

New day same story 'King' Kohli fails again India collapse to 185

Israeli strikes kill at least 30 in Gaza as ceasefire talks set to resume in Qatar

Kartik Aaryan congratulates Murlikant Petkar on being named for Arjuna Award



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India protests China's two new counties in Ladakh

MEAs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that creating new counties will not affect India's sovereignty or legitimise China's "illegal occupation" of the region.

New Delhi India on Friday said it has lodged a "solemn protest" with China over the creation of two new counties in Hotan prefecture, asserting that such moves will not lend legitimacy to Beijing's "illegal and forcible" occupation in the region.

In a strong reaction, external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said parts of these so-called counties fall in India's Union Territory of Ladakh and that the Chinese action will have no bearing on New Delhi's consistent position regarding its sovereignty.



Territory of Ladakh and New Delhi's consistent position regarding its sovereignty.

China's announcement on establishing the two counties came days after Special Representatives of the two nations resumed boundary talks that was stalled for almost five years.

"We have seen the announcement pertaining to the establishment of two new counties in Hotan Prefecture of China. Parts of jurisdiction of these so-called counties fall in India's Union Territory of Ladakh," Jaiswal said.

CONTD ON PAGE-2

Centre on alert over HMPV outbreak in China

New Delhi The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union health ministry is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country, and is in touch with international agencies, according to official sources.

"We will continue to monitor the situation closely, validate information and update accordingly," the sources said, following recent reports of an outbreak of the human metapneumovirus (HMPV) in China.



December 16-22 indicates a recent rise in acute respiratory infections, including seasonal influenza, rhinovirus, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and human metapneumovirus (HMPV), however, the overall scale and intensity of respiratory infectious diseases in China

HIGHLIGHT

HMPV can cause upper and lower respiratory disease in people of all ages, especially among young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems this year is lower than last year. A seasonal increase in respiratory pathogens is expected in the northern hemisphere, particularly during the winter period," sources said after an update from WPRO. Agency

Right to property a constitutional right: SC



New Delhi The Supreme Court has said that the right to property is a constitutional right and an individual cannot be deprived of his property without him being paid adequate compensation in accordance with the law.

A bench of justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan said the right to property ceased to be a fundamental right due to the Constitution (Forty-Fourth Amendment) Act, 1978, however, it continues to be a human right in a welfare state and a constitutional right under Article 300-A of the Constitution.

Article 300-A of the Constitution provides that no person shall be deprived of his property, save by authority of law. The apex court delivered its verdict on Thursday on an appeal challenging a November 2022 judgement of the Karnataka High Court in a matter pertaining to land acquisition for the Bengaluru-Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor Project (BMICP). Agency

MARKET

SENSEX	79223.11	NIFTY	24004.75
	-720.60		-183.90
GOLD	77,311.00	SILVER	89,490.00
	-406.00		317.00

WEATHER

Sunrise	7:14 AM
Sunset	5:38 PM
Moonrise	9:56 AM
Moonset	9:09 PM
Today's Prediction	
Maximum	23°C
Minimum	10°C
Tomorrow's Prediction	
Maximum	22°C
Minimum	10°C

PM Modi labels AAP 'disaster for Delhi', calls for its defeat in assembly polls



New Delhi Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday launched a scathing attack on AAP, calling it an "aap-da" (disaster) that has gripped Delhi for the past 10 years, prompting its chief Arvind Kejriwal to return the barb by claiming that the BJP is facing the real "aapda" as it "lacks" a CM face and issues for the as-

HIGHLIGHT

Targeting Kejriwal, PM Modi claimed that he fulfilled the housing dreams of 4 crore people instead of building a "Sheesh Mahal" for himself. Taking a jibe at Kejriwal after inaugurating several key development projects for Delhi at an event here, the prime minister said he could have also built a "Sheesh Mahal" for himself, but chose to prioritise the people by constructing houses for them.

CONTD ON PAGE-2

State Youth Festival Haryana

**Shri Vishwakarma Skill University
Dudhola, Palwal**

3rd January to 5th January, 2025

Yuva Sammelan and Cultural Evening

4th January, 2025 | 4:00 PM
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Sports Stadium, Palwal

"आज हमारा फोकस देश के अपने युवा साथियों पर है, जिसकी झलक हमारी हर नीति और निर्णय में देखी जा सकती है।"
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

Chief Guest
Sh. Nayab Singh Saini
Chief Minister, Haryana

Guest of Honour
Sh. Gaurav Gautam
Minister of State for Youth Empowerment & Entrepreneurship and Sports (I.C.)

Scan the QR code to join the programme

Directorate of Skill Development and Industrial Training, Haryana

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.pharyana.gov.in | #HaryanaYouthFestival

India protests China's two new counties in Ladakh

CONT FROM PAGE-1
"We have never accepted the illegal Chinese occupation of Indian territory in this area," he said. "Creation of new counties will neither have a bearing on India's long-standing and consistent position regarding our sovereignty over the area nor lend legitimacy to China's illegal and forcible occupation of the same," Jaiswal added.

He further said: "We have lodged a solemn protest with the Chinese side through diplomatic channels."

The latest irritant in ties came weeks after India and China ended an over four-and-a-half-year border standoff and announced steps to reduce mistrust.

Following an understanding reached on October 21, the two sides completed the disengagement of troops at the two remaining friction points of Demchok and Dapsang.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Russia on October 23 and agreed to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms, signalling an intention to normalise the relations.

In the nearly 50-minute meeting, Modi underscored the importance of properly handling differences and disputes and not allowing them to disturb peace and tranquillity in border areas.

Nearly four weeks later, the Special Representatives on the border issue — India's national security adviser Ajit Doval and China's foreign minister Wang Yi held talks in Beijing.

It was the first dialogue under the framework of Special Representatives in nearly five years.

In the talks, Doval and Wang focused on "positive" direction for cross-border cooperation including resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, river data sharing and border trade.

Advt Contact:
9818-799941

Maldives is a 'very concrete' expression of India's neighbourhood first policy: Jaishankar

New Delhi: — The Maldives is a "very concrete" expression of India's neighbourhood first policy and New Delhi has always stood by the island nation, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said while hosting his Maldivian counterpart Abdulla Khaleel for talks.

In his opening remarks at the meeting, Jaishankar noted the finalisation of a framework to promote the use of local currencies for cross border trade between India and Maldives besides listing New Delhi's financial assistance to Male to help it deal with economic stress.

Both sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding to explore ways to bolster bilateral ties in several key areas including trade and investment.

The Maldives has been reeling under some financial stress. "I see that the framework to promote the use of local currencies for cross border transactions has been signed,"



Jaishankar said. "We have increased our engagement in various sectors and I do want to say that India has always stood by Maldives. For us, you are a very concrete expression of our neighbourhood first policy," he added.

The external affairs minister, referring to India's financial support to Maldives, mentioned the currency swap lines of USD 400 million.

"We have also facilitated the export of essential commodities to Maldives. That has been

very much a tradition in our relationship," he said.

"We certainly hope that our relationship has helped you to navigate through these difficult times," he added.

The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region and the overall bilateral ties including in areas of defence and security witnessed an upward trajectory under the previous government in Male.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Jaishankar and Khaleel took stock of progress made on the understandings reached during the visit of President Muizzu to India in October.

In his comments, Khaleel reaffirmed President Mohamed Muizzu's firm commitment to work closely with New Delhi in realising the joint vision for India-Maldives comprehensive economic and maritime security partnership.

Foreign Minister Khaleel reaffirmed President Muizzu's and the Government of Maldives' firm commitment to work closely with the Government of India in realizing the Joint Vision for India-Maldives Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership," the MEA said in a statement.

The visit of Khaleel provided an opportunity to further deepen the bilateral ties for the mutual benefit of two countries and the Indian Ocean Region, it said.

The ties between India and the Maldives came under severe strain after Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings, took charge of the top office in November 2023.

Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from his country. Subsequently, the Indian military personnel were replaced by civilians.

Reference to Sanatan Hindu evokes baffling reaction in India: Dhankhar

New Delhi: — Vice President Jageed Dhankhar on Friday lamented that reference to Sanatan and Hindu in India evokes baffling reaction from "misguided" people.

He also said that people who react to these terms without understanding the depths of the words and their deep meaning are "misguided" souls driven by a "dangerous ecosystem".

Addressing the International Congress of Vedanta organised at JNU here, Dhankhar said it was ironical and painful that in this country "reference to Sanatan, reference to Hindu evokes baffling reaction beyond comprehension."

"Rather than understand the depth of these words, their deep meaning, people tend to be in a reaction mode at the drop of a hat," he said.

Dhankhar dubbed such people as "souls which are misguided themselves". He said such persons are "driven



by a dangerous ecosystem that is a threat not only to society but to themselves".

The vice president said at a time when global disciplines are embracing the Vedanta philosophy, there are "some in this land of spirituality", who dismiss Vedanta and Sanatan text as "regressive".

"This dismissal often stems from perverted, colonial mindsets, inefficient understanding of our intellectual heritage. These elements work in a structured manner, in a sinister fashion," the vice president said.

SRMIST hosted Inter-University Youth Festival, SIGARAM

New Delhi: — SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur hosted the 38th AIU Inter-University Youth Festival, SRM SIGARAM. This event marked the centennial year of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU). A series of cultural and intellectual events, showcasing the remarkable talents of students from various universities, was the highlight of the Sigaram Youth Fest.

This five-day event featured various cultural performances, with the Founder Chancellor of SRMIST, Dr. T.R. Paarivendhar, inaugurating the fest. In their speeches, SRMIST's Vice Chancellor and AIU Additional Secretary, Mamta Agarwal, emphasized the importance of cultural exchange and youth empowerment. The event saw participation from over 21 universities from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

The festival featured



a wide range of cultural performances from various institutions, including: Mahatma Gandhi University; Chenda Melam and Thiruvathirai Kali Bharathidasan University; Folk performances with Para Drums

Sri Sankaracharya University; Mohiniyattam, Bharatanatyam, and martial arts; Amrita Vishva Vidyapeetham: Classical Carnatic and Malayalam songs

Gandhigram Rural Institute; Mayilattam and Oyilattam folk dances

creativity, teamwork, and dedication from the participants, leaving a lasting impression on both the audience and the judges.

At the valedictory ceremony, Dr. Nisha Ashokan, Director (Student Affairs) of SRMIST, gave an overview of the event, noting that 21 universities participated in 27 competitions, judged by a panel of 23 distinguished jury members. The chief guest for the valedictory, Mr. R. C. Clement Ramesh Kumar, IRS, inspired the students with a speech about chess world champion Gukesh and encouraged them to strive for excellence.

The festival also featured a range of intellectual events, including One Act Play, Debate, Quiz, and On-the-spot painting competitions, where themes such as political issues, social causes, and historical narratives were explored. These events highlighted exceptional

Three New Trains Flagged Off, Rs. 72 Crore Road Over Bridge Dedicated in Assam

Staff Reporter Guwahati:

Three new trains were flagged off and a new Road Over Bridge (ROB) at Tetelia station yard constructed by Northeast Frontier Railway was dedicated to the nation today from Guwahati. Hon'ble Governor of Assam, Lakshman Prasad Acharya.

Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw and Hon'ble Minister of State Pabitra Margherita were present at the Guwahati Railway Station apart from other MP/MLAs at various other locations.

The newly introduced trains include the train no. 55818/55817 (Guwahati - New Bongaigaon - Guwahati) Daily Passenger, train no. 15911/15912 (Tinsukia - Naharlagun - Tinsukia) Tri-weekly Express and train no. 12047/12048 (Guwahati - North Lakhimpur



Guwahati) Bi-weekly Jan Shatabdi Express.

During the flagging off ceremony, Railway Minister said that these services are expected to bolster regional connectivity and improve travel options for passengers across Assam and neighbouring areas.

Additionally, a new Road Over Bridge

(ROB) at Tetelia station yard constructed by Northeast Frontier Railway will be dedicated for the use of the common public during the ceremony.

The ROB (No. 59A) was constructed by Northeast Frontier Railway at a total cost of Rs. 72 crores replacing level crossing gate no ST-22 at Tetelia station yard.

General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway (Construction) Shri Arun Kumar Choudhary with senior officials of Head-Quarter and Divisions, Local MP/MLAs and other dignitaries were also present during program.

Water ATMs installed by Union Bank of India with efforts of Noida Authority

Ajeet Kumar Noida:

In order to provide a clean drinking water facility to the citizens of the Noida area, the newly constructed Water ATM in Sector-45 between Village Sadapur and Chhalera was inaugurated by Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Lokesh M. (IAS) in the presence of Additional Chief Executive Officer (SK), Finance Controller, representative of Union Bank of India and General Manager (Water) through the efforts of Noida Authority Water Department.

Clean cold drinking water supply will be provided to the general public free of cost through the installed Water ATM facility.

The capacity of this water ATM is 1200 liters per hour, in which Ultra Violet System (UV), Ozonator, Sand filtration, Carbon filtration, 5-10 microns filtration and Pebbles filtration have been used to improve



the quality of water. Apart from this, Reverse Osmosis (R.O.) has been arranged in this water ATM to remove hardness, fluoride, chlorides and other impurities.

For distribution to the public, this water ATM has provision of Automatic Card Operated Water Vending Machine with capacity of 20 liters per card and other Vending Machine with capacity of 1 liter

per card for cold & pure drinking water.

The water ATM will be run by the Jal Vibhag from 7 am to 12 noon and from 5 pm to 8 pm daily for the convenience of the public free of cost. Till now, 06 water ATMs have been constructed by the Water Department in Noida area using CSR funds and dedicated to the public by the Chief Executive Officer.

BJP destroying future of youths in country: Rahul

New Delhi: — The BJP is destroying the future of youths through alleged irregularities in the examination system, but the Congress is committed to fighting for the rights of students, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Friday.

His remarks came after two students protesting against alleged irregularities in the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission (MPPSC) exams were put in jail.

"The BJP is cutting the throat of the youth of India just like Ekalavya's, and destroying their future," Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X. "Failure in executing government recruitments is a big injustice. First, recruitment is not getting done. And then even if it is announced, exams are not held in time. If exams are held, the question papers are leaked. And when the youths demand justice, their voice is ruthlessly crushed," he alleged.

There were students' protest in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh as well over alleged irregularities in recruitment exams.

And, now two students protesting against the irregularities in MPPSC in Madhya Pradesh have been put in jail, and that after the chief minister himself met the students and assured them their demands would be considered, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha noted.

PM Modi labels AAP 'disaster for Delhi', calls for its defeat in assembly polls

CONT FROM PAGE-1
The BJP has been targeting Kejriwal for allegedly spending extravagantly on his official residence when he was chief minister, describing his erstwhile home as "sheesh mahal".

Hitting back at Prime Minister Modi, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief said that the BJP is faced with "aapda" in the national capital as the saffron party has "no CM face, narrative or issues" for the Delhi Assembly elections due next month.

Responding to PM's "Sheesh Mahal" remark against him, the former Delhi chief minister said, "The talk of Sheesh Mahal does not behave a person who built Rs 2,700- crore house for himself, travelling in a Rs 8400- crore plane and wearing a Rs 10- lakh suit."

Kejriwal asserted that Delhi is facing "aapda" of "breakdown" in law

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that my client GAJENDER SINGH (UID: 8476 2993 7482) SO JHAMMAN SINGH AND SHARDA DEVI (UID: 2182 9764 1520) W/O GAJENDER SINGH (BOTH RESIDENCE OF B-85 NEAR NAWADA METRO STATION, MANSA RAM PARK, MATIALA, D.K. MOHAN GARDEN, WEST DELHI-110059) have severed all their relations with their Daughter named KANCHAN (UID: 4849 8298 1753) due to her bad habits, my above named client have also disowned and debarred their said Daughter from all her movable and immovable properties. Anybody dealing with KANCHAN will do so at his/her/their own risk and responsibilities and my client will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by KANCHAN.

ADVOCATE SHMSHER TUF: LAXMI GARDEN, UDA MANDI TISHJI ROAD, NAWADA 110043 MOBILE NO: 9813713279

NEWS IN BRIEF

NDMC not to hike power tariff

Staff Reporter
New Delhi

The NDMC has decided not to raise power tariff following the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) PPAC order dated 31.12.2024, assuring that it would take all steps to retain the current electricity charges for its consumers.

In a press conference on Friday, NDMC chairperson Keshav Chandra and NDMC vice-chairman Kuljeet Singh Chahal informed about the aforesaid decision. Council members Anil Valmiki, Sarita Tomar and Dinesh Partap Singh were also present on this occasion.

There are nearly 70,000 power connections in NDMC areas, of which over 60% are domestic. The DERC has not issued a tariff order since 2021-22. It is pertinent to mention that the DERC issued a tariff order for FY 2021-22 in September 2021, in which the average power purchase cost for NDMC was Rs.7.26 per unit.

In the absence of a tariff order, PPAC petitions are submitted quarterly indicating the difference in the actual cost of purchasing power and the cost of power mandated by the DERC through its order. The PPAC orders are ad-hoc in nature, and they are reconciled during the truing up of accounts of a DISCOM.

NDMC chairperson Chandra and NDMC vice-chairman Chahal, informed that the PPAC order dated December 31 2024 has caused consternation among consumers. The current PPAC order, which proposes to increase the cost of power for consumers, will not be implemented by the NDMC. There will be no increase in the over tariff in the NDMC area in the near future.

International hockey stadium to be built in Greater Noida

The hockey stadium will include seating facilities for spectators, changing rooms for players, sets and other necessary facilities.

Noida

An international level hockey stadium is going to be built in the sports complex located in sector-37 of the city. The Greater Noida Authority has started preparations for the construction of this stadium.

The hockey stadium will include seating facilities for spectators, changing rooms for players, sets and other necessary facilities. This stadium will have capacity or more than 10,000 seats and also international level tournaments. The aim of the Greater Noida Authority is to promote sports facilities in the city so that children and youth could get an opportunity to hone their talent and make a career in sports.

Along with this, there is also a plan to develop Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Sports Complex as a center of excellence. Work has been started to increase other sports facilities on 10.5 acre of land in the sports complex of sector-37. Along with the hockey stadium, facilities for wrestling and other sports will also be provided here.

District Hockey Association general secretary Sandar Manjith Singh said that this hockey stadium would be a big gift for the district. There was a constant demand for it. Now its construction will give a tremendous boost to the game of hockey.

Education revolution by Delhi govt transformed system: Atishi

Atishi said the importance of the new building becomes evident when one sees the smiles on the faces of the children studying there.

New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Friday claimed that the education revolution brought by the Delhi government has transformed education system and children face no shortage of opportunities now.

Inaugurating a new academic block at the Government Girls Senior Secondary School in Jhilmil Colony, Atishi said the importance of the new building becomes evident when one sees the smiles on the faces of the children studying there.

The newly inaugurated block includes 45 rooms, with 25 classrooms and six advanced laboratories equipped with modern tools, including three types of microscopes. These facilities aim to enable students to study subjects like biology more thoroughly and pursue careers in fields



Delhi Chief Minister Atishi speaking at the event.

such as medicine and engineering, she said. "The importance of this building becomes evident when you see the smiles on the faces of the children studying here. As we entered the school, we saw students confidently presenting exhibitions, and their enthusiasm reflects how meaningful this new block is for them," Atishi said, speaking at the event.

The chief minister said

there was a time when government school students could not attend government schools during the rainy season because classrooms and grounds would get flooded, and facilities like labs, libraries and sports grounds were merely dreams for them.

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said in a post on X, "The education revolution in Delhi continues. Today, another new

government school building was inaugurated in Delhi. "This new building includes excellent facilities to students. Congratulations to all the students and their parents," the former chief minister said.

Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel acknowledged the challenges students faced in the past and highlighted the progress achieved with improved infrastructure.

"When I became an MLA in 2014-15, the Class 12 pass percentage in government schools was just 60 per cent. Today, it has improved to 95 per cent. Students have not only excelled academically but also demonstrated innovation through startups, creating and successfully selling projects," Goel said.

The newly constructed academic block consists of 46 rooms, including 25 classrooms, a principal's office, a staff room, and six laboratories equipped with necessary

facilities. The block also features eight toilets and an elevator to ensure accessibility, said a statement.

It mentioned that the school operates in two shifts, serving 1,187 students in the morning and 1,435 in the evening. Previously, the school had 36 classrooms, resulting in a student-to-classroom ratio of approximately 40.

With the addition of new classrooms, the school is now able to offer Commerce, Arts and Science streams — subjects that were previously only available at the boys' school. This expansion marks a significant development for the girls' school, it stated.

The new block will benefit not only students from Jhilmil Colony but also those from the neighbouring areas, including Vivek Vihar, Jwala Nagar, Vishwas Nagar, New Friends Colony and Kasturba Nagar, it added.

GRAP 3 curbs back in Delhi-NCR amid rise in air pollution levels

New Delhi

The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality on Friday brought back stage 3 curbs under the Graded Response Action Plan amid a rise in air pollution levels owing to unfavourable meteorological conditions, according to an official order.

Delhi's air pollution levels showed an increasing trend and the 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) stood at 371 at 4 pm.

Classes up to grade V are required to shift to hybrid mode under Stage 3. Parents and students have the option to choose online education wherever available.

Under Stage 3, the use of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel cars (4-wheelers) is restricted in Delhi and nearby NCR districts. Persons with disabilities are exempt.

Stage 3 also bans non-essential diesel-operated medium goods vehicles with BS-IV or older standards in Delhi.



worsening of the situation.

GRAP Stage 3, which was lifted last Friday, entails a ban on non-essential construction work. Classes up to grade V are required to shift to hybrid mode under Stage 3. Parents and students have the option to choose online education wherever available.

Other Council members, Anil Valmiki, Sarita Tomar, and Shri Dinesh Partap Singh were also present at the press conference.

Chahal assured the consumers that NDMC will not allow any increase in electricity bills, despite the DERC's order. Currently, there are approximately 55,000 power connections in NDMC areas, with more than 60% being domestic consumers.

No Increase in Power Tariff in NDMC Area: Kuljeet Chahal

Staff Reporter
New Delhi

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has appealed against the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) order, which proposed an increase in the Power Purchase Cost Agreement (PPCA) for the quarter of January to March 2025.

This increase would have resulted in higher electricity bills for consumers in the NDMC area.

In a press conference held today at the Council Room, Palika Kendra, New Delhi NDMC Chairman Shri Keshav Chandra and Vice Chairman Shri Kuljeet Singh Chahal confirmed that the Council has appealed against the DERC's order.

Other Council members, Anil Valmiki, Sarita Tomar, and Shri Dinesh Partap Singh were also present at the press conference.

Chahal assured the consumers that NDMC will not allow any increase in electricity bills, despite the DERC's order. Currently, there are approximately 55,000 power connections in NDMC areas, with more than 60% being domestic consumers.



Chandra explained that due to the absence of a tariff order, the truing up of accounts has not taken place.

In this context, the DERC's PPAC order, which proposes an increase in electricity costs, has caused unnecessary panic among consumers.

NDMC does not accept the current PPAC and intends to appeal to DERC for a reduction in the proposed rates.

"There will be no increase in power tariffs in the NDMC area in the near future. The Council is committed to taking care of its consumers," Shri Chahal said. He clarified that the PPAC is a surcharge imposed by the electricity regulatory commission to account for variations in power

purchase costs incurred by distribution companies. These costs depend on factors like coal and fuel prices.

Kuljeet Singh Chahal addressed the media and stated that the DERC has allowed an increase in the PPCA from 38.75% to 54.52%, which would have led to a rise in electricity bills during the January-March 2025 quarter.

He assured consumers that under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Home Minister, NDMC is working for their welfare, and no additional charges will be imposed on any consumer. He emphasized that no consumer will have to pay a single extra penny.

He also mentioned that in 2017, the Government of

Woman on run after murder; nabbed in Naraina

New Delhi

A 25-year-old woman wanted in a murder case was arrested on New Year's Eve, police said on Friday.

Rozida, who had been on the run for months, was arrested from the Naraina area in west Delhi, they said.

On October 2 last year, an altercation between two groups in west Delhi's Moti Nagar resulted in the death of a man, Shah Nawaz, who succumbed to injuries.

In the wake of the incident, police arrested several people, including one Azad, and three minors.

"However, Rozida, along with another accused, Aju, managed to escape. Subsequently, a non-bailable warrant was issued against her," a police officer said. Investigation revealed that Rozida had decamped to Bihar. Later police came to know that she may return to Delhi to meet her children on New Year's Eve.

"The team tracked her near Naraina on December 31 and arrested her near Satya Park. During interrogation, Rozida admitted her involvement in the murder," the officer said.

Rozida revealed that she, with a stick, and her asso-



ates, assaulted Shah Nawaz and another person, Nafiz, with the intent to kill them. "Rozida fled to her native village in Madhubani in Bihar, where she lived under a false identity," said the officer.

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Bijendra Devi W/o Mr. Satyvir Singh owner of Residential Plot no. 16/A, area 150*25= 175 sq. yds., part of Kharsa no. 753/L, 754/L, at Pratap Nagar near Police line, colony Vill. Harsaru, Pargana Dasna, Tehsil & Dist. Garhwal, U.P. vide Sale Deed dated 25.06.2021, doc no. 2107, executed by Mrs. Rajabala Devi & Mr. Ajay Kumar Sharma both W/o & S/o late Mr. Gangasharan Sharma, in SRO V, GZB, and said property to be financed by AU Small Finance Bank Ltd, if anybody has charge/interest/title/third Party in the said property of any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing and with proof within 07 days on the below mentioned address, failing which I am aware that in case default with the mortgage property that all borrower / Owners are responsible for the same. Satendra Gautam Advocate Shop no. 3, Property no. 126, Lal Kauna Ghaziabad, U.P.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that NIRANJAN, Aadhar No. 9439 2365 6856 S/O RAIJA RAM & MACH-LA DEVI, Aadhar No. 9672 4421 1944, W/O NIRANJAN, both are residing at F-491, RAGHUBIR NAGAR, TAGORE GARDEN, NEW DELHI-110027, has disowned/debarred his/her son PAWAN, aged about 26 years from all movable/immovable properties/assets and severed all his/her relations with him. He is being independent, and any expense or expenditure incurred by him will be his/her own responsibility if any body deals with him in any manner will do so at his/her/their own risks and responsibilities. We shall not be responsible for any kind of act done by her.

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. - MC-SC, SRP Cleaning, 24 dated 30.12.2024. Keelup open tender is invited by Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Eastern Railway, Sealdah, Room no. 42, 1st Floor, DRM Building, Kalser Street, Kolkata-700014 on "Two Packet System" in prescribed tender form from reputed contractors with adequate experience and financial capability for the under mentioned work: Name/Description of Work : "Cleaning work of Road/Trip maintenance coaching train at Krishnapur for three years". Tender Value : ₹ 3,26,48,834.48. Earnest Money: ₹ 13,300. Cost of Tender Documents: ₹ 5000. Period of contract : 03 years. Bidding Start Date: 08.01.2025. Date & time of closing of tender: 22.01.2025 at 11.00 hrs. Date and timing of tender opening: 22.01.2025 at 11.00 hrs. Tender document including e-tender notice and eligibility criteria of the work may be seen and downloaded from www.irps.gov.in (Website URL). No manual offer will be accepted. (SDAH-300204-25) Tender Notice is also available at website: www.e.irindianrailways.gov.in www.irps.gov.in Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easterrailwayheadquarter

'Delhi health min lied in petition relating to Farishtey scheme' says LG office

New Delhi

Delhi Health minister Saurabh Bhardwaj withdrawing his petition in the Supreme Court relating to Farishtey scheme that it alleged was rendered ineffective due to non-payment of dues, shows his claims were baseless and intended to malign the LG, Raj Niwas said on Friday.

The AAP in response termed the LG's assertions were contempt of the court and an attempt to "manipulate and misinterpret" its proceedings.

The scheme, 'Farishtey Dilli Ke', was launched by the AAP government in 2019 to provide free medical treatment to road accident victims and encourage the passersby to take them to hospitals for treatment.

The AAP dispensation last year alleged that the scheme was rendered ineffective due to interference of the LG of-



Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj withdrawing his petition in the Supreme Court relating to Farishtey scheme that it alleged was rendered ineffective due to non-payment of dues, shows his claims were baseless and intended to malign the LG, Raj Niwas said on Friday.

The withdrawal of the writ by Bhardwaj vindicates the LG office and proves that all along he had been indulging in "pointless and malicious blame game" in a "classic example of dragging politics into the Court," the statement charged.

The scheme was never made inoperative, as alleged by Bhardwaj, it said.

The total number of beneficiaries under the scheme during 2022-2023 was 3,698, and was 3,604 till October 2023, when the writ petition was moved, it claimed.

"Contrary to his claims in the petition that payments were not being made under the scheme, Rs. 4.85 crores (sic) were paid during 2022-2023, and a payment of Rs. 4.98 crores till February 12, 2024, were made to private hospitals under the scheme," it said.

These figures, prima facie, neither indicate a "halt" in the 'Farishtey' scheme nor do they support allegations of "non-payment" by Bhardwaj, the LG office claimed.

The AAP claimed that the petition was disposed of because the payment was released after LG V K Saxena came under pressure due to notice from the apex court.

"This is shameful, as LG stooped to shameful, as LG didn't bother to respond to letters of Chief Minister until he received notice from Supreme Court.

Career guidance programme for students lunched

Staff Reporter
New Delhi

NDMC chairperson Keshav Chandra here on Friday launched a first ever career guidance counselling programme aimed at supporting more than 7000 students of NDMC-run Ash Adarsh Vidyalaya and Navvy Schools studying in 9th to 12th classes.

The programme will be conducted by "Aasman Foundation" and "iDream Career". This initiative will include the students going through a psychometric assessment test, followed by one-on-one guidance from the counselling team to help the students to select the various career paths available to them for their career journey according to their interests, personality and aptitude levels.

Each student shall be provided with a 16-pages analysis report and an information portal with a well researched content of 560+ careers, 1000+ Exams and Scholarships, 25000+ colleges.

Each student shall be provided with a 16-pages analysis report and an information portal with a well researched content of 560+ careers, 1000+ Exams and Scholarships, 25000+ colleges.

launched a helpline for counseling students for careers, stress and time management, examination anxiety and board examination preparation, available to them on a mere phone call. The Aasman Foundation also conducted a workshop for 240 NDMC principals and teachers, on how to guide the students effectively with the help of the counselors.

This programme is an alignment with NEP 2020, and equipping the upcoming generation for their future careers and to become global citizens.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE Sr. DEE-TGS-GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender agined Tender No. 230-TGS-GZB-2024-28. The details are under: 1. Name of work : Repair, Reconditioning, Rehabilitation, Testing and Supply of 7775 KV/A Transformer type LOT- 7775 for WAP-7 locomotive and Repair/Rehabilitation of 7475 KV/A Transformer of WAP-7 Loco with conversion of 950 KV/A total load winding to 2 x 622.5 KV/ 950 V Winding for the period of 12 months at Electric Loco Shed Ghaziabad. 2. Approx cost of work : Rs. 2,03,40,790.00 3. Earnest Money to be deposited : Rs. 2,51,700.00 4. Last Date & Time of submission of tender: 28.01.2025 (11.00Hrs.) 5. Date & Time of opening of tender document : 28.01.2025 (After 11.00 Hrs.) 6. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen : www.irps.gov.in Note : (i) The tenders must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement System (IRPS) site i.e. www.irps.gov.in participating in e-tender system. (ii) For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. (iii) No manual offers are acceptable. (iv) Cost of Tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. 230-TGS-GZB-2024-28, Dated: 31.12.2024. 28/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Why is the depreciation of the rupee not stopping?



By Dr Satyavan Saurabh

Sustained outflows after the September 2024 stock peak weakened the rupee as investors moved to safer assets amid speculation of a rise in US interest rates. Trade deficits, such as the high trade deficit, highlight external dependence on imports, especially for energy, widening the current account deficit during rupee weakness. India's oil import bill rose with the rupee depreciation, widening the 2024 trade deficit to close to \$75 billion.



Global events such as tariff threats and the BRICS currency dispute add to volatility by creating uncertainties for India's external trade and investment. The US President's 2024 tariff warning against the current plans of the BRICS countries triggered a market sell-off, weakening India's external stability. Heavy reliance on foreign exchange reserves to stabilize the rupee restricts long-term monetary flexibility during sustained global market turmoil.

A widening trade deficit due to a rise in imports compared to exports leads to foreign exchange outflows, weakening the rupee. India's record trade deficit in 2022 due to rising crude oil and gold imports drives rupee depreciation. The fall in the Indian rupee underscores the challenges of maintaining currency stability amid external sector vulnerabilities. Currency fluctuations are triggered by global geopolitical tensions such as the Russia-Ukraine war, rising crude oil prices, and capital outflows, as well as domestic factors such as the fiscal deficit. Effective policy measures are crucial to enhance India's external resilience and stabilize its economy.

The rupee exhausted more than \$20 billion in reserves in a single quarter to pull the rupee back to 85.53 in December 2024. A weak rupee constrains domestic monetary policies, raising inflation through costlier imports while reducing fiscal space to address growth concerns. The cost of crude oil imports rose 15% in December 2024, putting pressure on poli-

cymakers to effectively balance currency management and fiscal expansion strategies. Protectionist trade measures, such as tariffs or sanctions, can undermine currency stability by disrupting the trade balance. Political instability or conflict between major economies creates volatility, boosting demand for the safe-haven dollar and weakening emerging market currencies. The Russia-Ukraine war led to a surge in global crude oil prices, which put pressure on India's import bill and depreciated the rupee. Tight monetary policies in advanced economies led to capital outflows from India, putting pressure on the rupee. The US Federal Reserve's rate hike plan in 2022-23 led to foreign portfolio outflows, which weakened the rupee.

A widening trade deficit due to a rise in imports compared to exports leads to foreign exchange outflows, weakening the rupee. India's record trade deficit in 2022 due to rising crude oil and gold imports drives rupee depreciation. High domestic inflation depreciates the currency value, making exports less competitive and imports costlier. Rising prices of inelastic imports such as crude oil push up India's import bills, weakening the rupee in 2023. A decline in domestic and foreign investment in India indicates weak economic growth, discouraging currency inflows. In 2024, declining corporate performance and rising stock valuations led to foreign portfolio investment outflows. Central bank interventions to stabilize the currency are limited by foreign exchange reserves and can provide only temporary relief. A late RBI intervention in December 2024 managed to temporarily stabilize the rupee at 85.53 per dollar. A fiscally constrained

government reduces its ability to manage external shocks, thereby weakening confidence in currency stability. India's record fiscal deficit during the pandemic limited government measures to boost external resilience. The government's clear stance on currency policies boosts investor confidence and reduces speculative pressure. The RBI governor's ruling out of de-dollarization in 2024 reassured the market, temporarily easing concerns of rupee depreciation.

Measures to strengthen external resilience include boosting exports and focusing on value-added manufacturing and services to increase foreign exchange earnings and reduce trade imbalances. Strengthening sectors such as pharmaceuticals and IT can help reduce the trade deficit and stabilize the rupee. Reduce dependence on volatile crude oil and essential imports by entering into long-term agreements with diversified suppliers. Expanding crude oil imports from Russia and Middle Eastern countries reduces average oil import costs in 2023. Build strong reserves through sovereign wealth funds and gold accumulation for effective currency stabilization.

According to the Reserve Bank, record foreign exchange reserves of \$600 billion in 2021

helped manage volatility during the pandemic. Enter into agreements to settle trade in local currencies, reducing dependence on the US dollar and mitigating exchange rate risks. The India-Russia Rupee-Ruble Trading Mechanism eased pressure on foreign exchange reserves during the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Prioritize low-cost and long-term borrowings while reducing short-term external debt to avoid currency risks.

India's increased issuance of sovereign green bonds helped attract stable foreign investment while reducing repayment volatility in 2023. A strong external sector is important for India's economic resilience amid global uncertainties. By promoting export competitiveness, ensuring prudent fiscal policy, diversifying foreign exchange reserves, and increasing bilateral trade in rupees, India can reduce currency volatility. A visionary strategy emphasizing structural reforms and global economic integration will ensure long-term stability and strengthen India's position in the global economy.

(Dr. Satyavan Saurabh, Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist)

Breaking Time Sudoku

What to do

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digit 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only correct solution.

	8		1					9
			5		3			
	1	3		2			5	
5	2							
8	6				1	3		
4		6		3	8			
	7	5		2	1		4	

Solution, Sudoku

1	3	8	7	5	6	9	2	4
4	6	2	8	9	3	5	7	1
7	5	9	1	2	4	3	6	8
8	2	3	6	1	9	4	5	7
5	7	1	4	3	8	2	9	6
9	4	6	2	7	5	1	8	3
2	1	4	9	8	7	6	3	5
3	9	7	5	6	1	8	4	2
6	8	5	3	4	2	7	1	9

THE WISDOM TREE

BY SUVEEN KUMAR

DEFINE SUCCESS

Success is risking your life at every step and saving your life every step, success is feeling fearful and doing brave, success is rolling every and covering distance. A true success is life is perhaps self-defined, a true failure is life is perhaps self-defined and a true balance in life is also perhaps self-defined. If life has millions of definitions then how come things in life can have one, if life has millions of faces then how come things in life can have one, if life is so unpredictable then how come things and people can be predicted. Everyday we know things and everyday we get confused, everyday we possess things and everyday we lose, everyday we make things and everyday we break, everyday we attempt to infiltrate from Pakistan, there would be increased infiltration of terrorists, Rohingyas and desperate Bangladesh is through the porous 4000 plus km border. Both nations will continue to harbour anti-India sentiments. This will bring both closer.

In helping you succeed even if it takes to making someone bleed. It's good to do things what you feel is right but it is always right to do the right things to make you feel good. Read your feelings and count your heartbeats. Some find success in their failure and some find failure in their success, some find success when they stop and some find success only on their go, some enjoy success when they have not even found it and some enjoy their success after they have lost it. Your meaning of success is meaningless for others, things that you enjoy doing they most they do and suffer. You can talk about success, you can write about success, you can know it you can feel it but may be you can never have it and even if you have had it may be you can never keep it and even if you keep it for some time then at some time you are sure to lose it.



Someone out there is failing the same way, as you celebrating a today someone out there is cursing this day. Some of us find our success in defining success and designing success, some of us find our success

Moral: if you already know that life is a journey then may be you don't believe in it, because you are still looking for a destination.

India-Bangladesh ties in the coming days

The Indian foreign secretary, Vikram Misri, recently visited Bangladesh and apart from meeting his counterpart, Mohammad Touhid Hossain, also met the head of the interim Government, Mohammad Yunus. His per the MEA readout, he highlighted India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh. In addition, he conveyed India's concerns on issues related to safety and welfare of minorities, as also attacks on cultural, religious and diplomatic properties.

announced plans to procure Onions, Potatoes and Sugar from Pakistan, apart from India. Thirdly, the Arakan army of Myanmar, a Buddhist ethnic insurgent group, fighting the military junta has taken control of the 270 km Myanmar border with Bangladesh. While it immediately does not pose a threat to Bangladesh, it also pushes large numbers of Rohingyas into the country. Further, it closes an avenue for import of rice from Myanmar. Thus, the only source for Bangladesh would remain India.

operations. There was not a single Bangladeshi in the surrender photograph nor was Bangladesh permitted to hold Pakistani prisoners of try them for war crimes. In contrast, the Vijay Diwas celebrations involving the armed forces on both sides were conducted in good faith and as per previous protocols. However, levels of attendance by Bangladeshi war veterans were low.

In parts of India too, anger against attacks on minorities in Bangladesh is visible. In Tripura, hospitals, hotels and restaurants have decided against hosting Bangladeshis. Protests against attacks on Hindus have taken place throughout the country.

has emerged, unearthing for its support in its battle for freedom as also throughout its existence. The militant Islamists in Bangladesh are conveying the impression that India has interfered in their countries policies through its history and is therefore not a friend as it claims to be. It should be treated as an adversary.

The porous Indo-Bangladesh border, despite being largely fenced, will remain a matter of concern. India will have to contend with two unstable borders, Pakistan and Bangladesh. While only terrorists attempt to infiltrate from Pakistan, there would be increased infiltration of terrorists, Rohingyas and desperate Bangladesh is through the porous 4000 plus km border. Both nations will continue to harbour anti-India sentiments. This will bring both closer.

While Bangladesh will still seek Indian support and assistance, Pakistan is aware that it cannot bank on India. Both nations will collude on a common anti-India agenda, already visible with demands for restoring SAARC. Bangladesh, as against Pakistan, will have to tread carefully as it can only bank on India for most of its needs including electricity and food stocks.

China, which already has its inroads in Pakistan will now attempt the same in Bangladesh. While India has managed to ignore Pakistan and considers it a non-entity it would continue attempting to maintain ties with Dacca, hoping to push a change in its attitude. The US deep state, which forced the change in Bangladesh, has resulted in India being largely surrounded by three hostile states. Managing this will be a challenge for the Indian Government.

India-Bangladesh ties were ideal, all territorial disputes resolved, trade flourishing and people to people contact existed. India was the destination for shopping and medical treatment.

India-Bangladesh ties were ideal, all territorial disputes resolved, trade flourishing and people to people contact existed. India was the destination for shopping and medical treatment. The approach of the Mohammad Yunus Government towards minorities is unacceptable and the internal scenario, including the growing anti-India sentiment, must change. A few indicators post the visit display that this was strongly expressed.

India-Bangladesh ties were ideal, all territorial disputes resolved, trade flourishing and people to people contact existed. India was the destination for shopping and medical treatment. Since the overthrow of the Sheikh Hasina regime, a lot has changed.

Many Bangladeshis residing illegally in India are also radicalized and would impact national security. Indian security agencies recently arrested members of the global terrorist group Ansar-ul-Bangla Team (ABT) which were running sleeper cells in India intending to target the Siliguri corridor. Security forces also arrested members of the Left attempting to infiltrate to Bangladesh.

There are unfirmed reports of Pakistan moving terrorists to J and K through Bangladesh. The re-entry of Pakistan into Bangladesh, as also cancellation of requirement for Pakistanis to obtain security clearance, prior to applying for visa, opens doors for greater presence of the ISI to enhance anti-India activities in the NE.

India should realize that the Shireen Hasina regime is over and a very different Bangladesh

TOP STORY

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UP CM inaugurates ₹2.7 Cr natural water purification project for Rapti River

■ Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday inaugurated a ₹2.70 crore water purification project undertaken by the Municipal Corporation to treat drains flowing into the Rapti River using the natural method of phytoremediation technology.

Gorakhpur
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday inaugurated a ₹2.70 crore water purification project undertaken by the Municipal Corporation to treat drains flowing into the Rapti River using the natural method of phytoremediation technology.

Speaking at the event, the CM highlighted the transformative potential of the initiative, stating that it will not only purify the river but also save crores of rupees in costs. "There will be neither electricity nor maintenance cost in this," he added.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath praised the efforts of the Municipal Corporation in ensuring the Rapti River in Gorakhpur remains uninterrupted, pure, and its water clean and pristine. "This is a commendable initiative," he said. "It is a significant step towards preserving fertility and sustaining life."

Highlighting the critical importance of clean water, he recalled that between 1977 and 2017, polluted water and unhygienic conditions caused diseases like encephalitis and vector-borne illnesses, leading to the tragic deaths of 50,000 children in eastern Uttar Pradesh, including Gorakhpur.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

The Chief Minister credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for inspiring nationwide initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission, the Amrit Mission in urban areas, and the Jal Jeevan Mission in rural regions, all aimed at ensuring access to clean drinking water. Through the Har Ghar Nal Yojana, the government has worked tirelessly to deliver pure drinking water to every household.

CM Yogi Adityanath further highlighted the success of the Namami Gange project in reviving river ecosystems, initiated under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. He said, "This commitment to preserving India's river culture has culminated in the upcoming Mahakumbh, the world's largest religious and spiritual gathering, set to take place at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26."

Reflecting on Gorakhpur's heritage, the Chief Minister remarked, "Our civilization and culture thrive along the banks of rivers. Gorakhpur, nurtured by the Rapti and Rohini rivers, is reclaiming its essence as we purify the very rivers that sustain our way of life."

The Chief Minister highlighted that the National Green Tribunal had previously been imposing fines on the Municipal Corporation due to the discharge of polluted water into the Rapti River. In response, the Corporation had planned to construct a sewage treatment plant (STP) at a cost of ₹110 crore. However, the Chief Minister advocated for the adoption of natural water purification methods.

He said, "Today, the positive results of this approach are evident. Previously, the water's Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) level had reached 350, making it more toxic than hazardous waste and unsuitable even for irrigation. After employing natural purification methods, the BOD level has now been reduced to a pure state, with the water at the end of the process having a BOD level of just 22."

CM Yogi further emphasized that the entire ₹2.7 crore cost of this natural water purification project is a one-time expense. In the long run, it will save crores of rupees in electricity and maintenance costs.

He expressed confidence that this method could be implemented more extensively, calling it a model for sustainable development. "By applying this natural model to every drain, we can successfully preserve the purity of water—the most essential resource—while achieving superior results at a fraction of the cost," he said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed the Municipal Corporation's water purification project using the natural phytoremediation technique before its inauguration.

He examined the project's design and visited the site to observe the condition of the treated water. Municipal Commissioner Gurav Singh Sogavari informed the Chief Minister that polluted water from the city flows into the Rapti and Rohini rivers through 15 major drains.

He said, "To prevent con-



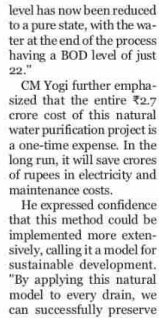
tamination of the river water, the Municipal Corporation is implementing a ₹2.7 crore water purification project using the phytoremediation technique. The project covers the drain flowing into the Rapti River via Takiya Ghat from the Ilahi Bagh Regulator."

He added, "Under this method, a pre-filter has been installed on the main drain, along with four branch drains and two additional smaller drains. A gabion wall made of natural stone has been constructed every 30 to 40 meters, and aquatic plants have been planted in the drain. The water passing through these processes gets purified before entering the river. The project is designed to purify up to 15 million liters of water per day."

During his visit, the Chief Minister suggested expanding this natural purification method to other drains as well.

While inspecting the project at Takiya Ghat, CM Yogi Adityanath took time to interact warmly with women, the elderly, and children. He inquired about the studies of a young girl named Aashiya, who is in class three. The Chief Minister blessed Aashiya and the other children, and he also distributed chocolates to them.

He said, "To prevent con-



Rajan Punchhi

Leader of Opposition Jaiwant Thakur said that now the government is targeting Raj Bhawan. Raj Bhawan has dignity which is being deliberately tried to be tarnished. Chief Minister should intervene in this matter and stop this kind of dirty politics. This kind of politics against every institution is not in the interest of the state.

Leaders must think before giving any kind of statement against Raj Bhawan. It is the responsibility of the Chief Minister to keep his leaders under control and not make Raj Bhawan a part of their politics. This attack on Raj Bhawan by people is being done as a part of a well thought out conspiracy, hence it is the responsibility of the Chief Minister to rein in such people. Bharatiya Janata Party will not tolerate any kind of conduct contrary to the dignity of Raj Bhawan.

Leader of Opposition said that leaders are giving absurd statements to shine their politics. This kind of tradition is not right in any

way. Himachal has never had a tradition of targeting the Raj Bhawan for petty politics. Therefore, the head of the state and the head of the Congress should stop those who start such a tradition. The way Raj Bhawan is being targeted, it is clear that the people sitting in the government want to divert the attention of the people of the state from their failure. That is why they are making such baseless statements. Such people should understand that they have been exposed now, so their tactics will not work.

Jairam thakur said that the fire incident in Tandvi village of Banjar assembly constituency of Kullu district is very sad and horrific. Hundreds of people became homeless. People's property worth crores has been destroyed but the government is not bothered by this. After such a big incident, no big representative of the government and administration reached the spot on the day of the incident. The entire state knows what kind of event the top officials of the district administration were busy with.

UP govt ensures safe arrangements for Mahakumbh

Mahakumbh Nagar
Under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership, extensive arrangements are being made for the safety of devotees at the Mahakumbh. Special attention is being given to suspicious individuals, with security forces maintaining strict surveillance. In this regard, Mahakumbh police recently questioned four foreign nationals.

The individuals, hailing from Russia, Germany, and Belarus, had their necessary documents thoroughly checked. After verifying the documents, three of the foreigners were allowed to continue their stay, as their paperwork was in order. However, one individual was sent back due to an expired visa.

CM Yogi has instructed officials to ensure all necessary arrangements for a safe Mahakumbh. Following this, security measures have been strengthened in the area. Senior Superintendent of Police, Rajesh Divedi, mentioned that vigilance has been increased for the safety of devotees, with Mahakumbh police remaining on alert 24/7. They are closely monitoring both local and foreign citizens. The police are conducting multiple levels of checks to ensure the safety of every devotee.

In this context, four foreign nationals were questioned after being found suspicious. Among them were a Russian citizen, a German national, and two individuals from Belarus. Their necessary documents were examined, and the paperwork of the German and Belarusian nationals was found to be in order, allowing them to go free. However, the fourth individual, Andre from Moscow, Russia, had an expired visa and passport. As a result, he was sent back to Russia. The Senior Superintendent of Police emphasized that the entire Mela area is under constant surveillance, and anyone found involved in suspicious activities will not be spared.

First International Pravasi Uttarakhandi Conference to be held in Dehradun on Jan 12

Dehradun
Uttarakhandis from 17 countries will attend the first International Pravasi Uttarakhandi Conference to be held here on January 12 to explore investment opportunities in the state.

More than 50 well-known migrant Uttarakhandis have already registered for the event to be inaugurated by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama.

Panel discussions will be held in four different sessions at the one-day event on investment possibilities in Uttarakhand, especially in hospitality, wellness and skill development sectors, an official release here said.

Employment abroad, higher education as well as investment possibilities in garden herbs will also be discussed.

Many migrant Uttarakhandis who have earned a name for themselves in different fields while living abroad are participating in this conference.

Apart from Girish Chandra Pant, a Dubai resident who received the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, it includes names like Dev Ra-

turi from China, Dr Anita Sharma from America, Bhuvan Tiwari from Japan, Sunil Thapliyal from Singapore, Meenakshi Dabral and Dr A K Kala from Thailand.

"Migrants of Uttarakhand living abroad are earning a name for themselves in every field. They have a vast experience in the field of science and technology and entrepreneurship."

"The government wants the migrants to utilise their experience for the development of their own state and village. The government is ready to give all possible help in this," Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been constantly inspiring migrants to contribute to

the development of their states, the positive results of which are emerging, Dhama added.

The idea of organising an event like this struck the chief minister when he went abroad to invite investors for an investment summit here in December, 2023 and he was accorded a traditional welcome by migrant Uttarakhandis living abroad.

Dhama was impressed by the fact that Uttarakhandis had kept their cultural traditions alive despite living for years on foreign soil.

The event will bring them together on a common platform and think over what they can do for their own state where they actually belong, Dhama said.



Komal Ramola Chandigarh
Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini Friday made a slew of announcements to mark the birth anniversary of iconic social reformer Savitribai Phule including that the state government will now officially celebrate the day every year.

Saini also announced the state government will expedite the proposal to extend the metro line from Bahadurgarh to Asaudha. He also said the Bahadurgarh Municipal Council will be upgraded to a Municipal Corporation.

Saini made the announcements at a programme in Bahadurgarh on the occasion of Savitribai Phule Jayanti. During the programme, the chief minister said Phule's birth anniversary will, from now on, be celebrated officially by the state government every year.

According to an official statement, he further said feasibility checks will be carried out to proceed with projects such as constructing an underpass at the railway crossing in the city, renovating roads in Bahadurgarh, developing a park on

the vacant land adjacent to the old court, and establishing a "Vyayamshala" and "Yogshala" on a plot near the old bus stand.

Paying his tribute to Phule, Saini also said she was not only India's first woman teacher but also a beacon of women empowerment. Married to Jyotiba Phule, a revered social reformer himself, Savitribai Phule was considered by many as India's first woman teacher due to her pioneering work for educating women — especially from deprived groups — when it was considered a taboo.

Meanwhile, Saini further said Phule's vision inspires the Haryana government's women empowerment initiatives. The Government Women's College in Loharu, Bhiwani, has been renamed after Savitribai Phule. The government is committed to educating and empowering women and continuous efforts are being made toward this goal, he said.

Despite facing numerous obstacles, she courageously established a girls' school in Pune, Maharashtra, in 1848, Saini said. Born on January 3, 1831 at Naigao in Satara district of Maharashtra, Savitribai married Jyotiba and moved to Pune with him. Her husband, reformist zeal, taught her to read and write. Savitribai took a teachers' training course and became a qualified teacher in 1847.

The couple then started a school for girls in Bhidewada in Pune city in 1848, and she became its first teacher. The couple had to face tremendous harassment from conservative elements who found the idea of women's education repugnant. Chief Minister Saini said that inspired by Savitribai Phule's vision, the BJP government in the state has opened colleges within a 20-kilometer radius to provide higher education.

In the last 10 years, 79 government colleges have been established, including 30 exclusively for girls, he said. Saini said that in January 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the nationwide 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign from Patna.

"Haryana has actively worked with NGOs to save daughters under this initiative. The state's gender ratio has improved from 871 to 916. Haryana is now recognised as a state that empowered daughters rather than one that suppresses them, marking a true tribute to Mata Savitribai Phule," he said, according to the statement.

Haryana govt to celebrate Savitribai Phule's birth anniversary every year, says CM Saini



Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini

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Attack on Raj Bhawan is a well thought out conspiracy: JR Thakur



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

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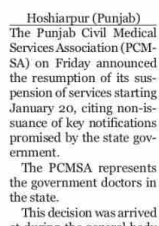
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

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Govt doctors of Punjab to resume suspension of services from Jan 20 over 'unmet' demands



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New day same story 'King' Kohli fails again India collapse to 185

Sydney
Rohit Sharma "opted to rest" in the team's interest but the same old script unfolded on a new day for Indian batters as they surrendered meekly for a paltry 185 in the face of some hostile seam bowling from Australia on the opening day of the fifth and final Test here.

Virat Kohli (17 off 69 balls), whose form and technical weaknesses are also under the scanner, was for the seventh time dismissed in the corridor of uncertainty in the tour, a problem that seems incurable at the moment.

At stumps, Australia were 9 for 1 with stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah sending the wofully out-of-form Usman Khawaja (2) back in the hut.

Teenage sensation Sam Konstas was unbeaten at 7 after hitting Bumrah for a first-ball four. The 19-year-old also had an animated exchange with the Indian star.

Bumrah opted to bat under overcast conditions and the ultra-defensive approach by Indian batters only compounded their problems with Scott Boland's (20-8-31-4) immaculate length and tremendous discipline leaving them in a dismay.

Mitchell Starc (18-5-49-3) and Pat Cummins (15-2-4-27-2) were equally relentless giving the Indians no room for release shots.

Rishabh Pant top-scored for the visitors with a 98-ball 40, going against his grain to battle it out, taking painful blows



to his body in the process.

If Rohit's decision to "rest" was a forward thinking move, the persistence with Kohli is proving to be detrimental and the celebrated batter might just have one more Test innings left to save his place in the traditional format.

"I wouldn't say it's a par score but still a competitive score," said Pant, admitting that the pitch is not easy to bat on.

If one takes away the second innings hundred at Perth out of his last 20 Test innings, Kohli has managed an average of 17.57.

He could have been out off Boland's first delivery but tried to battle hard. However, it has always been that one

moment in which his hands and the willow magnetically follow a delivery in the corridor of uncertainty.

Pant curbs natural instincts for a session

Having copped criticism from all quarters for his bizarre shot selection in Melbourne, Pant, for a change, copped body blows, trying to curb his natural game.

The big-hitter in him came out only on a couple of occasions with one of them fetching him a straight six off Beau Webster.

Pant put his head down and endured nasty blows on his bicep, helmet and twice in the sensitive abdominal area. He

and the dogged Ravindra Jadeja (26 off 95 balls) defended doggedly as they added 48 off 151 deliveries for the fifth wicket.

Only 50 runs were scored in the second session and trying not to be adventurous proved counter-productive with most batters retreating in a shell letting Boland and company dictate the terms of play.

Finally, Pant's patience ran out and one pull shot too many became his undoing.

India realised they haven't scored enough runs and lost a lot of wickets. The defensive tactic in the second session when the ball got old ended up costing them dearly.

There wasn't much swing on offer despite cloudy conditions but a decent grass cover ensured that Boland's back-length deliveries proved enough.

As far as Pant was concerned, the "honest conversations" with head coach Gautam Gambhir seemed to have worked with the southpaw respecting the game situation for most part.

If Pant was disciplined, Shubman Gill's judgement on the last delivery before lunch did cause trouble for India. Gill (20 off 64 balls) did all the hard work for close to couple of hours before stepping out to Nathan Lyon on the last ball of the session only to be caught at first slip.

In the morning KL Rahul and Yashvir Jaiswal came in to open the innings but didn't last long and the saga of first innings failures continued.

Facing Jasprit will be challenging on this track, says Webster



Sydney

Debutant all-rounder Beau Webster feels facing ace India pacer Jasprit Bumrah will be an enormous challenge on the SCG pitch which is helping seamers, and the Australian did not place his finger on an ideal first innings score.

India were all out for 185 and then Australia lost Usman Khawaja off the last ball of the day to Bumrah to end at 9 for one.

"Think there's definitely a method to go about batting on this wicket. But Jasprit is a world class bowler and no doubt he's going to challenge our whole batting group. He's phenomenal with his lengths and lines, it is going to be tough on a wicket that will offer a fair bit for him," Webster said in the post day one press conference.

He said getting India out for a total less than 200 on a seamer friendly track was a commendable effort.

"It was a pretty seamer-friendly track and most of the day the ball stayed pretty new with the grass coverage. It is not an abrasive square either. So, the plan was to bowl a little bit fuller and entice those front foot defences and front foot drives."

"Thought Scotty (Boland) was excellent, he's been unbelievable since he came back into the team and saw why he's a world class bowler. Thought all the bowlers were really good today to bowl them out for 200."

Webster said the degree of seam movement for a few deliveries was way more pronounced and hence they beat the bat regularly.

"There were a couple of unplayable balls, when it seems that much it can be hard to get a wick-

et at times. We saw a nice-ish partnership (Jadeja-Pant), where we struggled to get a breakthrough through the sheer seam movement. We beat the bat a lot but couldn't find the edge."

The 31-year-old was all praise for Boland and said the pacer can find a way to get wickets on any surface and when there is help on offer, he is on par with the best in business.

"If there's anything in the wicket he finds it and if there's nothing in the wicket he still manages to find a way through," the lanky Tasmanian said.

"He's been fantastic this whole series when he's got his chance, he's relentless. I think it's his line and length and his natural angle that makes it really hard for right-handers, but when we see him go round the wicket to left-handers it's impressive stuff."

Webster caught the great Virat Kohli at third slip and he found Boland's bowling enjoyable.

"It's great to watch from the third slip today, the amount of movement he gets and how accurate he is and how challenging he is for both left and right handers. He's been superb, he can bowl long spells and back up the next day."

"He's a ripping bloke so everyone is stoked when he does well which seems to be all the time at the moment."

Webster said he was happy to put his nondescript village, Snug in Tasmania, a part of the cricketing map.

"My phone has been blowing off with messages and calls. It is a proud moment especially since I come from a small place and it is nice to put it on the map," he added.

This could be a motivation for all Indian football coaches Armando Colaco

New Delhi

Describing himself as the "bridge" between the old and new generation of coaches, Dronacharya awardee Armando Colaco feels this honour will act as motivation for the country's gaffers to take Indian football to new heights.

Armando, 71, has been applying for the award, the highest recognition for coaches in India, for several years.

"First and most important is that our coaches are going to realise that all your hard work is going to communicate, and I could be an inspiration to all these coaches because I'm like a bridge between the old generation and the new generation," Armando told the AIFF.

"This could be a sort of motivation for all Indian coaches since foreign coaches are currently playing a dominant role in Indian football," added Armando, who coached the national team in 2011.

He is the first Goan to receive the award, years after having won a record five NFL/I-League titles with Dempo SC.

During his short stint as the national coach, he had some impressive results under his belt, including a 2-1 victory over Qatar in a friendly played at Doha.

The same year, he guided India to a creditable 2-2 draw against mighty United Arab Emirates in a World Cup qualifying match at the Ambedkar Stadium in Delhi.

"But etched in my memory will always be the 0-3 defeat we suffered against UAE in the away tie. "We were reduced to nine men within 25 minutes because of two red cards. I had to quickly change the tactics and shuffle the players to stay in the game," said Armando.

His wards in club level included players like Samir Naik, Mahesh Gawali, Clifford Miranda, and Clim Lawrence, who went on to don the national colours for many years.

The years between 2004-05 and 2011-12 seasons, Dempo were the dominant force in Indian domestic football under the tutelage of Armando.

"I had players who went on to play for the national team and even captain the national team. So, you know, that made me a very happy person. God has rewarded me. That's the greatest satisfaction because I have really worked very hard all these years," said the veteran coach.

Ayub twists right ankle as South Africa reaches 72-3 against Pakistan in 2nd test

Cape Town (South Africa)

Pakistan had an injury scare when opening batter Saim Ayub twisted his right ankle on the field as South Africa reached 72-3 at lunch on day 1 of the second and final test on Friday.

Ayub fell awkwardly in the outfield and was visibly in a lot of pain as he received brief treatment on the ground before he was rushed to a hospital for precautionary scans.

The Pakistan team management said an update on the extent of Ayub's injury "will be provided in due course."

South Africa, which has already sealed its place in June's World Test Championship final with a dramatic two-wicket win in the first test at Centurion inside four days, lost three wickets for nine runs in the latter half of first session after getting a promising start of 61.

Ryan Rickleton completed his half



century in the last over before lunch and was unbeaten on 50, but off-spinner Salman Ali Agha pegged the home team further when he had Tristan Stubbs caught behind for zero which gave wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan his third catch of the morning session.

South Africa settled in well despite Aiden Markram surviving a close lbow off Mohammad Abbas' first ball after skipper Temba Bavuma won the toss and elected to bat on a dry wicket.

Committed to nurture sporting talent bring glory in global arena Indian Army



New Delhi

A day after the government announced the names of sportspersons chosen for various prestigious sports awards in the country, the Indian Army on Friday reaffirmed its commitment to nurturing talent in sports to propel the nation to glory in the global sporting arena.

In a post on X, the Army congratulated Subedar Hokato H Sema, a bronze medalist at the Paris Paralympics 2024, and Simran, the wife of Naik Gajendra Singh, for earning a place among the Arjuna Awardees.

Double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker and chess world champion D Gukesh were among the four winners of the Major Dhyani Chand Khel Ratna award, announced by the Sports Ministry on Thursday. The list also included an unprecedented 17 para-athletes among the 32 Arjuna awardees, recognizing their outstanding success at the Paris Paralympics.



"Subedar Hokato H Sema, a bronze medalist at the Paris Paralympics 2024 in Sitting Shotgun (F-57 category), has also won a bronze at the Para Asian Games 2022 and has three Para national silver medals to his name," the Army wrote in the post.

Simran won the bronze medal in the women's 200m (T-12 category) and finished fourth in the women's 100m (T-12) at the Paris Paralympics 2024. She has also secured a World Para Championship Gold Medal in the same category, along with Para national golds in both the 100m and 200m events, among other international honours.

"Their remarkable achievements through perseverance and dedication have brought laurels to the nation and inspired countless others to pursue excellence against all odds. The Indian Army is committed to nurturing talent in sports to propel the nation to glory in the global sporting arena," it added.

Rohit's road ahead Tough to see 'Hitman' in India jersey beyond Champions Trophy

Sydney

The recent Melbourne Test against Australia was possibly Rohit Sharma's last appearance for India in the traditional format, but will this white ball colossus continue beyond next month's Champions Trophy is the million dollar question.

Rohit's absence from the ongoing fifth Test might have been sugarcoated as "opted to rest" by everyone concerned but if one cuts through the niceties, he is as good as dropped.

When the name in talks is as big as Rohit, who has given his everything for the country for the past 17 years, his future appearances could be open to conjecture.

As it is, he has retired from T20 Internationals post India's victory in the ICC World Cup earlier this year in the West Indies.

The selectors will certainly have discussions after the Australia series and the roadmap for both Rohit and Virat Kohli will be decided.

The wisemen will now have to sit together to pick the team for the England bilateral series at home and the Champions Trophy.

Obviously, the longevity of Kohli's Test career hinges on the second innings at Sydney and it is increasingly becoming difficult to carry him for the England series unless he makes a significant contribution here.

So, is there a way forward for Rohit, the Test cricketer? Unfortunately, the next Test match that India will play if they don't qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) final is against



England from June 18-22 in Leeds.

Of course, the selection committee will take call only after the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, but someone as intelligent as Rohit, a T20 World Cup and five-time IPL winning skipper, knows that it is difficult to add to his 67 Test appearances.

Having been "nudged" into taking rest here, does Rohit have it in him to slog it out in the domestic cricket when Ranji Trophy resumes later this month, as there will be no red ball cricket available for him before the England tour?

If yes, then Rohit is sending out a message to go on by his own terms.

The selectors can decide not to select him for Tests but whether to quit a format is the player's sole prerogative and he is answerable to none.

But if the answer is a no, then, logically the Ajit Agarwal committee cannot

pick a 38-year-old for the next World Test Championship cycle that runs from 2025-2027.

So, what Rohit has in his calendar if he does not get picked for Test matches? Three ODIs against visiting England and the Champions Trophy before the IPL. The one-dayers are no longer the most sought after bilateral format as most teams keep their confirmed to just three games.

Once the Champions Trophy is over, the next ODI bilateral rubber is against Bangladesh in August, and the next big 50-over event, the World Cup, is in South Africa in 2027.

Rohit will be 40 by then. Will he be in prime form or fitness to play a blue riband tournament with a good 9 to 11 games in a space of six weeks including travel? Hence, the Champions Trophy looks like a fitting tournament for Rohit's international swansong.

Musk 'misjudged certainly misinformed' over UK grooming attacks Minister

London: A senior British politician pushed back Friday on Elon Musk's criticism of the government's handling of a historic child grooming scandal.

In recent days, Musk has shared and reacted to posts on his X platform that have been critical of the British government after it rejected a call for a public inquiry into the grooming scandal in the north of England town of Oldham.

Though Health Secretary Wes Streeting said Musk's views were "misjudged and certainly misinformed", he urged the world's richest man and close confidant of US President-elect Donald Trump to work with the government on tackling the issue of child sexual exploitation.

The government has argued that Oldham must follow in the footsteps of other towns and commission its own inquiry into the historical abuse of mainly girls.

A 2022 report into safeguarding measures in Oldham between 2011 and 2014 found that children were failed by local agencies, but that there was no cover-up despite "legitimate concerns" that the far-right would capitalise on "the high-profile convictions of predominantly Pakistani offenders across the country".

For Advt Contact: 9818-799941

Israeli strikes kill at least 30 in Gaza as ceasefire talks set to resume in Qatar

Deir al-Balah (Gaza Strip):

Israeli strikes killed at least 30 people in Gaza, including children, overnight and into Friday, hospital staff said, as often-stalled ceasefire talks to end the Israel-Hamas war were set to resume in Qatar. Sirens sounded across Israel for missiles fired from Israel for missiles fired from Yemen.

Staff at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital said that more than a dozen women and children were killed in strikes in central Gaza, including in Nuseirat, Zawaida, Maghazi and Deir al-Balah.

Dozens of people were killed across the enclave the previous day, bringing the total killed in the past 24 hours to 56.

"We woke up to the missile strike. We found the whole house disintegrated," Abdul Rahman Al-Nabris said in the Maghazi refugee camp.

The Israeli army said in a statement on Friday that during the past day, it had struck dozens of



Hamas gathering points and command centres throughout Gaza. The army asserted that measures were taken to mitigate civilian harm, such as using aerial surveillance.

And it issued a warning for people to leave an area of central Gaza immediately, saying it would attack following launches from there toward Israel. The military

said that a few projectiles entered Israel from central and northern Gaza, with no injuries reported. Freelance journalist Omar al-Derawi was among those killed on Friday. Associated Press reporters saw friends and colleagues mourning over his body, with a press vest laid on his shroud. The Committee to

Protect Journalists said last month that more than 130 Palestinian reporters have been killed since the start of the war. Israel hasn't allowed foreign journalists to enter Gaza except on military embeds.

Israelis also woke up to attacks. Israel said that missiles were fired into the country from Yemen, setting off air raid sirens in Jerusalem

and central Israel and sending people scrambling to shelters.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage. Israel's army said that a missile was intercepted. The Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen often claim responsibility.

Efforts at ceasefire negotiations were expected to resume Friday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office has said that he authorised a delegation from the Mossad intelligence agency, the Shin Bet internal security agency and the military to continue negotiations in Qatar. The delegation was leaving for Qatar on Friday.

The US-led talks have repeatedly stalled during nearly 15 months of war. Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead in Gaza until Hamas is destroyed. But the militants, while greatly weakened, have repeatedly regrouped, often after Israeli forces withdraw from areas.

South Korea's impeached president defies warrant after hourslong standoff

Seoul: South Korean investigators left the official residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol after a near-six-hour standoff on Friday during which he defied their attempt to detain him. It's the latest confrontation in a political crisis that has paralyzed South Korean politics and seen two heads of state impeached in under a month.

The country's anti-corruption agency said it withdrew its investigators after the presidential security service blocked them from entering Yoon's residence for hours, due to concerns about their safety.

The agency said its outnumbered investigators had several scuffles with presidential security forces and expressed "serious regret about the attitude of the suspect, who did not comply with the legal process".

It said detaining Yoon would be "virtually impossible" as long as he is protected by the presidential security service. The agency plans

to "strongly demand" that the country's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, instruct the service to comply with their execution of the detention warrant.

Outside the residence, a large group of pro-Yoon protesters braved freezing temperatures for hours, waving South Korean and American flags while chanting slogans vowing to protect him.

The National Police Agency said it planned to investigate the chief and deputy chiefs of the presidential security service on suspicion of obstructing official duty and summoned them for questioning on Saturday.

Yoon, a former prosecutor, has resisted investigators' attempts to question him for weeks. The last time he is known to have left the residence was on December 12, when he went to the nearby presidential office to make a televised statement to the nation, making a defiant statement that he will fight efforts to oust him.

Trump's strength unpredictability can help end the war in Ukraine: Zelenskyy

Kyiv: US President-elect Donald Trump is "strong and unpredictable", and those qualities can be a decisive factor in his policy approach to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

However, Zelenskyy said it won't be possible to end the almost three years of war in one day, as Trump claimed during his election cam-



Trump's strength unpredictability can help end the war in Ukraine: Zelenskyy

his position," Zelenskyy said in a Ukrainian television interview late Thursday, referring to fighting on the battlefield.

"I believe (Trump) is strong and unpredictable. I would very much like President Trump's unpredictability to be directed primarily toward the Russian Federation," Zelenskyy said.

Trump, who takes office on January 20, hasn't publicly fleshed

out his policy on Ukraine, but his previous comments have put a question mark over whether the United States will continue to be Ukraine's biggest — and most important — military backer.

Zelenskyy is eager to guarantee that Washington's support keeps coming, and he met with Trump in New York even before the US presidential election in November.

With the war about to enter its fourth year next month, and with Trump coming to power, the question of how and when Europe's biggest conflict since World War II might end has come to the fore.

Russia controls about one-fifth of Ukraine, and capitalized last year on weaknesses in Ukraine's defences to slowly advance in eastern areas despite high losses of troops and equipment.

The war's trajectory isn't in Ukraine's favour.

The country is short-handed on the front line and needs continued support from its Western partners.

Trump responded favourably to the possibility raised by French President Emmanuel Macron of Western peacekeepers being deployed to Ukraine to oversee an agreement that stops the fighting, Zelenskyy said.

BUSINESS

India's Forex Reserves Drop by USD 4.11 Billion



Mumbai: India's forex reserves dropped by USD 4.11 billion to USD 635.279 billion during the week ended December 27, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall kitty had dropped by USD 8.478 billion to USD 644.391 billion.

The reserves have been declining for the last few weeks, and the drop has been attributed to revaluation along with forex market interventions by RBI to help reduce volatility in the rupee. The forex reserves had increased to an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September.

For the week ended December 27, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 4.641 billion to USD 551.921 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by USD 54.1 million to USD 66.268 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 12 million to USD 17.873 billion, the apex bank said.

SBI launches new deposit schemes; Har Ghar Lakhpati & SBI Patrons

New Delhi: In a move to attract deposits, the State Bank of India (SBI) on Friday said it has launched two new deposit schemes Har Ghar Lakhpati and SBI Patrons, designed to provide customers with greater financial flexibility and enhanced value.

Recognising the widespread aspiration for financial security, Har Ghar Lakhpati a pre-calculated recurring deposit scheme designed to help customers accumulate Rs 1,00,000 or multiples thereof, SBI said in a statement.

This product simplifies the process of achieving financial goals, allowing customers to plan and save effectively, it said.

Besides, the bank also introduced SBI Patrons, a specialised term deposit scheme tailored for senior citizens aged 80 years and above.

This product offers enhanced interest

rates, recognising the long-standing relationship many senior customers have with the bank. SBI Patrons is available to both existing and new term deposit customers, it said.

SBI Patrons depositors would earn an additional 10 basis points higher interest rate than what is offered to senior citizens, while the recurring deposit scheme would be similar to rates

offered on fixed deposits. At present, the fixed deposit rate for above one year term is 6.80 per cent above two years 7 per cent, above 3 years 7 per cent and for 5-7 years is 6.5 per cent.

The minimum tenure of recurring deposits is 12 months (one year) and the maximum is 120 months (10 years). SBI has a market share

of about 23 per cent in deposits. These innovative offerings demonstrate the bank's resolve to prioritise innovation and strengthen its market leadership in deposits.

SBI Chairman CS Setty said, "We aim to create goal-oriented deposit products that not only enhance financial returns but also align with our customers' aspirations. We are redefining



Har Ghar Lakhpati & SBI Patrons

This product simplifies the process of achieving financial goals, allowing customers to plan and save effectively, it said.

traditional banking to make it more inclusive and impactful".

At SBI, he said, "we are committed to leveraging innovation and technology to seamlessly deliver solutions that empower every customer. We are committed to fostering financial inclusion and empowerment, to contribute to India's growth journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047".

Meanwhile, the bank has announced the launch of a TAB-based end-to-end digital onboarding process for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to streamline the opening of NRE (Non-Resident External) and NRO (Non-Resident Ordinary) accounts.

Rural poverty declines sharply in FY24 at 4.86 pc: SBI research

New Delhi: Rural poverty has declined significantly to 4.86 per cent in the fiscal ending March 2024 from 25.7 per cent in 2011-12 mainly driven by government support programmes, said a SBI research released on Friday.

Urban poverty too is estimated at 4.09 per cent, down from 13.7 per cent in 2011-12.

"The sharp decline in rural poverty ratio is on account of higher consumption growth in low-end 0-5 per cent decile with significant government support and such



support is important as we also find that change in food prices has a significant impact on not just food expenditures, but overall expenditure

in general," said the SBI research on consumption expenditure survey. The latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, released by

the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, showed that consumption inequality in rural as well as urban areas declined during the August 2023-July 2024 period as compared to a year ago.

"It is possible that these numbers could undergo minor revisions once the 2021 census is completed and the new rural-urban population share is published, the research report said.

We believe urban poverty could decline even further. At an aggregate level, we believe poverty rates in India could now be in the range of 4-4.5 per cent with almost minimal existence of extreme poverty," it said.

Enhanced physical infrastructure is scripting a new story in rural mobility, it said and added

that one of the reasons for the increasingly shrinking horizontal income gap between rural and urban and the vertical income gap within rural income classes," SBI said.

The difference between rural and urban monthly per capita consumption expenditure/Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) to rural MPCE is now at 69.7 per cent, a rapid decline from 88.2 per cent in 2009-10... mainly due to the initiatives the government has taken in terms of DBT transfers, building

rural infrastructures, augmenting farmer's income, (and) improving the rural livelihood significantly," it said.

The research estimates that food inflation dampens consumption demand more in low-income states compared to higher-income states, reflecting that rural people are comparatively more risk-averse in low-income states than in high-income states.

Most of the high-income states delegate a savings rate greater than the national average (31 per cent).

Several start-ups had initially registered abroad for easy access to finance from international funds, enhanced valuations and relaxed regulations in many sectors.

Many are exploring India listings after moving back.

Further, he said the Department for Promotion of Internal Trade has inked 50 MoUs with corporate houses, sharing their problem statements.

statements are shared with start-ups to look at opportunities.

Jayant Digambar Somalkar's award-winning film 'Sthal' to release on March 7

New Delhi
Actor Sachin Pilgaonkar has come on board as a presenter for Jayant Digambar Somalkar's award-winning Marathi film 'Sthal', which is slated to release in theatres on March 7.

'Sthal' won the coveted NETPAC award for best film from the Asia-Pacific region at the 48th Toronto International Film Festival in 2023.

The film stars first-time actors from Somalkar's village -- Nandini Chikte as the protagonist Savita along with Taranath Kharitkar, Sangita Sonekar, Suyog Dhawas, Sandip Somalkar, Sandip Parkhi, Swati Ulmale, Gauri Badki and Mansi Pawar.

The film is produced by Karan Grover, Shefali Bhushan, Jayant Digambar Somalkar and Riga Malhotra.



Set in a village in the Vidarbha region of India, the story follows "a determined young girl, Savita, who yearns for education and a brighter future. However, as her farmer parents anxiously struggle to find a suitable match for her, societal expectations place immense pressure on her to prioritize marriage over personal aspirations. Pilgaonkar shared the poster of the film on social media on Friday announcing its release on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule, the first female teacher in India, a social reformer and a poet. The actor said he watched the film for the first time at the MAMI Festival in Mumbai along with his wife, Supriya Pilgaonkar, and both loved it. "This film rooted in the

rural culture of Maharashtra got such an overwhelming response even from the Marathi diaspora in America, that I immediately offered my support in every way to the director," the actor said in a statement.

Somalkar, known for co-directing and writing the web series "Guilty Minds" made his debut feature with "Sthal".

"It's a moment of immense joy and pride for me to announce that 'Sthal', after its incredible journey across the globe, touching hearts and winning accolades, will finally grace theaters on 7th March, perfectly timed with International Women's Day. For a filmmaker, there's no greater dream than seeing their work come alive on the big screen and connect with audiences," he said in a statement.

Netflix unveils trailer of Vikramaditya Motwane's new series 'Black Warrant'



New Delhi

Streamer Netflix on Friday unveiled the official trailer of "Black Warrant", the much-awaited prison drama series from filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane.

Zahan Kapoor, the grandson of late cinema legend Shashi Kapoor, is making his series debut with the show, a dramatised adaptation of Sunil Gupta, former superintendent at Tihar Jail, and journalist-author Suneeta Choudhury's book, "Black Warrant: Confessions Of A

Tihar Jailer".

The show, also starring Rahul Bhat, Paramvir Singh Cheema, Anurag Thakur and Sidhant Gupta, will debut on Netflix on January 10.

The trailer sees Kapoor as Sunil Gupta, who with his two trusted fellow jailers, confront Tihar's notorious inmates and the entrenched politics.

The official logline states: "Armed with little more than grit and determination, the trio faces towering challenges within Tihar. This never-seen-before account

traces the deeply personal stories of inmates, officers, and their complex dynamics. Will they be able to challenge the system and bring change for the better, or will Tihar change them?"

Motwane, who earlier worked on Netflix's first India original "Sacred Games" and also directed "CTRL" for the streamer, has co-created "Black Warrant" with Satyanshu Singh, who also serves as a co-director alongside Ambiecka Pandit, Arkesh Ajay and Rohin Raveendran Nair.

Prime Video debuts first teaser of 'Paatal Lok' season two



New Delhi
Streaming service Prime Video on Friday unveiled the teaser of "Paatal Lok" season two, which will bring back acclaimed actor Jaideep Ahlawat as the washed up police inspector Hathi Ram Chaudhary.

The OTT platform shared the teaser of the second chapter on its official social media pages. The short clip offers a glimpse at Ahlawat as Hathi Ram, teasing a new mystery that will unravel before the viewers.

Just like the first season, where Ahlawat narrated a story from the Hindu epic Mahabharata, the actor is seen telling a new lore to the viewers.

Standing in an elevator, the actor recites the story of

a man who killed a bug under his bed. The man is hailed as brave and powerful but soon enough, countless new bugs start spawning under his bed.

"Poor guy, he thought he killed one insect and the game is over. That's not how it works, not down here in Paatal Lok," the actor said.

Besides Ahlawat, actors Ishwak Singh and Gul Panag are also returning for the second season. They are joined by newcomers Tillotama Shome, Nagesh Kukunoor and Jahmi Bana.

"Paatal Lok" is written and created by Sudip Sharma. The second season, directed by Avinash Arun Dhaware, is a Clean Slate Filmz Production in association with Eunoia Films LLP.

The eight-episode season

two of "Paatal Lok" will premiere on January 17 on Prime Video.



Kartik Aaryan congratulates Murlikant Petkar on being named for Arjuna Award

New Delhi

Chandu Champion" actor Kar-

Petkar, who won the top honours in the 50m freestyle swimming event of the 1972 Heidelberg Paralympics, was portrayed by Aaryan in "Chandu Champion", the 2024 sports drama film from acclaimed filmmaker Kabir Khan.

Kartik Aaryan has congratulated Murlikant Petkar, In-

dia's first Paralympic gold medalist, after he was named for the Arjuna Award (Lifetime).

Petkar, who won the top honours in the 50m freestyle swimming event of the 1972 Heidelberg Paralympics, was portrayed by Aaryan in "Chandu Champion", the 2024 sports drama film from acclaimed filmmaker Kabir Khan. "Huge Huge Congratulations to Sri Murlikant Petkar Ji. Our film, #ChanduChampion begins with the scene of you fighting for the Arjuna Award and now seeing you getting the biggest sports honour of the country... the journey feels complete. Your win feels personal Sir," Aaryan said in a post on Instagram alongside a picture of Petkar and the film's poster. "Congratulations to the real Champion! Words cannot express this emotion. You are finally getting your due and we are all so proud of you Sir," he added.

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"Congratulations to the real Champion! Words cannot express this emotion. You are finally getting your due and we are all so proud of you Sir," he added.

Petkar, who was earlier honoured with Padma Shri in 2018, was selected for the Arjuna Award alongside 16 other para-athletes.

Petkar, originally a boxer in the Indian Army and switched to swimming after losing his legs in the 1965 India-Pakistan war. His incredible journey led to India's first-ever medal in freestyle swimming at the Paralympics in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1972.

"Chandu Champion", produced by Sajid Nadiadwala's Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment and Kabir Khan Films, was released in June 2024. The movie also featured Vijay Raaz, Bhuvan Arora and Rajpal Yadav in pivotal roles.

Tom Holland on avoiding red carpet walk with Zendaya It's her moment

Los Angeles

"Spider-Man" star Tom Holland says he doesn't walk alongside his girlfriend and frequent collaborator Zendaya on the red carpets as he wants her to have her moment instead of making it about them.

Holland and Zendaya, both 28, met while filming "Spider-Man: Homecoming" in 2016 following which the dating rumours surfaced. However, it was only in 2021 that they confirmed their relationship on social media.

"Because it's not my moment, it's her moment, and if we go together, it's about us," Holland told Men's Health magazine explaining why he does not accompany his girl-

friend on red carpet. The actor also spoke about his future plans and said once he becomes a father, he won't be seen in the movies anymore.

"When I have kids, you will not see me in movies anymore. Golf and dad. And I will just disappear off the face of the earth."

Holland and Zendaya will next star in "Spider-Man 4", in which Holland will reprise his role of as the web casting superhero whereas Zendaya will be seen as MJ. The shooting for the film is slated to begin in the summer of 2025.

They will also feature in Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey" alongside Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway and Robert Pattinson.



New York

Wayne Osmond, a singer, guitarist and founding member of the million-selling family act The Osmonds, who were known for such 1970s teen hits as "One Bad Apple", "Yo-Yo" and "Down By the Lazy River", has died. He was 73.

Sibling Merrill Osmond posted on his Facebook page that Wayne died this week at a Salt Lake City hospital after suffering a "massive stroke".

"I've never known a man that had more humility. A man with absolutely no guile," Merrill wrote. "An individual that was quick to forgive and had the ability to show unconditional love to everyone he ever met."

Wayne Osmond was the fourth oldest of nine children raised in a Mormon household in Ogden, Utah, and the second oldest among the musical performers. The



siblings' career began in the 1950s when Wayne, Alan, Merrill and Jay sang as a barbershop quartet.

Their popularity grew in the 1960s after being supported by singer Andy Williams, and they peaked as a quintet in the early 1970s, with younger brother Donny Osmond the breakout star.

"One Bad Apple" and other songs were often compared to the music of The Osmonds' contemporaries, the

Jackson 5, and Donny was positioned as the white counterpart to the Jacksons' lead singer, Michael Jackson.

The Osmonds' popularity faded by the mid-1970s, although Donny and Marie Osmond both enjoyed successful careers as solo performers and as a brother-sister duo.

In the 1980s, Wayne Osmond regrouped with Alan, Merrill and Jay as a country act and had a handful of hits, including "I Think



Andrew Garfield denies 'Spider-Man 4'

London

British star Andrew Garfield has dismissed speculations that he will be making an appearance in Marvel Studios' upcoming movie "Spider-Man 4".

Garfield, however, acknowledged that fans won't believe him as he had earlier denied rumours of starring in the Tom Holland-led 2021 movie "Spider-Man: No Way Home", only to make an extended cameo alongside Tobey Maguire.

"I'm gonna disappoint you. Yeah, no. But I know no one's gonna trust anything I say from now on," the 41-year-old actor told GQ UK in an interview.