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UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

'Reckless probe': High court quashes case over 'pro-Modi' wedding invite



BENGALURU: Karnataka HC has quashed proceedings against two persons accused of printing on a wedding invitation card a message calling upon people to vote for PM Modi in LS polls earlier this year. "The crime is recklessly registered, so is the chargesheet, on a reckless probe," Justice M Nagaprasanna observed in his recent order. Bridegroom Shivaprasad, a resident of Alanthaya village in Dakshina Kannada district, got the message, "Voting for Modi is the gift for my wedding," printed on his wedding invite, and the cards were printed at the printing press owned by A Balakrishna of Golithottu village. Both Shivaprasad and Balakrishna were booked on April 25 under section 188 of IPC and section 127A of Representation of People Act. The wedding was on March 27 and complaint was registered on April 19.

Elon responds to tech CEO who asked if foreign-born workers are really taking jobs

Elon Musk has responded to a question by a tech CEO who asked whether foreign-born tech workers in the US are taking jobs away from qualified native-born Americans, challenging the idea that foreign workers are 'stealing' jobs in the country. Amjad Masad, who is the CEO of Replit – an online integrated development environment (IDE) that allows users to write, run, and share code without the need for local setup – posted on X asked for an evi-



dence to support the claim that qualified Americans are being passed over for tech jobs in favor of foreign workers."Genuinely curious: Are there actual instances where qualified native born Americans couldn't get jobs in tech because foreigners took all of them? I'd be surprised if

it's true because at any given point there are hundreds of thousands of unfilled jobs in tech." To this, Musk replied by saying that there has always been a shortage on engineering talent in the country. "There is a permanent shortage of excellent engineering talent. It is the fundamental limiting factor in Silicon Valley."Sriram Krishnan faces backlash, Musk back appointment The comes at a time when there has been an uproar on social media .

High court comes to aid of ex-soldier's kin, grants disability pension

CHANDIGARH: Punjab and Haryana HC has ordered that a disability pension be granted to the legal heirs of a soldier who was discharged on medical grounds for neurosis which manifested as recurrent nightmares after his lover killed herself, reports Ajay Sura. A division bench comprising Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Sudeepti Sharma passed these orders recently while allowing a plea filed by a former Indian Army gunner from Punjab's Hoshiarpur. The petitioner, who had moved HC in 2020, died on May 14, 2021, during the pendency of the case, which was represented by his legal heirs after his death. The soldier was enrolled in the Indian Army on July 30, 1971.

Naveen Patnaik spares VK Pandian, links loss to BJP's 'bundle of lies'



BHUBANESWAR: Six months after BJD's electoral loss, party chief Naveen Patnaik attributed it Thursday to failure to effectively counter BJP's "false narratives & bundle of lies". This is the first time Naveen has publicly explained the reason for the defeat that snapped his 24-year stint as Odisha CM, contradicting speculation about close aide VK Pandian's influence being a key factor."Many people

were asking questions about how BJD lost in the last elections. We did not lose the trust of people. BJP came to power by telling lies, making false promises and misleading people," Naveen said in a video message on BJD's 28th foundation day.State BJP president Manmohan Samal hit back, saying BJD and Naveen "were still in shock over the defeat" over the defeat. Although Naveen had publicly acknowledged.

Seven day-day national mourning of Manmohan Singh

NEW DELHI: The Union government on Thursday declared a seven day-day national mourning of Manmohan Singh. According to officials, the Union cabinet will meet at 11 am Friday to pat tributes to the veteran Congress leader. Singh's last rites will be conducted with full state honours, the officials added. Meanwhile, Congress also announced that all party official programmes, including its foundation day celebrations, will be cancelled for the next seven days as a mark of respect for the former prime minister. Congress general secretary and Karnataka in-charge Randeep Surjewala said that as a mark of respect for Dr Manmohan Singh, the Congress has cancelled its 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan Rally' in Karnataka's Belgaum on Friday.Congress general secretary in-charge organisation K C Venugopal said that as a mark of respect for the departed former prime minister, all official programmes of the Indian National Congress, including its foundation day celebrations, stand cancelled for the next seven days. "This includes all the agita-



Manmohan Singh passes away: Rahul , Kharge visit former PM Singh's residence

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh passed away on Thursday. He was 92. He was admitted to the emergency department of AIIMS Delhi. The cause of his hospitalization has not been disclosed yet. Singh, who retired from the Rajya Sabha in April this year, was praised by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for his long and distinguished parliamentary career. His vision for India centered around not just high economic growth but also inclusive growth, aiming to uplift all sections of

tional and outreach programs. Party programmes will resume on 3rd January 2025. The party flag will be flown at half-mast during this period of mourning," Venugopal said on X.

society. His commitment to this vision was reflected in landmark legislation such as the Right to Food, Right to Education, Right to Work, and the Right to Information. Through these rights-based reforms, Dr. Singh ushered in a new era in Indian politics, ensuring that development benefited every citizen and creating a more equitable society. Sam Pitroda pays tribute to former PM Manmohan Singh, describes him as a 'Gandhian leader' with strength and dignity.

Singh, the architect of India's economic reforms, died at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, on Thursday night at the age of 92.

Shah launches 10k multipurpose co-ops, eyes 2 lakh target before-time

NEW DELHI: Union home and cooperation minister Amit Shah on Wednesday announced the launch of 10,000 Multipurpose Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (M-PACS), and said govt's target to establish 2 lakh such new societies within the next five years would be achieved ahead of schedule under a vision to have "presence of cooperatives in every panchayat" across the

country. The new M-PACS, which include credit societies as well as dairy and fisheries cooperatives, will be engaged in 32 activities, including storage and distribution of manure, gas, fertilisers, and water, making them more versatile and effective.The minister said once the target of 2 lakh PACS is achieved, it will play a vital role in ensuring easy availability of essential agricultural

resources and facilitate seamless integration of farmers' produce into global markets through robust forward and backward linkages. On the occasion, coinciding with the birth centenary of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Shah distributed RuPay Kisan Credit Cards to farmers and micro-ATMs to 10 new cooperative societies. Shah said every primary dairy will soon be equipped.

States with high malaria burden dip from 10 in 2015 to 2 in 2023

NEW DELHI: The number of states/UTs falling with high malaria burden in India has come down from 10 in 2015 to two in 2023, latest data shared by the health ministry shows. A state/UT is considered to have 'high burden', also referred to as category 3, if it has more than one malaria case per 1,000 population under surveillance. According to the health ministry, from 2015 to 2023, numerous states have transitioned from

the higher-burden category to the significantly lower or zero-burden category.In 2015, the ministry said, 10 states and UTs were classified as high burden (Category 3), of these, in 2023 only two states (Mizoram & Tripura) remain in Category 3, whereas four states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Meghalaya, have moved to Category 2.A state/UT is considered to fall under 'category.

Centre proposes steep fines, jail terms to curb misuse of national emblem

NEW DELHI: In a bid to curb the unauthorised use of national emblem, names and photographs of President and Prime Minister, govt has proposed amendments with heavy fine of upto Rs 5 lakh and jail term. Govt is looking at whether laws, currently in force, to deal with misuse can be merged and brought under the administrative control of one department.At present, the home ministry enforces the State Emblem of India (Improper Use) Act.

ED to contest SC freeze on probe against lottery king

NEW DELHI: ED will contest an order passed by Supreme Court on Dec 13 putting on hold all investigation against Chennai-based 'lottery king' Santiago Martin, where the apex court, in an ex-parte interim order, barred the agency from unlocking and looking into the contents of his iPhone 15 Pro and electronic devices seized from his employees during last month's searches on his premises. The top court has also put on hold summons issued to Martin for two months. Sources in the agency said the court order was "unprecedented" as it had put on hold all investigation against Martin "indefinitely" and also stopped the agency from routine work related to the probe, such as examining the seizure documents and devices, and summoning the accused. "These days,



all documents and communications are digitally stored, either in phones or laptops/computers. Where do you look for evidence if you don't recover them from phones or other digital devices?" a source said. An SC bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Pankaj Mithal, while posting the matter for Feb 17, accepted Martin's prayer to "issue an ex-parte interim

order directing the respondents not to access and copy the contents of mobile phone iPhone 15 Pro", besides other electronic devices (phones, laptops/computers) seized from his employees. The court also accepted his request for "ex-parte interim order staying the effect and operation of summons" issued to him. The agency, Martin argued in

his petition, wanted his presence in the ED office "for the purpose of extraction of data stored in the respective digital devices" with regard to an ongoing investigation against him. "In the meanwhile, there will be ad-interim relief in terms of prayer clauses (i) and (ii) of the application for interim relief," the bench said. Martin was the biggest political donor, with electoral bonds worth Rs 1,368 crore, and the biggest beneficiary was DMK, with Rs 509 crore of contributions received from him. The ED had fought to restart the investigation against Martin after two years of court battles where the PMLA probe was closed by an SC order after the Tamil Nadu police withdrew the predicate offence (FIR) based on which ED had initiated its money laundering case.

Trains to Kashmir may begin rolling next month

NEW DELHI: The Railways has tweaked five AC sleeper trains and one Vande Bharat with chair cars for their deployment on Jammu-Kashmir route to cope with harsh weather conditions, ahead of launch of train operations to Kashmir valley from the rest of the country. For safety of passengers and trains, Railways will have an airport-type security check for passengers boarding these trains.Sources said the preparation is in full swing considering the Commissioner of Railway Safety is scheduled to carry out final inspection of the Katra-Reasi section of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail line on Jan 5, boosting hope for commercial operation of trains to the Valley from next month.



Gang rape survivor fails to identify self in clip, 3 acquitted

BHOPAL: Three accused in a gang rape case involving a minor were acquitted by the Pocco court in Gwalior on Tuesday after the rape survivor failed to identify herself in a video, purportedly of the alleged crime. The court then said it found no merit in the allegations levelled against the accused youth, all aged 18.The video, purportedly of the alleged rape, was played during the court pro-

ceedings, but the survivor denied being the person seen being assaulted in it. According to the survivor's initial statement, mentioned in the FIR, she had befriended one of the accused on social media. On June 1, he invited her to the Hanuman Mandir in Gwalior's Kampu. Upon arrival, she found him in the company of two friends. She claimed the three then took her for a

drive in a car. The survivor alleged that the youth she had befriended said he loved her and subsequently raped her while his friends were present. She claimed that he also recorded the act on his phone. When she protested, he threatened to make the video public.A case of gang rape was registered at Gwalior's Mohana police station on July 18 and the three accused.

Today's Event

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's arriving today at Police Line at 11:20 am. Spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani told that at 11:30 am he will meet the party officials at the Circuit House and at 12:00 noon he will distribute the digital records of the houses prepared under the ownership scheme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Medical Association. He will attend the distribution program as the chief guest in Prayagraj and will go to Police Line Helipad at 1:30 pm and depart for Lucknow. Former Union Minister and former National General Secretary of BJP, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi will meet journalists at Circuit House on December 27 at 11 am.

Kishore Varshney condoles Manmohan death

Prayagraj: Deeply saddened to know of the sad demise of former PM Dr. Manmohan Singh. My sincere condolence and homage to his passing away. He will always be remembered for his economic revolution and progressive changes brought to the Country, said Kishore Varshney, ex.spokesman, Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee while replying to media queries over former prime minister death.



Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi condoles ex-PM's death

Prayagraj: "The news of the demise of former Prime Minister and Finance Minister of India and famous economist Dr. Manmohan Singh is extremely sad. His demise is an irreparable loss for the political world. His work towards the country will always be remembered. I pray to God to grant his departed soul a place at his feet and give strength to his family and fans to bear this loss," said Former Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi.



Minister Kapil Dev Aggarwal met Union Minister Amit Shah

Laid emphasis on solving problems of traders and entrepreneurs

Lucknow: Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship of Uttar Pradesh Government and Muzaffarnagar MLA Kapil Dev Aggarwal met Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah and discussed the problems of traders and entrepreneurs. During this, he appealed to the entrepreneurs of Uttar Pradesh, especially Muzaffarnagar, to take concrete steps to resolve the difficulties and discrepancies being faced by the Central GST and State GST departments. Minister Kapil Dev Aggarwal talked about GST registration, return filing, tax payment and GST law. He emphasized the need to increase the number of facility centers for better availability of services related to counseling. He said that these facilities should be further strengthened with the cooperation of the Central and State Government to connect the traders and entrepreneurs through simple and easy process. Along with this, Minister Kapil Dev Aggarwal also discussed the all-round development of Muzaffarnagar and other political issues. He had detailed discussion with the minister.



Grand event of Bir Children's Day: Children displayed amazing talent

Prayagraj: North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture, Government of India organized "Veer Bal Diwas" program in the Cultural Center Auditorium on Thursday in memory of the unparalleled bravery and sacrifice of Sahibzadas. This special program was organized with the aim of encouraging the courage of children, their creativity and unique skills. On this occasion, small children displayed their talent amazingly. The program started with Ganesh Vandana "Teri Jai Ho Ganesh Teri Jai Ho Ganesh" by the children of K.D.Crew Group of Prayagraj, followed by dance performance on the song "Suswagatam Suswagatam, Albela Sajan".



After this, the emerging budding artist of Prayagraj, Asit Aarav, won the hearts of the people sitting in the auditorium by presenting the inspirational songs Kirpa Tere Gun Gaawan Kar Kirpa Tere and Wah Wah Govind Singh Ape Gur Chela. After this, Vaishnavi Chawla enthralled the audience with her captivating Bharatanatyam presentation. Similarly, Yashika Tripathi presented a dance drama based on the marriage of Lord Ganesha and received a lot of applause from the audience. This event organized on Children's Day, along with inspiring the children, also gave a message to the society to understand the importance of children. On this occasion, a large number of people including all the officers and employees of the center were present. The program was conducted by Himani Rawat.

The disciplinary system of St. Peter's School Chhatwa is unique: Sohan Singh

Christmas festival was celebrated with great pomp in St. Peter's School Chhatwa

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Meja. Christmas was celebrated with great pomp and gaiety in St. Peter's School Chhatwa, Sirsa - Prayagraj on Wednesday. On this occasion, school manager Rishabh Soni organized a grand Christmas celebration for the students, in which the school teachers organized games along with food stalls for the entertainment of the students. The students of the school actively participated in this program and enjoyed a lot. The school's principal Mrs. Shivani Soni ensured that the students enjoyed

thoroughly.

On this occasion, Sohan Singh, Senior Commandant CRPF was present as the Chief Guest of the program. In his address, he congratulated the school management for the successful organization of the Christmas celebration and praised St. Peter's School for focusing on four important values like discipline, education, dedication and development. He further said that the arrangement of this school is very unique in itself. All the teachers of the school Seema Keshari,



Neeraj Kumar Pal, Ruby Keshari, Nishi, Mamta

Upadhyay, Amita Yadav, Sarita Agarwal, Poonam

Kushwaha, Kajal Yadav, Aanchal Keshari, Ragini

Keshari, Saumya Keshari, Srishti Singh, Urvashi Tiwari and Abhijeet Tiwari tried their best in serving delicious food and arranging wonderful games to entertain the students and parents who came to the function. The Principal of the school, Mrs. Shivani Khera Soni expressed her gratitude to all the staff members, parents and others who attended the program. She thanked all the media members and reporters for attending the function and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2025.

Jeev Jaya organization will provide free lenses to cataract children

Jeev Jaya's aim to improve quality of life across the world

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: All children suffering from cataract to the age of 21 years will now be able to benefit from the agreement between Jeev Daya Sanstha and Principal, Moti Lal Nehru Medical College. High quality Intra Ocular Lens (IOL) to Jeev Daya Sanstha which is a private non-profit, NGO, which was established in 2002 by Dr. Vijay Jain and his family. In simple words, Jeev Daya aims to improve the quality of life across the world. Jeev Jaya seeks to establish long-term collaborative partnerships with medical institutions and physicians and foster collaboration between eye hospitals and health professionals around the world to ensure that the available expertise is maximized. The primary focus areas of the Foundation include paediatrics, palliative care, holistic health, disability assistance, mobility assistance and eye care. In this initiative, an MoU has been signed with Jeev Jaya Sanstha by Dr. Vatsala Mishra, Principal, Moti Lal Nehru Medical College, and Dr. Aparajita



Chaudhary, Director and Head of Department, Regional Eye Institute, MD Eye Hospital, Prayagraj. According to this MoU, Jeev Daya Sanstha will now provide high quality Intraocular Lens (IOL) free of cost to the Eye Department, Regional Eye Institute, Manohar Das Eye Hospital, Prayagraj to all the children up to 21 years of age. Children of all castes and religions will be able to avail the benefits of this agreement absolutely free of cost and their blindness will be eliminated so that they will be able to see the new world with their own eyes again. This will help in reducing the problem of preventable blindness in our country. The box contains a high quality intra-ocular lens - Dr. Aparajita Chaudhary, Head of the Department of Manohar Das Eye Hospital, said that this is a useful intraocular lens for children suffering from cataract. A special type of lens that helps in enhancing vision when placed in the surface of the eye.

Ultimate Warriors & Golden Hawks match ends with 1-1 draw

Northern Premier Cash Money Football Tournament

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: On Thursday, the match played between Ultimate Warriors and Golden Hawks in the Under-15 category in the Northern Premier League football tournament under the aegis of Northern Football Academy ended in a 1-1 draw and both the teams had to be satisfied with one point each. According to organizing secretary football coach



Indranil Ghosh, Shaksham Oraon from Ultimate Warriors gave the team the lead by scoring an excellent goal with a pass from Krish Bahadur, while in the second half of the game, Anant Tripathi of Golden Hawks scored the goal. Player of the match award was received by Ultimate Warriors' Shaksham Oraon from Football Coach Sunil Nigam.

Railways makes elaborate arrangements to ensure security during Maha Kumbh 2025

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Prayagraj: Railways has made extensive and unprecedented arrangements to ensure the safety of pilgrims at all major railway stations including Prayagraj, Naini, Subedarganj and Chheoki during the grand event of Maha Kumbh 2025. More than 18,000 personnel of Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) will be deployed at 9 railway stations in Prayagraj. The purpose of deployment of these personnel is to prevent any untoward incident, ensure passenger safety and provide a smooth and safe travel experience to the pilgrims.

In view of the huge crowd during the Maha Kumbh, the railways have prepared a special strategy. RPF and GRP personnel deployed at railway stations will not only monitor security but will also be active for passenger assistance. The number of CCTV cameras and other surveillance equipment has been increased at major stations so that immediate response can be given to any suspicious activity. In addition, special check posts will be set up at railway stations, where



every passenger and luggage will be thoroughly checked.

RPF and GRP personnel have been given special training for crowd control and disaster management. These personnel will be deployed at all sensitive places including crowded areas, platforms, ticket counters, entry and exit gates. Apart from this, special deployment of women police personnel will also be done to ensure the safety of women passengers. The Railway Protection Force has planned to use state-of-the-art equipment for crowd control. This includes metal detectors, scanners, and mobile patrolling units. Security personnel deployed at railway stations will be ready for quick action in every situation.

The joint operations of Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) during Maha Kumbh will not only ensure the safety of passengers but will also ensure that all passengers have a safe and smooth travel experience. Railways have made all necessary arrangements so that passengers do not face any kind of difficulty during this historic religious event and Maha Kumbh 2025 becomes a peaceful and safe event.

Brave martyrs sacrificed their lives for religion & nation: Mayor

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: On the occasion of Veer Bal Diwas (26 December), the sacrifice of Sahibzadas of the tenth Guru of Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh was remembered by organizing various programs in the Gurudwaras of Prayagraj metropolis. In which Mayor Umesh Chandra Ganesh Kesarwani paid tribute to the sacrificed Sahibzadas Baba Shri Zorawar Singh Ji. And a symposium was organized by paying floral tributes to the portrait of Baba Shri Fateh Singh Ji. The sacrifice of the brave Sahibzadas was discussed by organizing Pakki Sangat Gurdwara Ahiyapur, Alopibagh, Shabad Kirtan, Kavi Darbar. In the program organized at Pakki Sangat Gurdwara Ahiyapur, the Mayor said that the Mughals had an army worth thousands of

lakhs and the brave Guru Gobind Singh's bravery. Sahibzadas had courage and did not bow down to the Mughals and were sacrificed for the religion and



nation. Sikhism inspires to sacrifice everything for the nation. At the age of 9 and 7, both Sahibzads Baba Shri Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba

Shri Fateh Singh Ji sacrificed their lives. The sons of India will continue to be inspired by this sacrifice for ages. Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra said

celebrating Veer Bal Diwas. On this occasion, Phulpur MP Praveen Patel ji, Metropolitan District President Rajendra Mishra, Yamunapur District President Vinod Prajapati, Gangapur District President Kavita Patel, BJP leader Neeraj Tripathi, BJP spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani, Councillor OP Dwivedi Neeraj Tandon ji Sunita Chopra Umesh Mishra, former councillor Giri Baba ji, BJP workers. Girijesh Mishra, Anil Kesarwani ji Manoj Mishra ji Vivek Mishra ji Amar Singh ji Workers like Manu Chawla Jasbir Singh, Kuldeep Singh Khalsa, Jaswinder Singh, Paramjit Singh Bagga, Gurdeep Singh Sama, Sardar Patbinder Singh, Deep Dwivedi, Rakesh Bharti, Vivek Mishra, Prashant Shukla etc. were present.

Engg Farooq Nasir poses queries to audience at consumer awareness event

Prayagraj: While observing National Consumer Rights Day, a seminar on National Consumer Day was held at Hindustani Academy. Justice Arun Tandon, Mohammad Ibrahim (Chairman, Dist. Consumer Redressal Committee), Badal Chatterjee (Ex. Commissioner Prayagraj) J.N. Yadav (Media Incharge "Mahakumbh Mela" Prayagraj. 2025) Er. Harsh Vardhan Bajpai Member of City North Legislative Assembly, Prayagraj graced the occasion with their august presence.

Engg. Mohammad Farooq Naseer expressed his gratitude to all the distinguished guests and the audience for making the event successful, while conveying Christmas greetings to audiences. Addressing the audience, he posed questions asked in consumer surveys. "If you answered 'no' more than four times, your consumer attitude is fairly lax. Most people fail to check even basic information when shopping; this helps some companies sell inferior products in the market. There are four basic tenets in the law that ensures consumer rights. These include: (i) be protected against marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property, (ii) be informed of the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services, (iii) be assured of access to a variety of goods or services at competitive prices and (iv) to seek redressal against unfair or restrictive trade practices," he opined while interacting with those attending the seminar to alert gullible consumers. Chief Convener M. A. Ansari President, District Consumer Advocates Bar Association, ASRANAWAZ Anchor (Social Activist), Convener ATA REHMAN (CA), Dr. AMIT ROY and FAROOQ NASIR (Engineer) played pivotal role in ensuring no-holds-barred success of the consumer awareness event.

Cong has no respects for Babasaheb, shedding 'crocodile tears': Nandi

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: Uttar Pradesh Government's Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi has strongly attacked Congress in the name of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, accusing him of misleading the countrymen and baking political bread. A strong attack has been made by posting on social media. Minister Nandi posted on social media that Congress always committed the grave sin of belittling the rich legacy of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar ji, his incomparable contributions and achievements.

In all the years of independence, only the Nehru-Gandhi family was glorified and the Congress Party, which insults other great men, is shedding crocodile tears today! These tears are not tears of love for Baba Saheb but tears of yearning to stay away from power. When the public has rejected these dynastic people for the third time in a row, they are making an



unsuccessful attempt to mislead the innocent Dalit society by creating a false pretense of Dalit love. Rahul Gandhi considers it his family right to become the Prime Minister. With the strength of the Constitution given by Baba Saheb, the most respected Shri Narendra Modi, who comes from a backward society and poor family, has become the Prime Minister of the country for the third consecutive time. Congress is not able to digest this pain. Honorable Home Minister Shri Amit Shah ji exposed the Congress with authentic facts and historical truth in the Parliament of the country. When the reality of Congress was exposed, as usual they are making unsuccessful attempts to divert attention by spreading lies and hoaxes. The people of the country are seeing and understanding everything. Public is well aware of the crocodile tears of Congress and the two-faced face hidden behind it.

BJP members welcomed ex-Union Minister Naqvi

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Prayagraj: Former Union Minister and senior BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on arrival in Prayagraj BJP Prayagraj Party workers and officials under the leadership of Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra welcomed him at the Circuit House. Meanwhile, during the meeting with the workers, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said that the strong and efficient leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proved to be a solution not only for India but for the world and today the whole world is appreciating the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India is becoming the world's economic superpower and is digging the grave of terrorism. He said that One Nation One Election is the need of the country today on which all parties should be united so that the pace of development can be avoided due to repeated elections. The country can be free from repeated election expenses. He said that SP chief Akhilesh Yadav is spreading the poison of communalism in the state to fulfill his political interests regarding the assembly elections to be held in Uttar Pradesh in 2027. To deal with him, Bharatiya Janata Party workers should start preparing for the 2027 elections in Uttar Pradesh and foil his intentions. Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said that today there is peace in Uttar Pradesh, under the Yogi government, Uttar Pradesh has become free from hooliganism and strengthened by cultural nationalism. On this occasion, senior BJP leaders Ram Ji Kesharwani, Nawab Khan, spokesperson Rajesh Kesharwani, Ramesh Pasi, media in-charge Vivek Mishra, Rakesh Bharti, Prashant Shukla, Bilal Ahmed, Haider Abbas Naqvi etc. workers were present.



Awareness rally for environmental protection and cleanliness

Prayagraj: In view of the world famous Mahakumbh Prayagraj, with the joint efforts of two clubs, Lions Club Allahabad City and Lions Club Allahabad Ashok, a huge rally has been organized on 27 December 2024 at 11:30 am, in which two clubs from Allapur Around 400 students of Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir School will participate. All the students will participate in the rally with posters, banners and others focusing on the environment and all our global causes, starting from Saraswati Vidya Mandir Inter College located near Labor Square water tank and going to the school premises via Bagambhari Gaddi and Matiyara Road, would end. On behalf of Lions Club City, convenor President Anup Singh, Secretary Achal Aggarwal, Treasurer Ram Ji Kesari will be there. Public Relations Officer Lalu Mittal has appealed to the members and general public by sending letters, mails and through social media to reach the rally on time. Be helpful in making Prayagraj prosperous, encourage it and contribute in keeping your city Prayagraj clean.

BJP leaders paid homage to Atal by reciting Sunderkand at Hanuman temple

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: On the 100th birth anniversary of the world's popular leader, symbol of good governance, Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, BJP workers, under the leadership of Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra, paid homage by reciting Sunderkand at the Hanuman temple of Dhussa Rajrooppur. Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra said that the personality and working style of Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, his life as a vigilant guardian of democratic values and imbued with the spirit

of patriotism, is a source of inspiration for all of us BJP workers. Program coordinator Avinash Dubey said that Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee Following the path shown by, we have resolved to dedicate ourselves to the nation in building a developed India. Former Vice Chancellor Prof. Remembering Atal, Girish Tripathi repeated his words: Be a human being, not just by name, not by face, not by form, by



heart, by intellect, by values, by knowledge. Every

Indian should take a pledge in the interest of the nation.

with his melodious voice in a very special way. Promi-

nent among those who read and paid homage was former Vice Chancellor Prof. Girish Tripathi, Dr. Pramod Shukla, Vijay Dwivedi, Avinash Dubey, Shubhanshu Tripathi Manav, Councilor Gulab Singh Patel, Ranjan Shukla, Ajay Hela, Rakesh Dubey, Sushil Kannaujiya, Avichal Dwivedi, Singer Deepak Bhargava, Councilor Deepika Jaisal, Ram Lochan Sahu, Narendra Tripathi, Ankit Kannaujiya, Arun Chauhan, Vivek Singh, Sanjay Dwivedi, Dinesh Tiwari etc. were hundreds of BJP workers.

Preparations for Ayush Mahakumbh/Global AYUSH Expo going on in full swing

Prayagraj: A meeting was organized under the aegis of Sanjeevani Welfare Society and SWS organization on Thursday at Hotel Ajay International located in Civil Lines, in which various cultural programs to be held in NCZCC from January 2 to January 6 were discussed and consulted. In the meeting, SWS Director Saqib Siddiqui told reporters that a dance performance will be organized at NCZCC on 4th and 5th January in which Bhojpuri, Oriya and Rajasthani film actors from different states will participate. After the dance performance, Bhojpuri Ashish Singh Bunt, Oriya hero Naveen Kumar, Raina Production film director and Rajasthani hero Zubair Khan and renowned actors Ajay Gupta, Sagar Verma, Raj Dwivedi and Ajay Mishra will be

honored with actor awards. SWS Secretary Annu Vishwakarma said that our organization organizes such colorful programs every year in which people are given an opportunity to showcase their talents and their morale is boosted through this platform.

In this meeting, Project Manager of Sanjeevani Welfare Society, Dr. Rahul Shukla told reporters that apart from various cultural programs to be organized at NCZCC from January 2 to January 6, free counseling camp will be held. A team of senior doctors will participate, who will ensure better treatment of patients. It is being organized in the "North Central Region Cultural Centre" of Prayagraj, in which 36 types of sections include various types of Naturopathic/Homeopathic/Ayurvedic and



Unani medicines distribution centers/various food stalls/crafts/home industries/handicrafts and natural herbs will be set up. Service centers related to products made from naturopathy, yoga and other services as well as free OPD have also been arranged. It is estimated that in the free OPD of more than 1 lakh people, health related advice, medical examination

and consultation will be provided by experts and senior doctors from all over the country. Secretary of Sanjeevani Welfare Society, Shrawan Shukla said that for the first time at the global level, Global Ayush Mahakumbh or Global Ayush Expo 2025 is being organized by Sanjeevani Welfare Society, a well-known NGO in the field of AYUSH in Prayagraj, from

2 to 6 January at NCZCC, Prayagraj.

Secretary of Sanjeevani Welfare Society, Shrawan Shukla said that the organization has been working in the field of AYUSH medical system since 2013 in which the aim is to honour all the AYUSH doctors, create AYUSH medical awareness and benefit the needy people through AYUSH medical treatment. In this sequence, with the aim of maintaining the grandeur, divinity and dignity of Mahakumbh 2025 this year on the holy land of Prayagraj and hoisting the flag of AYUSH medicine on the world stage, the Society has thought of organizing Ayush Mahakumbh / Global AYUSH Expo. Pankaj Kumar, Shreya Mehta, Tania Singh, Sarjit Gautam etc. were present on this occasion.

Prabhat Pandey death: Congmen demand impartial probe

Prayagraj: On the call of President, Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee Ajay Rai, under the leadership of President of Metropolitan Congress Committee Prayagraj, Pradeep Mishra Anshuman, on the instructions of the former Minister, during the siege of Legislative Assembly Lucknow in protest against the mis-governance of BJP, former Secretary of Uttar Pradesh Youth Congress, Late Prabhat Pandey died due to police brutality and a memorandum addressed to Governor, demanding an impartial investigation, was given to the District Magistrate, Prayagraj. On this occasion, Pradeep Mishra Anshuman said that the Bharatiya Janata Party wants to destroy the Constitution and democracy. Here the public is not able to convey its views peacefully to the government; hence the police is suppressing its voice with the help of the administration. In a similar action, the Lucknow Assembly is taking action. During the siege itself, due to police brutality, former secretary of Uttar Pradesh Youth Congress, Late Shri Prabhat Pandey died due to police brutality, which shows the dictatorship of the government. This sacrifice of Late Shri

Prabhat Pandey, Congress party will not let it go waste. Prominent in giving the memorandum were Pradeep Kumar Mishra Anshuman, Raghunath Dwivedi, Ashish Pandey, Ram Manorath Saroj, Vinay Pandey, Istiaq Ahmed, Ajendra Gaur, Abdul Kalam Azad, Ashfaq Ahmed, Baijant Mishra,



Sushil Mishra, Vivek Pandey, Shadab, Nafees Qureshi, Ahmed, Irshad Ullah, Saurabh Chaudhary, Shubham Shukla, Israt Ali Chand, Altamash, Ram Lakhyan Yadav, Vishal Sonkar, Kameshwar Sonkar, Sheela Rawat, Pratima Tripathi, Gulshan Neta, Farhan, Abhay Saroj were present.

7th day of book fair: Excellent literature available to readers at affordable rates

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: The stall of Sahitya Bhandar, containing the works of 250 famous writers from across the country, remains the main center of attraction in the Prayagraj Book Fair. Here, books of different genres by two hundred and fifty authors are available for only Rs. 50. The representative of the stall, Suryabaali Mishra, said that in



the year 2014, on the golden jubilee of Sahitya Bhandar, on the suggestion of famous litterateur Doodhnath Singh, as part of social service, expensive books were made available at cheap prices. It was started. This initiative started with the books of 50 authors and has now reached the works of 250 authors. The interest of the readers in the fair was especially seen in books like 'Hindi Cinema' by Prahlad Aggarwal and 'Prayag: Kumbh Mahaparva'

by Dr. Krishnanand Pandey. Apart from this, excellent literature like Jawaharlal's 'Hindustan Ki Kahani', Bhagwan Singh's 'Apne-Apne Ram' and Vijoyi Hari's 'Hamari Parampara' are also attracting readers at the stall of Sasta Sahitya Mandal, New Delhi. There is also a special demand for Gandhi Diary 2025. Sangam of Social Initiatives: A

camp has been organized by Rakt Sankalp Sanstha at the book fair, where till now more than 40 people have pledged to donate blood regularly. More than a dozen people have expressed their desire to join the organization. Camp representative Sudhir Kesarwani said that the facility of digital barcode has been provided to fill the form. Importance and richness of the book fair. Organizer of this book fair, organized with the joint effort of Forsen Books and Bookwala, Manoj Singh Chandel said that the fair is for the readers of every category has brought something special for you. Co-coordinator Manish Garg informed that this fair will run till 30 December 2024 and entry into it is completely free. The book fair has emerged as an important aspect not only for literature lovers but also for the society. A confluence of literature, culture and social concerns is being seen in the fair.

HC stays recovery proceedings till disposal of arbitration Petitioner counsel Arif Iqbal convinced court for halting recovery sans arbitration

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: In the case involving WRIT-C No. 40111 of 2024, in which the petitioner M/S Sk Industries via its owner Swatantra Kumar Vs State Of Up And 7 Others, court heard arguments of petitioner counsel Arif Iqbal and after contemplating all factors - Justices Vivek Kumar Birla and Nand Prabha Shukla stayed recovery process till the disposal of arbitration. The court arguments presented by Arif Iqbal, learned counsel for the petitioner and Mohan Srivastava, Standing Counsel for respondent nos. 1 to 5 and 7. The present petition was filed for quashing the impugned auction notice pasted by the revenue staff at the house of the petitioner and also to stay the effect and operation of the impugned auction notice. Pursuant to the order dated 11.12.2024, learned Standing Counsel has produced before this



court a copy of the instructions dated 17.12.2024 which are taken on record. According to the instructions, no auction had taken place on 16.11.2024 as no bidder was present and now the next date fixed for auction is 23.12.2024.

It is submitted by learned counsel for the petitioner that on one hand, arbitration proceedings are pending and on the other hand, the same without having been concluded, the recovery proceedings are



being pressed against the petitioner.

Attention was drawn to various documents to indicate that repeatedly instructions were sought by the concerned official but the same were not supplied and, therefore, the matter was deferred but still the recovery certificate dated 19.9.2018 was issued. The petitioner was therefore constrained to file writ petition before this Court being Writ-C No. 20423 of 2020 challenging the aforesaid



recovery certificate as well as directing the respondent nos. 1 and 2 to decide the arbitration claim.

Therefore, the Court is prima facie of the opinion that without adjudicating upon the grievance of the petitioner in respect of the claim so raised against the petitioner in regard whereof the recovery certificate has been issued and without there being conclusion of the arbitration proceedings, recovery proceedings are being pressed against the

petitioner. The present petition, therefore, stands disposed of with an observation that it is expected that the Arbitrator shall conclude the arbitration proceedings preferably within a period of six months from the date of production of certified copy of this order. Mohan Srivastava, learned Standing Counsel is directed to communicate this order to the Arbitrator so that he may proceed accordingly. The recovery is of the year 2018 and the claim challenging the said recovery proceedings having not been finalized by the Arbitrator in spite of the observation of the Court in the earlier petition as noted above, this Court finds it appropriate to stay the recovery proceedings pursuant to the impugned recovery proceedings for a period of eight months or till disposal of the arbitration proceedings whichever is earlier.

Editorial

Every persecuted community sought and found refuge in India

Is India a Hindu-first majoritarian country? There are fringe extremists among Hindus who are communal. But the vast majority of ordinary Hindus bear no animosity towards Muslims — or indeed towards any minority community. Every persecuted community sought and found refuge in India. India's historical tolerance of different faiths has long been recognised around the world. Parsis fled Islamic persecution in Iran 13 centuries ago. They came to India — they did not seek refuge in any other country to the west or north of Iran. They knew that the safest haven for them lay in India. Their fire temples and faith have remained undisturbed in India for 13 centuries. Parsis have repaid India's generosity by being exemplary citizens, contributing to India's development far in excess of their numbers. Ratan Tata is only one of several generations of Parsis who have served India — from Dadabhai Naoroji to Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. When Christians arrived in India soon after the birth of Jesus Christ, they were welcomed on the Malabar Coast. As time went by, they set up churches and educational institutions in Kerala and elsewhere, creating prosperity and inclusiveness in their new homeland. Like Parsis, Christians adapted to Indian ways. Jews fleeing persecution in Europe and the Middle East too found refuge in India's southern states, living in peace with Muslims and Christians amid a Hindu majority. It was only after the beginning of the colonial era that trouble visited India. The Portuguese were especially violent. The Inquisition in Goa from the 16th century onwards created a chasm between Hindus and Christians who had till then lived together in harmony. The communalisation of Goa's social fabric was caused not by India's innate secular ethos but by Portugal's communal violence that fractured relations between Hindus and Christians for centuries. Many Muslims had fled their holy lands after the internecine battles between Sunnis and breakaway Shias in the 7th and 8th centuries. Muslims, like early Parsis, Jews and Christians, sought and received refuge in India. But the advent of foreign Islamic armies in northwest India caused violent clashes with local Hindu rulers. Once again communalism was injected into Indian society from overseas. And once again, the peaceful social fabric of India was torn apart. What has changed in recent decades is the deliberate communalisation of Indian politics. Since Independence, Muslims were told: you are special; you have special rights. The intent was not just to win Muslim votes (though that was regarded as a collateral benefit) but to maintain communal peace. After the trauma of Partition, the Jawaharlal Nehru government sought to appease Muslims instead of empowering them. But appeasement is cosmetic. It delivers no significant economic benefit to the appeased. It is a palliative to mitigate unrest, not provide modern education to Muslims. The rise of Hindutva began in the early 1900s. The RSS was founded by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in 1925. But decades before that Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak had raised the flag of Hindu renaissance after centuries of subjugation by foreign invaders, Muslim and Christian. Has the rise of the RSS led to majoritarianism in India? Societies are resilient. Top-down communalisation is difficult to achieve. Despite the growing social power of the Sangh parivar and its affiliates, India remains a resolutely secular nation. In a poor country of 1.45 billion, communal riots are rare. Violence against Hindu minorities in Muslim-majority areas like Kashmir and parts of West Bengal does occur but these incidents too are increasingly isolated.



The ballot is stronger than the bullet

The ballot is stronger than the bullet." Abraham Lincoln's age-old wisdom has resonated with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, as evident in the Assembly elections 2024, the first to be held in ten years. The results are out, with a thumping majority for the National Conference or NC, which has won 42 out of 90 seats in the high-decibel Union Territory, and Congress, which has won 6. The BJP has, in terms of seat mathematics, performed above average, securing 29 seats—its best-ever performance in the region. It is noteworthy that while NC's Omar Abdullah will call upon Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to form the government and take possession of the historic Raj Bhavan, it is the BJP that has claimed the maximum share of the electorate pie by polling 25.5 per cent of total votes, followed by the NC at 23.4 per cent, the Congress (whose Rahul Gandhi claims Kashmiri ancestry) at 11.9 per cent, and Mehbooba Mufti's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) at 8.8 per cent. More words of wisdom from Abraham Lincoln: "Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters." The people of Jammu and Kashmir have voted unequivocally in favour of democracy, choosing to turn their backs on terrorism and eschew the gun in favour of guccis (uber-expensive morel mushrooms that are distinctive to the region), thereby paving the path for progress, peace, and prosperity in the region. It may be



considered a win not just for democracy, but also for the BJP, which has shown the world that it practices what it preaches. This is in line with PM Modi's recent statement at the UN: "Success of humanity lies in our collective strength, not in the battlefield." The world watched as Jammu and Kashmir went to vote for the first Assembly elections after the abrogation of Article 370. And the BJP today stands vindicated, as does the value of justice enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution. This was also the first election in Jammu and Kashmir where the power of the gun was veiled—as veiled as the burqa-clad women voters who turned out in droves to exercise their franchise in the three phases. Inflation, unemployment, development, and mental health were the concerns raised by the women who voted for the betterment of their families. The voter turnout was 63.88 per cent. A total of 873 candidates contested 90 seats, including 'independent' members of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami and Engineer

Rashid's Awami Ittehad Party. There was little talk of the much-misused word azaadi (freedom), which instead turned into the real freedom to exercise the right to vote this time around. Stray acts of violence in the first-ever peaceful elections can be attributed as a win-win for democracy, the people of Kashmir, Omar Abdullah's NC, and, most of all, the BJP, which is running the central government and is a national party. It has pledged to bring peace and prosperity to a region torn by violence in the past. The results have debunked many a myth and have brought a fresh perspective on democracy, azaadi, peace, prosperity, and participation. The narrative has changed from jihad to justice, from azaadi to awaam (people), and from bandook (gun) to berozgaari (unemployment). Who but the BJP, with the visionary team of PM Modi and HM Shah, could and would bring about this 180-degree turn? The people of Jammu and Kashmir have realised that their interests are aligned with the greater interests of

the rest of Bharat. The winds of change are tearing through Kashmir and it is a proud moment for our country to see the juggernaut of democracy rolling through the streets of Srinagar and Jammu. When some biased media houses' headlines scream, "Party opposed to India's stripping of Kashmir's autonomy comes to power," does it belie the fact that rumour-mongering and fear-mongering about the disenfranchisement of Kashmir have been part of the rhetoric with regard to the beleaguered state since 1947 to 2017? While one may assign entertainment value to the exit polls for the sake of revenue generation, it has negligible value in the world of real politik.

Speaking of disenfranchisement, there were Kashmiris who migrated to this side of the region under duress from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in 1947—Mirpuris. In 75 years, however, they had never voted. Thanks to the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A, they were finally able to exercise their fundamental right as

Indian citizens. Valmiki, a Scheduled Caste group who were brought to Jammu as safai karamcharis (sanitation workers) and always treated as outsiders, were finally able to vote. The Gorkhas from Nepal, who sacrificed themselves in Kashmir as part of the Gorkha regiment, were another disenfranchised group that had no status in Jammu and Kashmir despite having lived there for nearly a century. It is easy to understand that vested interests in a corrupt political system can deny a person their fundamental rights. PM Modi's mantra, "Sabka saath sabka vikaas (take all along)," indicates the BJP's policy of inclusion as a hallmark of development. This opportunity to participate in the democratic process itself is the biggest achievement of this election for the disenfranchised sections in Jammu and Kashmir. Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin called the election result a "stupendous victory" for democracy, adding, "This moment marks the beginning of a just and inclusive future that honours the hopes of every Kashmiri." While some democracies are struggling with paper ballots, the latest elections in Jammu and Kashmir have established the reliability of the Election Commission, its procedures, security forces, administrative measures, and EVMs. These protocols ensured a free and fair election, which itself is a great victory for India. Do we hear any calls that the EVMs were doctored or sabotaged? Even AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi acknowledged the Congress' tendency to blame election losses on EVMs.

Haryana Should Force Congress To Acknowledge Its Mistakes, For Once

The euphoria of June 4 has waned. Narendra Modi is no longer seen as 'vulnerable'. Rahul Gandhi's seemingly impeccable "strategy" is being questioned, albeit in murmurs. Though no one in Congress can dare to seek his downgrading, when you hear talk of the need for Sonia Gandhi to be active again, it signals disappointment with the present Rahul Gandhi-Mallikarjun Kharge-KC Venugopal-Jairam Ramesh leadership. Priyanka Vadra's presence in rallies is much sought-after—she had minimal exposure in Haryana—but nobody can suggest that openly within the Congress. Rahul Gandhi's image as a possible counter to Modi has been dented after the Congress's drubbing in Haryana. Also, given that the election saw the Congress facing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) one-on-one, its dismal performance has now sown doubts among its allies in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, as well as in Delhi and Bihar. The Congress is not new to assembly election defeats. After the 17th general election in

2019, the party could form governments in only three states: Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana. It played at best a supporting role as a junior coalition partner in Tamil Nadu and Jharkhand—a role that it will again reprise in Jammu & Kashmir now as a minor ally of the National Conference government. This is in sharp contrast to its status till 2005, when the Congress had ruled more than half the states in India. The Congress's resurgence in this year's Lok Sabha elections, in which it managed to bag 99 seats, was seen by many as an end to its lasting misfortune since 2014, when it couldn't muster even the minimum numbers to be recognised as the official Opposition party in the Lok Sabha. On the eve of Gandhi's US trip in September, Sam Pitroda, the Indian Overseas Congress chief, had even gone as far as to say that Rahul was "more intellectual" than his father, Rajiv Gandhi, and a "better strategist" who had all the qualities to be a "future Prime Minister".

As Pakistan gears up for SCO meet, China is giving it sleepless nights—not India

Pakistan is getting ready for the Shanghai Cooperation Council meeting in Islamabad, starting from 15 October. As part of the preparations, the government has announced a three-day holiday in the capital city, basically to ensure that no protests take place around that time—especially from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, which recently tried to hold a rally and sit-in. Also, the whereabouts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur are reportedly still unknown. Sources claim he is being held at an Inter-Services Intelligence safe house for as long as the foreign dignitaries are in town. At the core of these efforts is Pakistan's need to show stability at home while managing its relationships with both India and, even more so, China—especially in light of the Karachi terror attack and what it could mean for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Containing the PTI crowd in the run up to the SCO summit is a priority, especially to demonstrate to guests like India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar that things are not so bad in Pakistan. Islamabad was certainly not excited by his taunts at the recent United Nations General Assembly session, where he spoke about Pakistan's poor economic conditions. There is a possibility that things might not be too pleasant on the sidelines of the SCO, with political pressure on both the host and the Indian guest to project strength. Beyond keeping Islamabad peaceful and secure, clamping down on the PTI also sends a signal both to India and Imran Khan that any overtures between the PTI and India will not be welcome, especially after Jaishankar's unfriendly

remarks. Recently, PTI's information advisor Barrister Muhammad issued a statement saying that he would like to invite Jaishankar to address a PTI rally. While this was certainly highly provocative, it should not be seen as the party's greater willingness to talk to India. At best, it may be a move to encourage Delhi and the larger international community to think of Imran Khan as a leader capable of thinking outside the box. While Bollywood filmmakers such as Sudhanshu Saria, director of the recent release Ulajh, may have their fantasies about a new kind of Pakistani leader, one hopes there are saner elements in Delhi who don't fall into such imaginary traps. Khan is definitely embroiled in a battle with Pakistan army chief General Asim Munir, but whether he can destroy the existing power structure is highly questionable.

An even more significant invitee at the SCO summit is China, with whom Pakistan is slowly negotiating the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Agreement.

Islamabad has recently dug deep inside its tight pockets to provide some resources for the trainline project that will be built by China. Experts in Islamabad have told me that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been given the assurance that funds provided by it will not be used for the project. The political government needs to build infrastructure that can help boost the economy and improve its image. Having China at the table along with India will provide the diplomatic balance that Pakistan needs. If people in Islamabad are having sleepless nights leading up to the SCO meeting, it's not due to Jaishankar.

Why Muslim World Should Stop Holding A Grudge Against Israel?

Have you ever heard of the biggest ship disaster of all time? Six or seven times worse than the Titanic. On January 30, 1945, the Wilhelm Gustloff left the Baltic Sea port of Gotenhafen in northern Europe, now in Poland. They were carrying a number of German military officers. But ninety per cent of those on board were German refugees, fleeing the horrors of World War 2. The Soviets spotted the ship, fired three torpedoes, and all of them struck. That night, 10,000 people drowned in the icy waters of the Baltic Sea. For comparison, 1,500 people died when the Titanic sank. This is what happens

when someone like the Nazis or Hamas mixes the military with the civilians. It is sad. But such is the harsh reality of war. So why the outcry against Israel over the high civilian death toll in the war in Gaza? As the war in Gaza makes headlines in India, several commentators have been feeding us with a simple explanation for what is happening. They say that Israel is occupying Palestinian land. The Jews are oppressors, the Arabs are victims. Therefore, we must side with the Arabs. But the history is a lot more complex. The Arabs started the war in 1948-49, which Israel won. After that, Israel took 78 per

cent of the land, as opposed to the 55 per cent given to them by the UN partition plan. But what happened to the rest of the land? Egypt occupied Gaza and Jordan occupied the West Bank in the exact same war! So the Arabs snatched land from their fellow Arabs in Palestine. Do the Arabs ever talk about that?

No, because it does not fit their narrative. So when Israel was again forced to fight the Arab countries in 1967, there was no Palestinian state anywhere. In the 1967 war, Israel overcame the combined forces of five countries: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon. They attacked Israel from all

sides, but Israel still won. In that war, Israel captured large amounts of territory. But almost all of it was given back to these countries in return for them giving diplomatic recognition to Israel. The enemies of Israel could hardly have asked for a more fair deal. But what about the 700,000 Palestinian refugees? Yes, they had to leave their homes. And it was very unfortunate. But that is what happens when you lose a war of annihilation. The Germans launched a war of annihilation against the Soviets in 1941. So when the Germans were defeated in World War 2, the Germans lost a lot of land.

Rupee sees relative gain as other currencies fall more vs \$: RBI

MUMBAI: A relatively weak rupee, in the short term, benefits India's trade balance, a report published by RBI said. However, in the long run, a stronger rupee is more beneficial to trade balance. Trade balance is the difference between exports and imports of goods and services. The report, published in RBI's Nov bulletin, carries data on the real effective exchange rate (REER), which points to an overvaluation of the rupee in relative terms in Nov as other currencies depreciated at a higher rate against the dollar. REER is an index that measures the country's currency against a basket of other currencies. Re sees relative gain as other currencies fall more vs \$: RBI According to data published by RBI, the 40-country trade-weighted REER index



rose from 90.9 to 91.8 in one month while the six-currency basket rose from 104.4 to 105.3. The six countries in the smaller basket are the US, China, Eurozone, Hong Kong, the UK and Japan. Following Donald Trump's win in the US presidential election in early Nov, the dollar has gained against all major currencies including the rupee. However, the depreciation of the rupee against the dollar has been less than that of other currencies resulting in an appreciation of the REER.

Auto industry rides on partnerships

NEW DELHI: As Nissan and Honda look to work out a strategy to combine businesses for survival and higher competitiveness, they are not alone in striking collaborations. Indian car companies and two-wheeler players are increasingly going for tie-ups and joint ventures as they try to strike synergies for efficient product and platform development as well as to achieve cost savings

Ola Electric opens stores amid year of consumer complaint woes

Ola Electric Mobility Ltd. announced opening of 3,200 new stores in a single day, as India's biggest e-scooter maker seeks to expand its local footprint and address customer frustration related to shortcomings in service. The Bengaluru-based Ola Electric has increased the number of showrooms and service centers to 4,000, Ankush Aggarwal, group head of financial services and retail auto business, said at an even on Wednesday. The company, led by co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal, is looking to penetrate India's small towns as well as bolster its after-



sales service. "By leveraging its direct-to-consumer (D2C) model, Ola is ensuring that EV ownership becomes a reality for every household," the company said in an exchange filing last week. Ola Electric's single-day store launch blitz marks its attempts to revive its market share and reputation after a tumultuous year marked by a blockbuster listing in August followed by an

onslaught of consumer complaints regulatory scrutiny and a heated spat between its chairman and a stand-up comedian. Almost every Indian town, city and district would have an Ola Electric store and a service center, its Chairman Bhavish Aggarwal said in a Dec. 19 video posted on X. The milestone was initially expected on Dec 20 but later pushed.

US Federal Reserve cuts interest rate by 25 basis

Recent economic indicators, including Tuesday's robust November retail sales data, align with the Federal Reserve's assessment of a strong economy. The US Federal Reserve cut the interest rate by 25 basis points on Wednesday, according to an official statement following the key FOMC meeting. This



25 basis points cut has led to the central banks benchmark policy rate being in the 4.25% to

4.50% range. This represents a decrease of one full percentage point from its September level, when the Fed initiated the relaxation of stringent monetary measures implemented to address the inflation spike that commenced in 2021. The bank modified a crucial component of its interest rate.

Revival of 7-8% growth in focus at pre-Budget meet

NEW DELHI: The need to get back to 7-8% growth against the backdrop of global challenges, geopolitical tensions and to ensure that the country remains on track to reach developed nation status by 2047 dominated deliberations at a meeting of economists with PM Modi Tuesday. At pre-Budget consultations under the theme - 'Maintaining India's growth momentum at a time of global uncertainty' - the PM emphasised that the 2047 goal could be achieved with changes in mindset. The PM's remark came in the context of plans needed for grabbing opportunities that may open up for the country in the wake of a possible tariff war between



the US and China and how India can benefit and be part of the global value chain. Read also: Slowdown in Q2 is a 'temporary blip', says FM Nirmala Sitharaman Economists underlined the need to step up growth and offered suggestions on a range of issues, including employment generation, skill development, raising farm produc-

tivity, attracting investment and boosting exports. Growth has slumped to a seven-quarter low of 5.4% in the July-Sept quarter of the current financial year, raising alarm among policymakers and triggering calls for a cut in interest rates. The sharp slowdown in growth in the second quarter has also prompted several agencies.

Apple closes in on record \$4 trillion market cap with AI boost

Apple is closing in on a historic \$4-trillion stock market valuation, powered by investors cheering progress in the company's long-awaited AI enhancements to rejuvenate sluggish iPhone sales. The company has pulled ahead of Nvidia and Microsoft in the race to the monumental milestone, thanks to an about 16% jump in shares since early Nov that has added about \$500 billion to its market cap. The latest rally in Apple shares reflects "investor enthusiasm for artificial intelligence.

Congress distorted my statements, twisted facts on Baba Saheb Ambedkar : Shah

Chandigarh: Union Home and Cooperation Minister and BJP supremo Amit Shah, targeted Congress while addressing a press conference at the BJP's central office. In his speech, he clearly stated, "Congress has distorted my statement by cutting out a small portion and presenting it to the public, attempting to spread confusion. During the discussion on the Constitution in Parliament, marking 75 years of the Constitution, when

Congress's true face was exposed and it was proven that Congress is an anti-Ambedkar, anti-Constitution, anti-reservation, and anti-OBC party, the Congress in a frustration, began distorting Amit Shah's statement and spreading it across the country. It was also revealed that from Nehru to Rahul Gandhi, the Congress family sidelined Baba Saheb and opposed him at every step. However, during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress party carried

out the despicable act of editing Shah's statement using artificial intelligence and spreading false propaganda across the country. Prior to this, Congress had also edited and misrepresented statements made by PM Modi. The way Congress has tried to distort facts is highly condemnation. Distorting statements, creating uproar, and spreading confusion in society has always been Congress's old habit.

Wall Street rises as 'Santa Claus Rally' begins

Equity investors are also hoping for what's known as the "Santa Claus Rally," in which stocks rise during the final five trading sessions of a year. A rally in the group that has led Wall Street's gains in 2024 lifted stocks in a relatively quiet session ahead of Christmas. Following a strong day for big tech, the shares continued to power ahead on Tuesday. Tesla Inc. led megacaps higher. Broadcom Inc. and Advanced Micro Devices Inc. climbed as President Joe Biden's team launched a probe into Chinese-made chips. In a shortened pre-holiday session, the S&P 500 "The action of the past few weeks shows that the big-cap tech names are still the key leadership group in today's stock market," said Matt Maley at Miller Tabak. "These big-tech names are highly overweighted in



the portfolios of a huge number of institutional investors. Any buying they do over the next week is likely to be concentrated in these names." Equity investors are also hoping for what's known as the "Santa Claus Rally," in which stocks rise during the final five trading sessions of a year and the first two of the new one. This time around that window started Tuesday. "Santa Claus rally could still be alive, with strong seasonality into the end of the year," said London Stockton at Ned Davis Research.

Adani to buy plane maintenance co Air Works for 400 crore

NEW DELHI: The Adani Group, that operates airports in seven cities, including Mumbai and is building a greenfield one at Navi Mumbai, is expanding its presence in the aviation space. It is acquiring India's biggest private sector MRO (maintenance, repair & overhaul) player Air Works for an enterprise value of Rs 400 crore. dani Defence Systems & Technologies.

N Srinivasan resigns as India Cements vice-chairman and MD

N Srinivasan resigned as the vice-chairman & MD of India Cements on Wednesday, a day after the company became a subsidiary of UltraTech following the latter's acquisition. He also ceases to be the CEO, a position that he held as key managerial personnel (KMP). His daughter Rupa Gurunath and wife Chitra Srinivasan also tendered their resignations as wholtime director and non-independent director, respectively. This has brought the curtains down for the 50 years long association of Srinivasan with India Cements, which was co-founded by his father TS, a year before independence in 1946. Another co-founder was SNN Sankaralinga Iyer. The India Cements board, which met on Wednesday, also recorded the resignation of independent



The new board of the company has been reconstituted. Seven additional directors including UltraTech Cement's MD K C Jhanwar, chief manufacturing officer

directors of the company S Balasubramanian Adityan, Krishna Srivastava, Lakshmi Aparna Sreekumar and Sandhya Rajan. The new board of the company has been reconstituted. Seven additional directors including UltraTech Cement's MD K C Jhanwar, chief manufacturing officer E R Raj Narayanan chief marketing officer Vivek Agrawal and director - HR, Aditya Birla Group, Ashok Ramchandran have been appointed

in the capacity of non-independent and independent directors of the board. "The erstwhile promoters and members of the promoter group, namely N Srinivasan, Chitra Srinivasan, Rupa Gurunath, EWS S K Asokh Baalaje, Financial Service Trust, Security Services Trust and Chennai Super Kings Cricket, who no longer hold any equity shares of the company, cease to be promoters.

Forex spends fall 14% in a month, local e-pay up

MUMBAI: Forex spending by Indians dropped 14% to \$2.4 billion in Oct from \$2.8 billion in the previous month. The decline in international spending occurred even as domestic spending through electronic channels peaked during the festive month.

According to RBI data, Indians spent \$2.4 billion overseas in Oct, the lowest since June 2024. The highest monthly forex spending was \$3.9 billion in June 2023, before tax-collection-at-source (TCS) norms came into effect. Of the total spending in Oct, \$1.5 billion was toward travel, followed by \$284 million for maintaining close relatives and \$221 million for fees. The drop in forex spending coincided with a rise in domestic spending, with digital payments and card payments reaching new highs in Oct 2024. Spending through domestic credit cards crossed Rs 2 lakh crore during the month, while UPI transactions totalled Rs 23.4 lakh crore. However, Nov witnessed a sharp drop in spending across all channels. According to RBI data, the volume of credit card transactions at shops fell 7%, while the value of transactions dropped 14% to Rs 68,233 crore. Online transactions, which had peaked in Oct, declined by 11% in volume terms and 17% in value to Rs 1,01,061 crore. Similarly, the value of debit card transactions also fell. In Nov 2024, UPI transactions declined compared to the previous month. The total transaction volume fell by 6.6% to 1,548 crore transactions, down from 1,658 crore in Oct. The overall transaction value decreased by 8.3%



Why Trump supporters are going crazy about Sriram Krishnan

The appointment of Sriram Krishnan as a Senior Policy Advisor for Artificial Intelligence in the White House has ignited a heated debate among political factions, particularly in the Trump-supporting Make America Great Again (MAGA) base. The uproar, which combines critiques of Krishnan's policies, broader immigration reform, and allegations of betrayal of conservative ideals, underscores the tension between nationalism and pragmatism in a globalized economy. This piece explores the key issues fueling the controversy. Trump's Surprising Appointment of Sriram Krishnan In a move that caught many by surprise, former President Donald Trump appointed tech entrepreneur Sriram Krishnan as a special envoy to advance US policy on artificial intelligence (AI). Krishnan's background as a prominent figure in Silicon



Valley, with extensive experience at leading tech companies, was seen by some as a strategic decision to bolster America's leadership in AI. However, the appointment quickly became a flashpoint for controversy. Critics from the far-right, particularly those aligned with MAGA ideologies, viewed Krishnan as a symbol of Silicon Valley elitism and a proponent of immigration policies that they claim disadvantage American workers. Trump, long associated with a tough stance on immigration, faced accusations of hypocrisy for aligning with a figure perceived to represent globalist ideals.

US gay couple get 100 years in prison for raping adopted sons

A gay couple from Georgia, William Zulock, 34 and Zachary Zulock, 36, were sentenced to 100 years imprisonment without the possibility of parole for committing heinous sexual offences against their adopted sons, according to the Walton County District Attorney's office. "These two Defendants truly created a house of horrors and put their extremely dark desires above everything.

Suriname ex-dictator and fugitive Desi Bouterse dead at 79

PARAMARIABO: Desi Bouterse, the former dictator and later elected president of Suriname, who became a fugitive of justice for the killing of political opponents, has died at 79, the government said Wednesday. Still popular with the poor and working class of the South American nation, Bouterse, who died Tuesday, rose to power after a 1980 coup as a young sergeant major in the army. He stepped down in 1987 under international pressure in the wake of political violence he was accused of orchestrating. He returned to power in



1990 after a second coup, this time without bloodshed. Bouterse left a year later, then was elected president of the former Dutch colony in 2010 and ruled for a decade. Current President Chan Santokhi offered condolences to Bouterse's loved ones and urged people to "maintain calm." He said citizens were awaiting "more detailed and

definitive information from official channels" on the late leader's passing. Rumors began to spread around midnight about the former strongman's sudden death after a short illness at his hideout.

His body was transferred by unknown people to his residence in the capital Paramaribo, where his family and National Democratic Party (NDP) supporters gathered early Christmas Day to bid farewell.

Doctor Rabindernath Khoenkhoen, speaking to reporters, did not provide details on the cause of death.

France President names 2024's fourth government amid political turmoil

French President Emmanuel Macron appointed a new government, led by Prime Minister Francois Bayrou. This is Macron's sixth prime minister since taking office and his fourth this year. The new government is said to be aimed at

addressing France's political and economic challenges. It includes figures from the center and right, but no members of the left-wing New Popular Front. Elisabeth, a former prime minister, will serve as education minister. Manuel Valls,

another former prime minister, returns to government as overseas territories minister. Gerald Darmanin, the former interior minister, is the new justice minister. Sebastien Lecornu will stay as defense minister and Jean-Noel continues as foreign minister.

Maniac stabs woman in NYC subway; victim says no one came to her help

In another frenzied attack in the subway, a woman was stabbed by a maniac at Grand Central Terminal on Christmas Eve and the victim said no one helped her when the attacker plunged the knife into her throat. 26-year-old Imani-Ciara Pizzaro was face-timing when she was attacked by the suspect, identified as 28-year-old Brooklyn native Jason Sargeant. "What's your problem?" the attacker said as he cut her throat with a small knife before kicking his phone away. **'I ran for help, there was no police'** The victim said her fellow passengers just froze after the attack and police



were seen nowhere in sight. "I wish there were cops in Grand Central when I was attacked, there were none. I was running for help and there was no one there. There are usually cops in four different spots and I ran to each one of them but none were there," the victim said to New York Post. No one called 911, the woman revealed adding that it was her neighbor with whom she

US welcomes poll plan by Bangladesh

DHAKA: The US welcomed the Bangladesh interim govt's announcement regarding the next national elections and said it would advocate for "free and fair" polls conducted in a "peaceful" manner. "So, we appreciate the steps that have been taken by the interim govt to prepare for elections that will ultimately allow the Bangladeshi people to choose their own govt representatives," said US principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel while responding to a question during a regular briefing at the US state department on Dec 18.

was Facetiming when the attack took place who called 911. A 42-year-old man was slashed in the wrist and the attacker then ran further into Grand Central towards the central ticket booth yelling "I hate all of you". Pizzaro recounted her harrowing experience of finding no help in the station and then getting out of the station and reaching the Roosevelt Hotel where she was treated. After Pizzaro was stabbed, witnesses pointed out Sargeant to MTA police within the station. He was arrested and the weapon was recovered. Sargeant has three prior arrests for criminal mischief, fare beating, and assaulting.

A prison consultant revealed how Luigi Mangione's Christmas is going in jail. Prison consultant Sam Mangel who is working with other inmates at the Metropolitan Detention Center revealed that Luigi Mangione is sleeping on a mattress that's 2 inches thick at best and has no separate pillow. The mattress has a little bump in the end for a pillow, the consultant told People. He is not working with Mangione but his revelations are based on what generally happens to other prisoners. For example,



Mangel revealed that Mangione's Christmas meal must have been green beans and a meal of Cornish hen. Mangel said depending on which section Mangione has been housed in, he could either be entirely alone or have some form of company. It was not known whether Mangione was removed from protective custody where

inmates are initially taken for monitoring purposes. Mangel revealed that if he is in protective custody, he will be alone in his cell on Christmas day with his food being provided to him through a sliding window. High-profile units like Diddy and Bankman-Fried have provision for an hour-long visit from family members on Christmas Day. "While you're allowed to hug the person when they come in, you can't be next to them, you have to face them [when seated]," Mangel says. Inmates in this section are typically given a holiday bag.

Pak minister defends military trial of civilians

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani minister on Wednesday defended the military trial of civilians, saying that such courts were competent to deal with the cases related to attacks on army facilities. Information minister Attaullah Tarar also urged the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led by Imran Khan to refrain from politicising or disputing the issue of military trials. "When an attack is carried out on a defence institution or its property is set ablaze, it becomes the responsibility of the relevant authorities to apprehend the culprits. Just as railway police handle crimes on railway premises, military courts address offences targeting military assets. So, when attacks on military assets occur, the Military Act is enforced," he said



while addressing a press conference. Tarar criticised Khan's party for using military courts as a political tool, aiming to create controversy around them. He clarified that military courts only handle cases involving attacks on defence establishments, citing incidents such as the attack on the Corps Commander's House in Lahore. The minister also criticised the PTI for changing its stance regarding trials of civilians in the military courts, recalling that during Khan's tenure, military court trials were praised.

Why was Harry left red-faced over Meghan actions in docu-series?

Prince Harry was reportedly left "red-faced" with anger over Meghan Markle's reenactment of her first curtsy to the late Queen Elizabeth II in a viral clip from their Netflix docuseries, a body language expert claimed. The series, titled *Harry & Meghan*, featured Markle recounting the meeting with the late monarch, which took place at the Royal Lodge in Windsor.

"The statements praising the military courts

Kabul claims Pak airstrikes killed 46 civilians in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: The interim Afghan Taliban govt claimed on Wednesday that 46 people, mostly women and children, were killed in airstrikes by Pakistani fighter jets on civilians in eastern Afghanistan late Tuesday night. Pakistani security officials said the airstrikes took place in Murgha and Laman areas of Barmal district, in Afghanistan's eastern Paktika province near Pakistan's volatile South Waziristan tribal district, on alleged camps of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). This has been the fourth time in the past few years that Pakistan has conducted airstrikes inside Afghanistan, and the second time since March 2024. "Last night (Tuesday), Pakistan bombarded four points in Barmal district of Paktika



"The Pakistani side should understand that such arbitrary measures are not a solution to any problem," Enayatullah Khowarazami. "

province. The total number of dead is 46, most of whom were children and women," said Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Afghan Taliban govt. He added that six others, mostly children, were wounded. Condemning the airstrikes, the Afghan defence ministry called them "barbaric" and a clear "aggression". It stated that several

refugees, including women and children, were killed and injured. "The Pakistani side should understand that such arbitrary measures are not a solution to any problem," Enayatullah Khawarazami, spokesperson for Afghanistan's defence ministry, wrote on social media platform 'X'. "The Islamic Emirate.

Amid H-1B row, David Sacks' crucial reminder to MAGA; Elon Musk reacts

David Sacks who will be working with Sriram Krishnan on artificial intelligence on the part of the incoming Donald Trump administration issued a reminder to the MAGA exponents amid the ongoing H-1B row. Sacks



reminded that in 2022, it was the same Krishnan, Sacks and Elon Musk who were working toward restoring the then-Twitter (now X) accounts of the MAGA people. "Many were grateful at the time," David Sacks wrote targeting Laura Loomer who has been at the center of this new flashpoint over Indian immigrants in the US and the H-1B. "Since people are digging up old tweets, here's one of @srimamk working with me and @elonmusk to restore free speech on Twitter and get MAGA their accounts back. Many were grateful at the time. Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah!" David Sacks wrote. Elon Musk reacted to it saying 'good times' as he has been supporting Krishnan's call to remove the country caps for green cards.

What is the H-1B row and how are David Sacks, Krishnan and Laura Loomer part of it?

Sriram Krishnan recently suggested to Elon Musk that anything to remove country caps for green cards would be huge. This was before his nomination for the AI role. MAGA activist Laura Loomer called out Sriram Krishnan for undermining America First and opening jobs for more Indians by removing the cap on H-1B. David Sacks clarified that Sriram did not say he wanted to remove all caps on green cards. "He said he wants to remove "country" caps on green cards. Right now, every country in the world gets allocated the same number of green cards, no matter how many qualified applicants it has.

Luigi Mangione sleeping on a 2-inch thick mattress in jail, no pillow: Report



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inmates are initially taken for monitoring purposes. Mangel revealed that if he is in protective custody, he will be alone in his cell on Christmas day with his food being provided to him through a sliding window. High-profile units like Diddy and Bankman-Fried have provision for an hour-long visit from family members on Christmas Day. "While you're allowed to hug the person when they come in, you can't be next to them, you have to face them [when seated]," Mangel says. Inmates in this section are typically given a holiday bag.

NYC subway horror accused 'fanned flames' with a shirt; victim died of thermal injuries and...

The 33-year-old Guatemala migrant, Sebastian Zapeta-Calil, did not only set the victim on fire but also fanned the flames by waving a shirt around her aiding the spread of the fire, according to testimony from police officers on the scene, CNN reported. The medical examiner determined that the victim died of thermal injuries and smoke inhalation.



More shocking details of the NYC subway horror emerge

Zapeta-Calil approached the victim silently approached the victim and then ignited her blanket. The woman had layers of clothing which immediately got engulfed in fire. CNN earlier reported that the victim had mobility issues and did not respond to the fire immediately. She sat still as she kept on burning and could only stand up when she was fully burnt. The suspect waved a shirt around her and then came out of the train and watched the victim turning to ashes -- from a bench outside the subway car. Accused claims he has no memory of incident Zapeta-Calil did not enter a plea during his arraignment on Tuesday. He told police he did not know what happened and that he was intoxicated at that moment. He, however, identified himself in the images of the attack. Zapeta is an undocumented migrant from Guatemala who was deported in 2018. But he subsequently returned to the US illegally. His most recent address was listed as a homeless shelter in Brooklyn. and other residents of the shelter identified him. They said he used to remain intoxicated.

Boxing Day Test: Batting order questions for India, Australia

MELBOURNE: Will the abrupt manner of Ravichandran Ashwin's exit from the international arena affect India's spirit? Will Australia find all the negative talk about the top order overwhelming? These are the two major questions facing these era-defining teams as they go into the fourth Test facing identical issues about poor batting returns and inevitable change. For India, Ashwin's retirement could be a portent of things to come. For Australia, David Warner's last Test in Sydney against Pakistan at the beginning of the year kick started plans which have yet to come to fruition. Bluntly put, Australia have yet to find a proper replacement, showing the perils of forced transition. Australia's pace lineup too is ageing but is still formidable and has kept such questions at bay. The same can't be said of some of the senior batting stars on both



sides, but they aren't the only ones under the microscope any more - some inconsistent youngsters too must share the blame. Both these teams are finding it hard to trust their batting lineups right now, but to what degree can teams con template alterations ahead of what is expected to be a series defining Test? As Ashwin told his teammates in the dressing room at the Gabba, "Trust me, everybody's time comes." Change may be inevitable, but Australia's canny skipper Pat Cummins is punting on being the enemy of change for now.Faced with a barrage of questions on

sticking with the opening combo of Nathan McSweeney and Usman Khawaja, who haven't exactly set the series on fire, Cummins retaliated, "There is so much more to picking a side than just looking at the Internet. (It's about) going on with really strong philosophies, working with players as a unit." There is no dearth of conspiracy theories when it comes to Australian cricket. Former player and coach Darren Lehmann has even suggested chief selector George Bailey is too close to the team and hence unable to make "hard decisions".

Babar Azam, Rizwan star as Pakistan take unassailable 2-0 lead against South Africa

NEW DELHI: Pakistan defeated South Africa by 81 runs in the second one-day international at Newlands, Cape Town on Thursday, thanks to the efforts of veterans Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan. Babar (73) and captain Rizwan (80) put up 115 off 142 balls for the third wicket, clearing the way for Pakistan's total of 329 all out. South Africa was all out for 248 despite Heinrich Klaasen scoring 97. The main destroyers were fast bowlers Shaheen Afridi (4/47) and Naseem Shah (3/37). Pakistan now has an insurmountable 2-0 lead



in the three-match series after the victory. After wins in Australia and Zimbabwe, it was their third straight series victory and the third for the Champions Trophy hosts in the southern hemisphere season. "It's a team game, from beginning to end all of

the guys are involved and contributing," said Rizwan.Before Babar was dismissed with the score on 192 in the 33rd over, he and Rizwan batted wisely and soundly, with their combined 204 one-day caps surpassing the total of the remainder of the side.

India's Richa Ghosh fires joint-fastest fifty in women's T20Is

NEW DELHI: India wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh on Thursday cracked an 18-ball half-century in the series decider against the West Indies, equalling the record for the fastest fifty in women's T20I history.Her blistering knock also set a new bench-

mark as the quickest fifty ever scored by an Indian women's batter in the format.At the DY Patil Sports Academy, Richa lit up the stage for a crowd of over 47,204 spectators with a superb 54 off just 21 balls, featuring three fours and five sixes.Her explosive

innings, combined with captain Smriti Mandhana's stellar 77, propelled India to a record total of 217 for 4 — their highest-ever in women's T20Is.This surpassed India's previous best of 201 for 5, achieved against the UAE .

How Smriti pep talk inspired India to first home series win

NEW DELHI: Ahead of Thursday's series finale in Navi Mumbai, India's stand-in captain Smriti Mandhana reminded her teammates that the team's five-year wait to win a T20I series at home did not "reflect" their ability. India produced an impressive batting performance when put in to bat. As the hosts recorded their greatest T20I total of 217/4, Mandhana (77; 47b) laid the groundwork before Richa Ghosh (54; 21b) tied the record for the joint-quickest fifty. India responded by limiting the West Indies to 157/9, winning the three-match series 2-1-their first home series win since 2019. "After the last match, I told the girls it has been five



years that we have not won a T20I series. That does not reflect the team we are," Mandhana said. "I told them that today, we have an opportunity to do that and we just want to keep doing the right things," added Mandhana. Mandhana continued her scorching form from the ODI series Down Under, where she scored a century in the final game, by hitting her third consecutive fifty.

"The batting line-up we had, there were a few youngsters coming in, so there was a bit of added responsibility and that kind of thing goes well if you really put your head into it, and when I do that, I probably bat better." "We lost all three tosses, so had to bat first and that is the harder thing to do (here). Really happy we could put up (a score) and loved the way Richa batted."

Italy to host Davis Cup Final 8 from 2025

NEW DELHI: The International Tennis Federation (ITF) has announced that Italy will be the host nation for the Davis Cup Final 8 from 2025 through 2027.Italy, led by Jannik Sinner, claimed victory in this year's competition, which concluded in Spain in November. The tournament, previously held in Malaga since 2022, will see a change of venue. ITF president David Haggerty stated: "We are delighted to partner with the FITP (Italian tennis federation) for the Davis Cup Final 8." He further noted: "Italy has a rich history in tennis and a proven ability to host world-class sporting events."

Novak Djokovic will run out of energy: Andre Agassi

BENGALURU: Andre Agassi wondered if the 24-time major winner Novak Djokovic would miss his greatest rivals - the now-retired Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer -- in the last leg of a glittering career where the 37-year-old goes for more history. The eight-time Grand Slam champion, in the city for the TIE Global Summit, assessed Djokovic's run and the Serb's recent partnership with friend and rival Andy Murray in a candid chat with media. It's hard to say, Father Time always wins. He has already done so much for so



long, it's hard to imagine longer. We said that about (Roger) Federer too. I think Novak will run out of energy more than capability. Cannot be easy, especially when the people you came to the dance with have left, that's a big thing.When Pete (Sampras) retired it was a blow to me, it set me back a little bit. It made me rediscover my inspi-

rations on some level. Djokovic has lost the guys he made history with. It'll probably get tougher and tougher emotionally, but I would never bet against them. Bet against them at your peril. In any coach-student relationship you need trust and trust can take time, but it's nice when it starts with believing in somebody.

'Alcaraz has best of Nadal, Djokovic and Federer, but he can't ...': Andre Agassi

NEW DELHI: Legendary player Andre Agassi observed that Carlos Alcaraz embodies distinct qualities from Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, while advising the tennis world against anticipating the young Spaniard to match the extraordinary achievements of these tennis legends. The collective Grand Slam victories of Federer, Nadal and Djokovic stand at 66, whilst Alcaraz, aged 21, has secured four major titles thus far. "I'm not a genius and I don't have a crystal ball. What I can tell you is Alcaraz defends like Novak, has power and spin like Nadal and has hands and finesse like Federer," said Agassi during a talk session in Bengaluru. The eight-time Grand Slam victor Agassi elaborated on why excessive expectations



shouldn't burden Alcaraz."Just because he has the best of all those three doesn't mean he can do what they did because there're so many other parts to the game, which mean decision-making, injuries, you know, luck," he said. With Djokovic at 37, approaching retirement, Agassi noted that the Serbian's competitive edge might diminish without Nadal and Federer in the arena. "He's already done so much, so long, and it's hard to imagine longer. I think he'll run out of the energy for it more

Aryna Sabalenka named WTA Player of the Year

NEW DELHI: Belarusian tennis star Aryna Sabalenka has earned her first WTA Player of the Year recognition, following her remarkable achievements of clinching two Grand Slam titles and achieving the year-end world number one position, as announced by the women's tennis governing body.Her outstanding year began with a successful defence.

than the capability.

Jasprit Bumrah a right-hand version of Wasim Akram: Justin Langer

NEW DELHI: With a whopping 21 wickets in three Tests, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been the centre of attention in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy Down Under. Bumrah, the leading wicket-taker in the series, is way ahead of other bowlers has been a serious headache for the hosts. The 31-year-old so far has two five-wicket hauls -- in Perth and Brisbane -- and has been a thorn in the flesh especially of Australia openers Usman Khawaja and Nathan McSweeney -- dismissing them four times each.Former Australia head coach Justin Langer on Thursday heaped rich praise on Bumrah, calling him a right-handed version of legendary Pakistan pacer Wasim Akram.



"I would hate to face him. He is like Wasim Akram. For me, he is a right-hand version of Wasim Akram, and every time I am asked the question 'Who is the best bowler you have ever faced', I say Wasim Akram "

"I would hate to face him. He is like Wasim Akram. For me, he is a right-hand version of Wasim Akram, and every time I am asked the question 'Who is the best bowler you have ever faced', I say Wasim Akram. "They have got good pace and the great bowlers just hit the same spot every time, and they have got a good bouncer, so it

makes them a bloody nightmare. He has got the ability to swing the ball both ways, his seam is literally picture perfect."If you present a perfect seam and it comes perfectly out of the fingers as it does with him., you get the double whammy, swing in the right conditions and if it hits the rope it can go either way. That's what Akram used to do.

'Leave him alone': Ashwin clarifies on father's 'retirement due to humiliation' remark

NEW DELHI: Hours after Ravichandran Ashwin father's explosive statement on his sudden retirement from international cricket due to 'humiliation', the spinner made a clarification on social media, pointing out that his 'dad isn't media trained'. Ashwin, 38, confirmed his shock retirement on Wednesday after the completion of the third India vs Australia Test in Brisbane. But his father on Thursday claimed that one of the reasons behind his son's sudden retirement call was the 'humiliation' he faced in the team. Ashwin's father Ravichandran said that regular omissions from playing XI forced him to quit. Clarifying on the statement, Ashwin requested on social media to forgive his father and leave him alone."I too came to know last minute, actually," CNN News18 quoted Ashwin's father Ravichandran as saying."What was going on in his mind I don't know. He just announced. I too accepted it with full pleasure. I did not have any feeling at all for that. But the way he gave his retirement, one part I was very happy, another part not happy because he should have continued."(Retiring) is his (Ashwin's) wish and desire, I cannot interfere in that, but the way in which he gave that, there could be many reasons. Only Ashwin knows, maybe humiliation," he said. "Definitely, no doubt about it (being emotional for the family), because he was on the field for 14-15 years. The sudden change -- retirement -- gave us really kind of a shock. At the same time, we were expecting it because humiliation was going on.



Mohammad Shami to be rested for Bengal's Vijay Hazare opener

NEW DELHI: Veteran Indian pacer Mohammad Shami will be rested for Bengal's opening match in the Vijay Hazare Trophy against Delhi on Saturday in Hyderabad. The Cricket Association of Bengal announced this decision on Thursday. Shami, who last represented India in the 2023 ODI World Cup, recently returned to domestic cricket after undergoing ankle surgery and a lengthy injury layoff.He has been recuperating at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. While Shami made an impressive comeback, taking seven wickets to help Bengal secure their first win of the Ranji Trophy season, and nine wickets in the recently concluded Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, concerns remain about swelling in his knee, which surfaced during the domestic T20 competition. Matthew Hayden's daughter Grace: Loves dal and roti, is a big fan of Rishabh Pant After the drawn third Test in Brisbane, Indian captain Rohit Sharma expressed frustration when persistently asked about an update on Shami's availability, stating, "I think it's high time somebody from NCA talks about him, where he is rehabbing... Those guys are the ones who need to come up and give us some kind of update."Rohit further added, "I understand he's playing a lot of cricket back home, but there have been some complaints.



Kejriwal launches 24X7 water supply in Rajinder Nagar

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the Delhi assembly elections, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday launched round-the-clock water supply in the Pandav Nagar DDA flats in the Rajinder Nagar area.

"When we came to power 10 years ago in Delhi, around 50-60 per cent of water was supplied by tankers. There used to be tanker mafia. I am happy to say that today, after 10 years, 97 per cent of Delhi gets water by pipeline," said Kejriwal. Today, round-the-clock clean water supply has started in Rajinder Nagar and we will extend it to the entire Delhi in the coming times," he added. Kejriwal drinks water to prove purity. Kejriwal also drank water directly from the tap, to show that water was clean. The AAP chief was accompanied by Delhi chief minister Atishi and local MLA Durgesh Pathak. The AAP has fielded Pathak from Rajinder Nagar con-



Evening courts to clear 2.5 crore traffic challan backlog

NEW DELHI: Justice Manmohan launched dedicated evening courts for traffic challans in the city, crediting the current Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, for his intervention that led to the fruition of a project aimed at easing commuter woes. Addressing a packed audience, including acting Chief Justice Vibhu and Justice Jyoti of Delhi high court, and judges of district courts, the Supreme Court judge said the evening courts won't just tackle the pendency of over 2.5 crore traffic challans but also

stituency for the Delhi assembly elections

"promote the rule of law".

Easy disposal of challans

The judge shared that CJI Khanna flagged the issue, prompting Delhi high court and other judicial authorities to try and resolve it. "In fact, the current CJI, Justice Sanjiv spoke to me at an event when I was the acting Chief Justice in Delhi HC and told me there is a major problem with traffic challans. We had a long discussion on it. I called a meeting of district judges, and we realised that the traffic police were on one server.

slated for February next year.

Delhi assembly elections: Congress likely to field Alka against CM Atishi

NEW DELHI: A tough contest is likely for Delhi chief minister Atishi from Kalkaji assembly constituency in Delhi elections with reports suggesting that Congress may field Alka Lamba against her, sources said.

Lamba, who was elected from Chandni Chowk on an AAP ticket in 2015, left the party in 2019 following differences with party leadership. Sources indicate that former municipal councillor Farhad Suri is expected to contest from Jangpura, while ex-acting Delhi Congress president Rajesh Lilothia may enter the fray from Seemapuri. Additionally, two for-



mer AAP MLAs — Asim Ahmed Khan and Devinder Sehrawat — who joined Congress on Monday, are likely to contest from Matia Mahal and Bijwasan, respectively. Rajesh Lilothia, who was elected from the Patel Nagar reserved constituency in 2008, is believed to have been shifted to Seemapuri

after Rajendra Pal Gautam — an AAP MLA from 2020 who joined Congress earlier this year — declined to contest. Congress has also fielded Mudit Agarwal, son of former MP Jai Prakash Agarwal, from Chandni Chowk. His candidacy was announced in the party's first list, sources said.

AAP claims BJP has no meaningful agenda for polls

New Delhi: Responding to BJP's "political chargesheet", AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal launched a sharp attack against the saffron party, criticising it for "lacking a chief ministerial face" or any "meaningful agenda" for Delhi assembly polls. Kejriwal said BJP was attempting to contest the elections by

focusing solely on targeting him with abuses. "Delhi has two govts—half governed by AAP and half by BJP-led Centre. Our govt achieved milestones like free electricity, water, free bus travel for women, improved roads and much more," he said. "What has BJP done? Today, Delhi's law and order is in a sham-

bles. Gangsters roam around freely, and shootings are happening in broad daylight. People entrusted them with managing law and order, and they failed miserably," he claimed. "Their only manifesto appears to be abusing Kejriwal for the next five years. I ask the people of Delhi—can abuse lead to the city's progress?"

3 booked with gold, cocaine in separate incidents at IGI

New Delhi: A 32-year-old man, who arrived from Riyadh to Delhi Airport, was booked after attempting to smuggle silver-coated gold concealed in a tea maker. The man from Uttar Pradesh was booked at Delhi Airport after he tried to smuggle gold concealed in a tea maker. "Initial checks didn't reveal anything unusual. However, during the X-ray baggage screening, suspicious images were observed," said a customs official.

A video shared by the officials shows that the tea maker was broken into pieces and gold worth Rs 34.67 lakhs was recovered. Of the total gold recovered, three silver-coated yellow metal pieces were hidden inside metallic flasks, while one silver-coated yellow metal piece was concealed in a metal tea container. In two separate incidents, foreign nationals were arrested for swallowing narcotic substances in capsule form. The first case involved a Brazilian national who arrived from Guarulhos via Paris on Dec 11. His unusual gait and behaviour raised suspicion, and he later admitted to ingesting 127 cocaine-filled capsules worth Rs 21 crore. The passenger was taken to Safdarjung Hospital, where the capsules were extracted over several days. "The seized narcotics were confiscated and the passenger was arrested on Dec 21," said an official. In another case, a South African national was arrested for ingesting 67 capsules containing narcotics worth Rs 12 crore. Based on intelligence, the passenger, who arrived from Addis Ababa, was intercepted. He confessed to swallowing the capsules, which were removed over several days at Safdarjung Hospital. The 67 capsules contained 799 grams of cocaine (841 grams gross weight). Both passengers were arrested, and the narcotics were seized.

HC asks police to reply to Tahir bail plea in Sharma murder

NEW DELHI: Delhi High Court on Tuesday sought response of the police on a plea by former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain seeking bail in a case relating to the murder of IB staffer Ankit Sharma during the northeast Delhi riots in February 2020. Justice Anoop Kumar Mendiratta issued notice to the police on Hussain's plea challenging a trial court's December 3 order rejecting his bail application for want of material change in circumstances. In his application, Hussain noted that whilst the trial has begun with 20 out of 114 prosecution witnesses examined, he has remained imprisoned for four years and nine months. The application, submitted through advocate Tara Narula, highlighted the extended period of imprison-



" Local residents later informed him that someone had been thrown into the Khajuri Khas drain from the Chand Bagh pulia mosque after being killed "

ment and argued that with numerous witnesses yet to be examined, trial completion remains distant. Allegedly part of the riotous mob and involved in the murder, have received bail from the high

court. The prosecution stated that on February 26, 2020, Ravinder Kumar reported to Dayalpur police station that his son Ankit Sharma, an Intelligence Bureau employee, had been missing.

BJP MLAs in HC again for tabling of CAG reports

New Delhi: The leader of the opposition in the assembly, Vijender Gupta, said BJP MLAs had submitted a new petition in Delhi High Court seeking the tabling of 14 CAG reports regarding various issues of the city administration. Gupta said he had urged the court to issue directives for Delhi govt to forward the reports to the speaker and for AAP govt to convene a special assembly session. AAP govt did not respond. Gupta and the other BJP MLAs earlier filed a similar petition, which was disposed of after LG said he had asked CM Atishi to call a special session to table the reports.

Why desilting of peripheral lines is key to civic health

New Delhi: Desilting of Delhi Jal Board's trunk and peripheral lines that transport sewage is not only essential for the treatment of waste but also related to problems of overflowing regular drains, which lead to water stagnation on roads. After the flooding of the city during 2022, the then CM, Arvind Kejriwal, ordered the desilting of these underground lines, which is one of the factors in urban flooding episodes. The work on this project started in 2023, and for the 10 trunk lines comprising



around 200 km, where the deadline was initially March 2024, around 90 km of this work was completed by Nov this year. The same was the status in 2023. The flooding and stagnant dirty water in Rangpuri has shown that the sewerage infrastructure, especially the desilting of trunk and peripheral

underground lines, is not being done properly. According to officials, over the years, the accumulation of sediment has resulted in reduced flow capacity of the sewerage system. During the rainy season, in particular, excessive pumping from sewage pumping stations causes back-overflow situations. "As a result, there is a problem of waterlogging on the roads, which results in considerable inconvenience to both vehicle and pedestrian movement due to the waterlogged conditions.

Delhi gangster, 2 others shot dead in Haryana hotel parking

NEW DELHI: **PANCHKULA:** A 29-year-old gangster from Delhi's Najafgarh was among three people shot dead by unidentified assailants early in the parking area of a hotel near Pinjore in Haryana's Panchkula where they attended a birthday celebration until 2.30am. Vinit Gehlot, alias Vicky Mitrau, had at least five



criminal cases against his name in Panchkula, Chandigarh and UP. He was killed along with his nephew Tirath (17) and a woman identified as Vandana, alias Nia, from Uchana in Jind. An unidentified fourth guest, said to be a woman, was with the victims but escaped unscathed as the assailants fired around 14 shots from a white Etios before escaping. Vicky took eight bullets and his teenage nephew four, police said. Shravan Kumar reported the fatal shooting just after the birthday party of a com-

2 Bangladeshi women detained at Agartala railway station

NEW DELHI: Two women from Bangladesh were detained at Agartala railway station on Monday for illegally entering India. The Agartala Government Railway Police (GRP), Railway Protection Force (RPF), Border Security Force (BSF), and Intelligence Department conducted the joint operation. The women, Nilufa Begum (34) and Jiasmin (30), are from the Shariatpur district of Bangladesh.

mon friend.

Racket to facilitate illegal Bangladeshi immigrants busted in Delhi, 11 arrested

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police have busted a major illegal immigration network, arresting 11 people, including document counterfeiters, Aadhaar operators, and technology specialists who created fraudulent websites, officials said.

DCP South, Ankit Chauhan, revealed that the suspects assisted Bangladeshi citizens by producing fraudulent Aadhaar cards, voter identification cards and other falsified documents through an unauthorised website. The undocumented immigrants entered India by utilising forest pathways and express railway services, said DCP Chauhan. He confirmed that authorities have apprehended 11 individuals who aided Bangladeshi nationals by providing counterfeit identification



" The suspects utilised counterfeit Aadhaar cards, voter identification documents and additional paperwork created using falsified credentials via an unauthorised website, he noted "

through unauthorised websites. The suspects utilised counterfeit Aadhaar cards, voter identification documents and additional paperwork created using falsified credentials via an unauthorised website, he noted. The Delhi lieutenant governor has instructed the chief secretary and police commissioner to implement a two-month intensive cam-

paign to identify and penalise illegal Bangladeshi residents in the capital city. Delhi police sources indicate that more than 1000 unauthorised Bangladeshi residents have been discovered throughout the city.

The enforcement operation included house-to-house verification, document examination and questioning.

Ammonia spike in lowers output at 5 water treatment plants



NEW DELHI: Five water treatment plants (WTP) of Delhi Jal Board (DJB) at Wazirabad, Chandrawal, Haiderpur, Bawana and Dwarka have reduced water production due to very high levels of ammonia in the Yamuna river, impacting several areas across the city. According to officials, the current pollution in the river is 5 ppm, which has reduced water production by around 100 million gallons per day (MGD) the average production of 990 MGD. Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said that BJP-ruled Haryana was responsible for the increasing levels of pollution in the river. According to DJB officials, south, north and central Delhi will see reduced water supply for the next few days. Among these are Greater Kailash I and II, South Extension, Moolchand, Jahangirpuri, Kalkaji, Govindpuri, Sangam Vihar, Model Town, Civil Lines, Bawana, Inderlok, Mangolpuri, Peeragarhi, Raja Garden, Hari Nagar, IGI Airport, Dwarka, and diplomatic areas. "The major impact is at Wazirabad and Chandrawal plants," a DJB official said. The Wazirabad plant has an overall capacity of producing 138 MGD. Production was reduced by around 40-50% to 55-60 MGD. The other affected plant is Chandrawal, which has a capacity of 99 MGD. Here, the production was reduced by around 10%. It is currently producing 89 MGD.