. (PTI)

## Suspect in Abe assassination to face murder charge, says his lawyer

TOKYO, JAN 12 /--/ Japanese prosecutors are expected to formally charge the suspect in the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe with murder on Friday, his lawyer said. Tetsuya Yamagami was arrested immediately after allegedly shooting Abe with a handmade gun as the former leader was making a campaign speech in July outside a train station in Nara in western Japan. Later that month, Yamagami was sent to an Osaka detention centre and given a five-month mental evaluation, which ended on Tuesday. Yamagami is now back in police custody in Nara after reportedly being deemed fit to stand trial. One of his lawyers, Masaaki Furukawa, told The Associated Press on Thursday that he expects prosecutors to charge Yamagami with murder and gun control law violations. Given the complexity of the case, it will take months before his trial begins, he said. Furukawa said he and two other lawyers took turns visiting Yamagami at the detention centre every 10-12 days, in between his examination by psychiatric experts. His visitors were limited to his lawyers and sister, he said. Furukawa said Yamagami was in good health at the detention centre. He said he could not disclose the details of their conversations before seeing what evidence prosecutors submit to the court in their indictment. Police say Yamagami told them that he killed Abe, one of Japan's most influential and divisive politicians, because of Abe's apparent links to a religious group that he hated. In his statements and in social media postings attributed to him, Yamagami said he developed a grudge because his mother had made massive donations to the Unification Church which bankrupted his family and ruined his life.

"It's an extremely serious case, but someone has to defend him," Furukawa said. "Naturally, he will have to take criminal responsibility for the serious consequences he caused by allegedly firing his gun to take away the life of a politician, and we are tasked with doing our best to reduce his punishment," he added. Some Japanese have expressed sympathy for Yamagami, especially those who also suffered as children of followers of the South Korea-based Unification Church, which is known for pressuring adherents into making big donations and is considered a cult in Japan.

Thousands of people have signed a petition requesting leniency for Yamagami, and others have sent care packages to his relatives or the detention centre. The investigation into the case has led to revelations of years of cozy ties between Abe's governing Liberal Democratic Party and the church since Abe's grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, helped the church take root in Japan in the 1960s over shared interests in conservative and anti-communist causes. Current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's popularity has plunged over his handling of the church controversy and for insisting on holding a rare, controversial state funeral for Abe. (AP)

## Royals appear for 1st time after publication of Harry's book

LONDON, JAN 12 /--/ Members of the royal family appeared in public on Thursday for the first time since the publication of Prince Harry's explosive memoir, touring charities and a hospital as they got on with the task of being working royals. King Charles III travelled to Scotland to meet with local groups that help combat rural isolation, while the Prince and Princess of Wales seemed relaxed as they arrived to formally open Royal Liverpool University Hospital in the home city of The Beatles. The book, "Spare", offers myriad revelations and accusations, many of which have been splashed across the global media for days. In the ghostwritten memoir Harry, 38, recounts his grief at the death of his mother, Princess Diana, a fight with brother Prince William and his unease with the role of royal "spare" in the shadow of his elder sibling, who is heir to the British throne. In a series of interviews, Harry repeatedly blamed the media for his troubles, saying that unfair and intrusive coverage contributed to the rift with William. He also accuses members of the royal family of leaking stories to the media to burnish their own reputations. People are snapping the memoir up. Penguin Random House announced Wednesday that first day sales topped 1.4 million copies. By contrast, Michelle Obama's blockbuster, "Becoming" needed a week to reach 1.4 million when it was released in 2018. The sales figures for "Spare" include hardcover, audiobook and e-book editions sold in the US, Canada and the United Kingdom. (AP)

## Pak media regulatory body cracks down on cable operators airing Indian content

LAHORE, JAN 12 /--/ Pakistan's electronic media watchdog on Thursday launched a crackdown on cable operators airing Indian content on TV channels in the country.

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) field staff conducted raids at four cable operators "for airing illegal Indian channels as well as Indian content," the



# Rahul seals chase after Kuldeep spins through Sri Lanka

India won the ODI series with a game to spare at Eden Gardens



(Left to right) Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul added 75 for the fifth wicket.Kuldeep Yadav celebrates after trapping Kusal Mendis lbw

KOLKATA, JAN 12 /--/ KL Rahul showed some glimpses of form with a gutsy half-century as he anchored India to a hard-earned four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the second ODI on Thursday. Rahul scored an unbeaten 64 off 103 balls on a difficult track as India chased down a modest target of 216 in 43.2 overs. The second highest score for India was vice-captain Hardik Pandya's 36. Earlier, Sri Lanka were all out for 215 in 39.4 overs with debutant Nuwanidu Fernando scoring 50. Mohammed Siraj (3/30) and Kuldeep Yadav (3/51) were the most successful bowlers for the hosts.

Team India, led by Rohit Sharma, will be aiming to win the ODI series vs Sri Lanka when they take them on in the 2nd match at Eden Gardens in Kolkata. India won the 1st ODI by 67 runs at the ACA Stadium in Guwahati on Tuesday. Team India will take heart from the fact that their captain Rohit Sharma is back in form. He smashed 83 off 67 balls that included 9 fours and 3 sixes respectively. His opening partner Shubman Gill scored 70 off 60 balls that included 11 fours. But India's highest run-scorer was Virat Kohli, who smashed 113 off 87 deliveries that

included 12 fours and 1 six respectively. Thanks to Kohli and Rohit's brilliant knock, India posted 373 for 7 in 50 overs. Sri Lanka had to struggle hard in the big chase and in the end fell short by 67 runs. They came so close only because Sri Lankan captain Dasun Shanaka's unbeaten 108 off 88 balls that included 12 fours and 3 sixes respectively. Pathum Nissanka smashed 72 off 80 balls that included 11 fours. But apart from these two, no one really stepped up and hence, Sri Lanka ended up on the losing side. Sri Lanka will aim to bounce back and draw level in the series to ensure the series is alive. Sri Lanka began solidly, debutant Nuwanidu Fernando fighting his way to a fifty as he and No. 3 Kusal Mendis put on 73 for the second wicket. At 102 for 1 in the 17th over, they were placed nicely. Was 300 on the cards? With the likes of Charith Asalanka and Dasun Shanaka to come, you wouldn't have bet against it. But the collapse was spectacular. Mendis was trapped lbw by Kuldeep Yadav, and that wicket triggered a slide that cost Sri Lanka six wickets for 50 runs. The strange thing about all of this is that the pitch was pretty flat, and India's bowlers were merely disciplined - though the fielding was superb. Only three batters

in Sri Lanka's line-up failed to get to double figures, and one of them was the No. 11. And yet they were all out for 215 in the 40th over. Only Nuwanidu got to a half-century. India's quicks bowled well again - Mohammed Siraj picking up three wickets and Umran Malik two, with some Sri Lanka batters clearly wary of the latter's pace. But it was Kuldeep Yadav who inflicted the most damage through that innings-defining collapse, picking up Asalanka and Shanaka (for 15 and 2) as well as Mendis, returning figures of 3 for 51 from his 10. Axar Patel was the other bowler to pick up a wicket.

The innings' nosedive was forged more of Sri Lanka's incompetence in this format than India's particular excellence. Mendis had batted nicely for his run-a-ball 34, but got hit on the back leg by a Kuldeep googly at the end of the 17th over, having misread the modest turn. Dhananjaya de Silva let an Axar arm ball slide between bat and pad; Asalanka sent a leading edge back to Kuldeep, the bowler; Shanaka got too far inside the line and let Kuldeep spin one into his pads and then leg stump; later, the bowling allrounders (Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage and Chamika Karunaratne) were all caught by Axar at

backward point, two of them off Malik. The lowest third of the innings had at least added some value before departing, however. Hasaranga made 21 off 17, Karunaratne 17 off 25, and Wellalage played perhaps the most responsible innings of the three, despite being the most junior, producing 32 off 34. It was thanks to them that Sri Lanka breached 200.

Through Nuwanidu's fifty, though, Sri Lanka had at least one positive. He was cautious against the new ball, leaving often, defending plenty, though he rarely seemed anxious even when he faced 10 scoreless deliveries to start, then had got to only 6 off the first 20. He was strong behind square, finding most of his runs, and four of his six boundaries, there. This was all the more impressive given he was batting out of position - he usually comes in at No. 4 or lower in domestic cricket.

**Brief Scores: Sri Lanka: 215 all out in 39.4 overs (Nuwanidu Fernando 50, Kusal Mendis 34; Kuldeep Yadav 3/51, Mohammed Siraj 3/30.) India 219/6 in 43.2 overs (KL Rahul 64 not out, Lahiru Kumara 2/64, Chamika Karunaratne 2/51)**

## GAMENOTES

### Prannoy enters quarterfinals of Malaysia Open

KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 12 /--/ Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy dished out another splendid show to progress to the men's singles quarterfinals with a thrilling win over Indonesia's Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo in the Malaysia Open Super 750 tournament here on Thursday. The World number 8 Indian looked in fine fettle as he staved off the spirited challenge from world number 19 Chico 21-9 15-21 21-16 in an hour and four minutes. The 30-year-old from Kerala will take on either Malaysia's Ng Tze Yong or Japan's Kodai Naraoka next. Commonwealth Games bronze medallists Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand fought hard before going down 13-21 21-15 17-21 to Bulgaria's Gabriela Stoeva and Stefani Stoeva in the women's doubles pre-quarterfinals. For Prannoy, it was his second meeting with Chico, who had defeated him at the 2018 Syed Modi International. In the form of his life, Prannoy made a good start, showing better control and his attack also earned him dividends as he led 7-5 before grabbing a 11-5 cushion at the interval. With Chico struggling with the drift conditions, Prannoy ran away with the opening game.

### ICA extends medical insurance to retired cricketers

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/ Indian Cricketers' Association (ICA) on Thursday announced it will provide medical insurance cover of Rs 1.5 lakh to its members, a move that will benefit over 100 retired cricketers. With the BCCI's medical reimbursement scheme applicable to only those cricketers who have played 10 or more first-class matches, many of ICA's members were not eligible for the same. "This is only a small start made by our Board. Last year we had extended a top-up hospitalisation cover for our members and this time around we have gone one step further and provided a full cover of Rs 1.5 lakh each," newly-elected ICA president Aunshuman Gaekwad was quoted as saying in a media release. The premium is being paid in its entirety by the ICA. "Presently we have extended the cover to 109 members who expressed interest in availing the insurance, all of whom have played between 5 and 9 first-class matches. In time to come, many more such members will be extended this cover," added Gaekwad (PTI)

### Australia pulls out from Afghanistan ODI series

MELBOURNE, JAN 12 /--/ Cricket Australia (CA) on Thursday announced it has withdrawn from the upcoming ODI series against Afghanistan, saying it is "unable to proceed" with the fixture amid Taliban's growing restrictions on women and girls. Australia were slated to take on Afghanistan in a three-match ODI series as part of the ICC Super League in UAE in March following their tour of India. However, after "extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Australian Government", the CA decided to abandon the fixture. "Cricket Australia has decided that it is unable to proceed at this time with the upcoming ICC Super League three-match Men's ODI series between Australia and Afghanistan scheduled for the UAE in March 2023," CA said in a statement. "This decision follows the recent announcement by the Taliban of further restrictions on women's and girls' education and employment opportunities and their ability to access parks and gyms. "CA is committed to supporting growing the game for women and men around the world, including in Afghanistan, and will continue to engage with the Afghanistan Cricket Board in anticipation of improved conditions for women and girls in the country," it added. (PTI)

### Britain's Jack Draper fires warning to Nadal by reaching Adelaide semi-finals

ADELAIDE, JAN 12 /--/ Britain's Jack Draper fired a warning to Rafael Nadal by storming past Karen Khachanov and into the Adelaide International semi-finals on Thursday. The promising 21-year-old faces defending champion Nadal in the first round of the Australian Open next week and showed he was in fine touch with a 6-4 7-6 (7/3) victory over Russia's Khachanov. It was a measure of revenge for Draper after losing to his third-seeded opponent last week. Draper lifted his ranking from 262 to 40 in a breakthrough 2022 and his Adelaide semi is his third in the past six months. "It'll be amazing to play on court with him, he's a great champion," Draper said of 22-time Grand Slam winner Nadal. "I want to play really well and I want to compete hard and do the best I can." Draper added that he believed he could achieve "great things" but there was "a mountain of work to do". (AFP)

## Messi scores in PSG win on return after World Cup triumph



PARIS, JAN 12 /--/ Lionel Messi scored in Paris Saint-Germain's 2-0 win over Angers in Ligue 1 on Wednesday on his first appearance since leading Argentina to victory in the World Cup in Qatar. Messi had been rested for PSG's first three matches following the long break in the season caused by the World Cup but he returned to training in Paris a week ago and was back in the starting line-up for this game against Ligue 1's bottom side. The win, which came three and a half weeks after he captained Argentina to their World Cup final triumph on penalties against France in Qatar, saw PSG move six points clear at

the top of the French table. Neymar also started, having missed his team's last two matches due to suspension and to undergo treatment on the ankle injury he suffered playing for Brazil at the World Cup. Meanwhile, Kylian Mbappe was rested for a second straight game having been afforded time off for a holiday in New York in the wake of his own World Cup campaign, which saw him score a hat-trick in the final but come out on the losing side. Mbappe and Messi are expected to be reunited this weekend in Sunday's match away to Rennes. In the meantime, the absence of the France star meant young striker Hugo Ekitike

again started in the home attack at the Parc des Princes and he opened the scoring in the fifth minute from a Nordi Mukiele cross at the end of a move in which Messi also featured. PSG were not at their sparkling best but Messi swept in his 13th club goal of the season to make it 2-0 with 17 minutes left. Ekitike and Mukiele were again involved before Messi applied the finish. The goal was initially disallowed for offside but a VAR check allowed it to stand. "Messi has recovered well. He is relaxed and in great shape physically, and with Leo the team looks different," said coach Christophe Galtier (AFP)

## India seek first podium finish in 48 years, to play tricky Spain today

ROURKELA, JAN 12 /--/ A historic bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics bringing them back among the international elite, India will seek their first podium finish in 48 years in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup as they begin their campaign against Spain in a tricky match here on Friday. A medal in this showpiece will strengthen the claim that the former giants of the game with eight Olympic gold have turned the corner in world hockey. The country won a bronze in the inaugural tournament in 1971 and clinched a silver in the next edition in 1973. Ajit Pal Singh led the side to title triumph in 1975 but since then they have failed to even reach the semifinals.

From 1978 to 2014, India could not go past the group stage. The Indian team, no doubt, would be one of the medal contenders with the talented bunch led by Harmanpreet Singh emerging as a force to reckon with. The team has earned respect from other top countries in recent times. Currently ranked sixth in the world, India have come into the tournament after an impressive show against the world number one side Australia in an away five-match series though they lost the rubber 1-4. Graham Reid's side matched the Australians, one of the favourites to win the World Cup, in most departments of the game, notching up their first win in six years against their formidable opponents. In the previous edition, also held in Bhubaneswar, India had exited at the quarterfinal stage after losing to the Netherlands, the eventual runners-up, and they would be looking to reach at least the semifinals this time. India have also done well in the FIH Hockey Pro

League, finishing third in the 2021-22 season. The confidence and the winning mentality is back with the team. Since Reid took over the head coach's position in 2019, India's stature has grown. He has been able to get the best out of the players, injecting a tactical discipline to their trademark skillful, fluid playing style, making



them a team that is respected and feared in equal measure. "We focussed mainly on scenarios in our training, what if we are 0-1 down, what if we are playing with 10 men, what if they take their keeper off. Those types of scenarios which are important that we have

**THE SQUADS:** India: Abhishek, Surender Kumar, Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Jarmanpreet Singh, Mandeep Singh, Harmanpreet Singh (captain), Lalit Upadhyay, Krishan Pathak, Nilam Sanjeep Xess, PR Sreejesh, Nilakanta Sharma, Shamsher Singh, Varun Kumar, Akashdeep Singh, Amit Rohidas (vice-captain), Vivek Sagar Prasad and Sukhjeet Singh.  
Spain: Andreas Rafi, Alejandro Alonso, Cesar Curiel, Xavi Gisbert, Borja Lacalle, Álvaro Iglesias, Ignacio Rodriguez, Enrique Gonzalez, Gerard Clapes, Andreas Rafi, Jordi Bonastre, Joaquin Menini, Mario Garin, Marc Reyne, Marc Miralles, Pepe Cunill, Marc Recasens, Pau Cunill and Marc Vizzcaino.

dealt with," Reid said. Captain and FIH Player of the Year Harmanpreet Singh, a fabulous defender and one of the best drag flickers in the game, will be key to India's success while goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, mid-field ace Manpreet Singh and Hardik Singh, and striker Mandeep Singh are all capable of bringing about game-changing moments. Defender Amit Rohidas, who has captained the team in the past and also takes penalty corners, and forward Akashdeep Singh will be among the other India players to watch out for. Reid said he wants to take some pressure off captain Harmanpreet, who is also a defensive bulwark. India will hope to begin with a win, as that result can help them top Pool D for a direct quarterfinal berth and avoid playing cross-over matches (meant for second and third place teams of each of each of the four pools). Qualifying for the quarterfinals through cross-over matches could lead to facing stronger teams in the last-eight stage like defending champions Belgium. "It's an old adage that the first game is the most important, so we are just focussing on that and then take it forward. That's how we are approaching," Reid said. (PTI)

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