

**6** WORLD

- Trump is joined by South Carolina leaders at New Hampshire rally
- Russian private jet carrying six people believed to have crashed in Afghan

**8** NATION

- 'Rammy' Ayodhya set for consecration ceremony, temple town decked up
- PM Modi rounds off south spiritual sojourn in TN

## Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee

Virasat bhi, Vikas bhi

Construction of new, grand and divine Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple  
Gift of development projects worth thousands of crores rupees to Shri Ayodhya Dham

## Cong pins Himanta's plea to avoid Batadrava during Ram Temple consecration

Rahul's Yatra: State govt to deploy commandos

**HT Bureau**  
GUWAHATI, Jan 21: Citing that there is no competition between Lord Ram and the Batadrava Satra, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday urged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi not to visit the birthplace of Srimanta Sankardeva at Batadrava on January 22.

Congress, meanwhile, asserted on Sunday that Gandhi's visit will proceed as scheduled.

All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary Jairam Ramesh maintained that Gandhi will visit the Than in Nagaon district as planned and urged that "no politics should be done over it".

Earlier, Sarma expressed concern about conflicting TV broadcasts, with one side featuring the Ram Temple Pran Pratishtha ceremony and the other showing Rahul Gandhi visiting Srimanta Sankardeva's birthplace.

"This won't be good for Assam. Two windows will be played together on TV showing both events,



which I think will not be good for Assam. He can go to Batadrava after 2 pm or in the morning hours. I feel if he does not go to Batadrava during those 2-3 hours during the Pran Pratishtha event will be good," Sarma said during a press conference here.

He further said that commandos will be deployed along sensitive routes of minority-dominated areas to be taken by Rahul Gandhi's

Speaking further expressed discomfort after reading a national media report suggesting that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi participates in the Ayodhya consecration ceremony, Rahul Gandhi would be present at the Batadrava satra.

Sarma informed that it is not that the Satra authorities have invited him and as there are Hindus in the Congress too, the visit can be rescheduled to early morning or in the evening.

For Monday, the Congress has chosen a route through "sensitive areas" of Morigaon, Jagiroad and Nellie which could have been avoided, the chief minister said.

"These areas are sensitive and I cannot discount any law and order situation arising and as such commandos will be deployed along sensitive routes of minority-dominated areas to be taken by Rahul Gandhi's Yatra on January 22," he added.

The reality in these areas cannot be denied and the administrations will have to (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Himanta distributes ration cards to 12,062 families in Mazbat

**HT Bureau**  
GUWAHATI, Jan 21: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday started the process of distributing ration cards to 12062 beneficiary families of Mazbat Legislative Assembly constituency in Udalguri district.

"Taking government's commitment to a new height in helping the under-privileged sections of the society, chief minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma today

started the process of distributing ration cards to 12062 beneficiary families of Mazbat Legislative Assembly constituency at Mazbat today," an official statement said.

It may be noted that as a part of National Food Security Act, state government under the leadership of chief minister has started distributing new ration cards to more than 42 lakh beneficiaries in the state.

"For the benefits of the under-privileged sections of the society, state government has increased the income limit of the families from ₹ 2 lakh in one year to ₹ 4 lakh for the beneficiaries to become eligible for the scheme," the statement added.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarma said that helping the people from cross section of the society, state government is giving ration (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## KA Police seize heroin worth ₹ 50 lakh in Bokajan

**HT Correspondent**  
BOKAJAN, Jan 21: In a routine check on NH 36 at 6:45 am, Karbi Anglong police made a significant discovery, recovering 519.68 gms of heroin from a Scorpio SUV with registration AS 11 U 2693 in Bokajan.

Thorough inspection revealed 45 soap cases containing powdery substances suspected to be heroin, concealed within three cut tubes and black polythene at the rear of the vehicle.

The contraband, seized in the presence of independent government witnesses, has an international

market value of ₹ 50 lakh.

The driver, Md Ajibur Rahman (39), and passenger/owner, Md Musidul Islam (27), both residents of Nagaon district, Assam, were apprehended in connection with the case.

In the last year December, the police in Karbi Anglong took a decisive step by destroying drugs worth over ₹ 27 crore.

The narcotics, including 12,550 kg of heroin, 189.35 kg of ganja, 2.8 kg of morphine, and 2098 tablets, worth ₹ 27,55,16,500 were meticulously burned in an open area (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

**HT BRIEFS**

### Pran Pratishtha

DIPHU: On the occasion of Ram Lalla Pran Pratishtha at Ayodhya, UP, the General Administrative Department, Government of Assam has issued an order that selling of meat and fish shall not be allowed within the state of Assam, till 4 00 pm on January 22. Meanwhile, in another order issued by the Governor of Assam there will be a holiday for educational institutions on January 22 to enable the employees to participate in the celebration.

### Lokhimon dharma

DIPHU: Kuru Madan Engti Hensek, leader of Lokhimon dharma has been invited to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Ayodhya Ram temple on January 22, 2024. He has already arrived in Banarasi by air to attend the grand function. He left Lokhimon Ashram, Dolamora, Karbi Anglong district, the birthplace of sect founder Lakhon Engti Hensek to Ayodhya on January 19. Kuru Madan Dev and three others accompanied him. Three associates are Baneshwar Ingti, Amar Singh Timung and Jiten Ingti, former publicity secretary of Lokhimon Sangh.

## Outstanding TB units recognised in state level review meeting



**HT Bureau**  
GUWAHATI, Jan 21: In a recent state level review meeting of the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), Dr MS Lakshmi Priya, IAS, mission director NHM Assam, along with Dr Abijit Basu, state TB officer, Dr Palash Talukdar, consultant - WHO HQ, and the NHM team recognised and awarded outstanding Tuberculosis (TB) units. The 'Best Performing' award was presented to the Manikpur Tuberculosis Unit in Bongaigaon district for their exceptional efforts. Additionally, the Mushalpur Tuberculosis Unit in Baksa district and the Kajalgaon Tuberculosis Unit in Chirang district were also acknowledged and awarded as the Best Performing Units during the review meeting held at the Assam Administrative Staff College, Guwahati.

## 'It was a first-of-its-kind rally held by Hindus in America and participants were emotionally charged'

### Spectacular car rally dedicated to Lord Ram enthralled Bay Area residents in California

**HOUSTON, Jan 21:** Over 1,100 enthusiastic riders, carrying saffron banners with the image of the Ram temple, participated in a massive car rally in the Bay Area, California, ahead of the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The car rally, organised by six volunteer Hindus from the Bay Area, passed through the iconic Golden Gate Bridge and various parts of San Francisco and Silicon Valley before culminating in a public meeting that included a cultural program and dances to the popular Ram songs on Saturday evening.

The event was followed by prasad distribution and a Tesla car light show.

Led by a giant Ram Rath, the rally covered almost 100 miles and was escorted by two police cars for security reasons. Three digital trucks alongside the rally



played videos of Ram's life story with life-size pictures of Ram, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman.

"The event, held in celebration of the Ram temple, drew an overwhelming response, surpassing all expectations," Rohit Sharma, one of the six organisers, told PTI over the phone.

"Despite unexpected rain, prompting a change in the ending station to Warm Spring

devotion amongst participants when they were told about the event being held thousands of miles away in Ayodhya for the inauguration of Ram temple after 500 years," Deepak Bajaj, one of the organisers, said.

The Tesla light show, a special feature with 170 registered cars coordinated by Vamsi Rajanala, exceeded expectations with over 300 cars dazzling the crowd.

"The rally, complemented by a Tesla light show, rhythmic dhol beats, and a delectable food feast elevated the event to unprecedented heights," Bajaj said.

Param Desai, also one of the organisers, said the grand celebration not only marked a significant cultural event, but also showcased the spirit of togetherness and the deep-rooted cultural ties within the community. (PTI)

## Mother and Child Protection (MCP) Card

Let us know about it's importance

**Salient Features of MCP Card**

- It contains important information regarding care during prenatal and postnatal period, including danger signs during pregnancy and care.
- It contains essential information on newborn care, immunization, diarrhoea, pneumonia and how to prevent diseases for children.
- Information on various Flagship Government Schemes and its benefits.

**Importance of MCP Card**

- It acts as a ready reference for all Pregnant women to know the required health check-ups and treatments that they should avail.
- All medical records of the Pregnant Women are updated by the ANM on the MCP card.
- During pregnancy it helps the beneficiaries to avail the various health benefits provided by the Government.
- Details of the health records of the newborns are updated in the card so that the parents/guardians can take proper care of the child.
- It helps in availing the birth certificate of the newborn child.
- Anganwadi workers record the age wise height and weight of the children so that timely health interventions can be done whenever needed.

The MCP card should be kept safely. Only one card is issued for each Pregnant Women and her child.

To know more contact ASHA/ANM

# Budget 2024-25: Govt may increase capex to propel economic growth

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** With private investment still muted, the government is likely to maintain its momentum on increasing capital expenditure, especially for the infrastructure sector in the upcoming Budget to propel economic growth.

Post Covid-19, the Budget has been laying special emphasis on capex. It has kick-started a dormant cycle for the economy. As a result India has witnessed over 7 per cent growth in the last three years, the highest among the large economies of the world.

During the current financial year, the government has made a record high provision of ₹ 10 lakh crore towards capex. During 2020-21, the government earmarked ₹ 4,39 lakh crore which increased by 35 per cent to ₹ 5,54 lakh crore in the subsequent year.

Another 35 per cent hike in capex was done in 2022-23 to ₹ 7.5 lakh crore which subsequently reached a high of ₹ 10 lakh crore, an increase of 37.4 per cent.

In the upcoming Budget too, the



government is expected to earmark a large amount towards capex as such investment has a multiplier effect on the economy and it also crowds in private investment.

"We estimate Government of India to budget for a capex of ₹ 10.2 lakh crore in FY25, implying a relatively sedate YoY expansion of about 10 per cent, compared to over 20 per cent expansion seen in each of post-COVID years. The slowdown in capex growth is

likely to have some bearing on economic activity and GDP growth," Iera said in its pre-Budget expectations.

The capex rose by 31 per cent to ₹ 5.9 lakh crore in April-November of the current fiscal (58.5 per cent of FY2024 BE) from ₹ 4.5 lakh in April-November FY23 (60.7 per cent of FY23 Prov).

While the growth remained high, capital spending contracted in October 2023 (-14.9 per cent;

first instance of contraction since April 2023) and then rose by a marginal 1.6 per cent in November 2023. Moreover, it has averaged at ₹ 73,210 crore/month, 12.2 per cent lower than the required monthly average of ₹ 83,400 crore to meet the budgeted target of ₹ 10 lakh crore.

India is a hugely infra deficit country and heavy lifting in this regard is being done by the government which crowds in private investment.

With the growth in the economy, there has been a pick-up in private investment in recent times in some of the sectors like steel, cement and petroleum sector.

According to Emkay Global Financial Services head research Seshadri Sen, capex by the government would continue and it will happen at a faster pace.

The capex would help unlock the virtuous cycle. Investment leading to productivity growth, job creation, demand and exports feed into each other and enable animal spirits in the economy to thrive. (PTI)

# FPIs turn cautious, pull out ₹ 13,000 cr from Indian stocks in Jan: Data

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Foreign investors have adopted a cautious approach this month, offloading domestic equities worth ₹ 13,000 crore in the first three weeks owing to high valuations of Indian stocks and surging US bond yields.

In contrast, foreign investors are bullish on the debt market and injected ₹ 15,647 crore in the debt market during the period under review, data with the depositories showed.

According to the data, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) made a net investment of ₹ 13,047 crore in Indian equities this month (till January 19).

They pulled out over ₹ 24,000 crore from equities during January 17-19. Before this, FPIs made a net investment of ₹ 66,134 crore in December and ₹ 9,000 crore in November.

"There are two main reasons why FPIs turned sellers. One, the US bond yield started rising with the 10-year yield rising from the recent level of 3.9 per cent to 4.15 per cent triggering capital outflows from emerging markets," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

"Second, since the valuations in India are high, FPIs used the excuse of less-than-expected results from HDFC Bank to press massive sales too," he added.

The extensive selling by FPIs could be attributed to offloading their stake in HDFC Bank given its disappointing quarterly results, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director, Manager Research,



Morningstar Investment Research India said.

FPIs started the new year with a cautious approach opting to book profits in the Indian equity markets as key stock indices touched all-time high levels, he said.

Moreover, uncertainty over the interest rate scenario also prompted them to stay on the sidelines and wait for further cues, before deciding to invest in emerging markets like India, he added.

Besides, FPIs were big sellers in other emerging markets such as Taiwan, South Korea and Hong Kong.

With regard to a bullish stance on debt markets, Kishay Upadhyay, smallcase manager and founder of FidelFolio Investments, said expectations of rate cuts in India have increased, long term debt bonds are expected to gain disproportionately from any sudden drop in yield.

This came following a net investment of ₹ 18,302 crore in the debt market in December, ₹ 14,860

crore in November, and ₹ 6,381 crore in October, data showed.

The announcement by JP Morgan Chase & Co. in September that it will add Indian government bonds to its benchmark emerging market index from June next year has influenced the inflow in the country's bond markets in the past few months.

In terms of sector, FPIs have been buying IT stocks this month after the management commentary following the Q3 results of IT managers indicated optimism of demand revival in the sector.

Overall, the total FPI flows for 2023 stood at ₹ 1.71 lakh crore in equities and ₹ 68,663 crore in the debt markets. Together, they infused ₹ 2.4 lakh crore into the capital market.

The flow in Indian equities came following a worst net outflow of ₹ 1.21 lakh crore in 2022 on aggressive rate hikes by the central banks globally. Before the outflow, FPIs invested money in the last three years. (PTI)

# Working on electric bikes, will launch when charging infrastructure ready: Classic Legends CEO

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Classic Legends, which designs, manufactures and sells classic motorcycle brands - Jawa, Yezdi and BSA, is working on electric bikes and will introduce it in the Indian market when the charging infrastructure is ready, according to company CEO Ashish Singh Joshi.

While the current charging infrastructure has the ability to support entry-level electric scooters or motorcycles with 50-100 km of range, for performance and intercity bikes it is not yet ready, he said.

"We looked at electric at the start and we started developing our electric product. We have a grant from the British government at our tech centre at Coventry to do electric products in BSA. We are working on our electric programme there," Joshi told PTI.

The Mahindra & Mahindra-backed firm had bought back the Czech motorcycle brand Jawa in 2018 and followed it up with Yezdi in 2022. Before that in 2016, it had also acquired the British motorcycle brand BSA.

When asked if the company was planning to enter the electric bike segment anytime soon, Joshi said, "As India moves along on the infrastructure side, we will take a call on when we want to bring our electric products. Infrastructure is very much needed."

Elaborating, he said at present the charging infrastructure has the ability to support entry-level electric

scooters or motorcycles with 50-100 km of range. The average usage of a scooter or a commuter motorcycle is 50-60 km, which can be charged at home or office.

However, for premium products with 300 km or 400 km of range with occasional usage, availability of charging stations is a concern.

"Also motorcycles in our category will have higher battery capacities as well," he said adding, the availability of higher voltage charging stations is also an issue.

For the kind of products that the company sells, he said, "Every biker's bike dream is to ride these bikes in intercity or take them into the mountains or desert as well. As soon as infrastructure starts getting there, electric motorcycles of our kind will become a reality."

When asked out of the three brands, which one would the company introduce the electric version, Joshi said, "All of our brands are capable of handling electrics. From an architecture point of view I don't see any reason why we couldn't do it in any of our three brands. We have not taken a call on what brand that we would go with."

On an optimistic note, he said the way India is moving on infrastructure at a breakneck speed, getting charging infrastructure on the highways soon looks positive. (PTI)



# Quarterly earnings, global trends to guide mkts in holiday-shortened week

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Quarterly earnings, global trends and trading activity of foreign investors will drive stock markets in this holiday-shortened week, analysts said.

It will be a trading holiday on January 22, with the Maharashtra government announcing a holiday in connection with the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Equity markets would also remain closed on Friday for Republic Day.

"The interest rate decisions of the BoJ (Bank of Japan) and ECB (European Central Bank), along with the US GDP data, are anticipated to drive the market dynamics," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

From the Q3 results front, Axis Bank, JSW Energy, Bajaj Auto, DLF, ACC and JSW Steel would announce their earnings this week.

"This is a truncated trading week following a holiday on Monday and on Friday. Traders should stay light as earnings season would get in full swing leading to stock-specific actions largely. Moreover, interest rate decisions of the BoJ and the ECB is due this week along with the US GDP and PMI data which would have an influence on the global rate cut trajectory," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark fell by 1,144.8 points or 1.57 per cent. The NSE and BSE conducted normal trading sessions on January 20.

# Goods & services exports marginally up at \$765.6 bn in 2023: Govt

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** The country's exports of goods and services rose marginally by 0.4 per cent to \$765.6 billion in 2023 despite global economic uncertainties, according to the commerce ministry data. Sectors which helped keep India's exports afloat include electronics, pharmaceuticals, cotton yarn, fabrics and made-ups; ceramic products, meat, dairy and poultry products, fruits and vegetables and information technology.

Goods exports in the last calendar year, however, contracted by 4.71 per cent to \$ 431.9 billion while services exports are estimated to have risen by 7.88 per cent to \$ 333.8 billion, the data showed. The merchandise imports also dipped by 7 per cent to \$ 667.73 billion last year as against \$ 720.2 billion in 2022.

The latest data for the services sector released by the RBI is for November 2023. The data for December 2023 is an estimation by the ministry. The main export destinations for India are the US, the UAE, the Netherlands, Bangladesh, the UK and Germany. Goods shipments are impacted due to the Russia-Ukraine war, the Israel-Hamas conflict and the Red Sea trade route

crisis due to attacks by Yemen-based Houthi on cargo ships.

According to international trade experts, if these challenges are prolonged, it will have major implications on global trade.

Economic think-tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that India's exports and imports have dipped by 2.6 per cent to \$ 1609 billion in 2023 compared to \$ 1651.9 billion in 2022.

The negative trade balance the difference between exports and imports decreased from \$ 141.3 billion in 2022 to \$ 75.2 billion in 2023. (PTI)

# IDBI Q3 FY24 net profit at ₹ 1458 cr

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Jan 21:** IDBI Bank on Sunday announced its quarterly results for Q3 FY24. The Net Profit stood at ₹ 1,458 crore for Q3 FY24, registering a strong growth of 57% YoY.

The operating profit stood at ₹ 2,327 crore. NIM was recorded at 4.72%, and Net Interest Income stood at ₹ 3,435 crore with a YoY growth of 17%. Cost of Deposit increased by 83 bps and stood at 4.34% for Q3-2024 as compared to 3.51% for Q3-2023. CRAR stood at 20.32% with YoY growth of 18 bps. Return on Assets (ROA) was recorded at 1.70% (YoY growth of 48 bps) and Return on Equity (ROE) stood at 19.57% (YoY growth of 361 bps). Net NPA stood at 0.34% and improved by 74 bps. Gross NPA at 4.69% improved by 913 bps. PCR stood at 99.17% up by 119 bps.

# Reliance to commission new energy giga complex this year

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd will commission a new energy giga complex in Gujarat in the second half of 2024, the company said in an earnings statement and investor call. Reliance is building a giga complex spread over 5,000 acres in Jamnagar in Gujarat. The complex comprises five giga factories for photovoltaic panels, fuel cell system, green hydrogen, energy storage and power electronics. "On track to commence new energy facilities in phases this year," the company said in a post-third-quarter earnings call with investors. Post announcement of third-quarter earnings on Friday, Ambani stated that the "New Energy Giga Complex is all set to be commissioned in the second half of CY24." (PTI)

# Jindal Stainless MD calls for removal of raw material duties in Budget 2024

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Jindal Stainless Ltd (JSL) MD Abhyuday Jindal has urged the government to remove import duty on raw materials in the upcoming Union Budget, a move, the industry leader said, will provide a level-playing field to domestic players.

He suggested levying Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on imports as the domestic market is being affected by cheap and sub-standard stainless steel products from select group of countries like China and Vietnam.

"One long-standing requirement of the stainless steel industry has been that there are certain raw materials that are not present in the country like ferro nickel and ferro molybdenum," Jindal told PTI.

At present, 2.5 per cent import duty is levied on ferro nickel and 5 per cent on ferro molybdenum.

Speaking further on Budget expectations, the JSL MD said severe dumping is happening from China, Vietnam, and certain countries with which India has Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).

This is putting severe pressure on MSMEs and preventing the

stainless steel industry from becoming aatmanirbhar, he said.

"There was an investigation by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR). The way out is that we definitely need some kind of protectionist measure. Our request is that some kind of duty be levied to give some protection to stainless steel companies in India," he said.

Jindal said DGTR has also recommended up to 19 per cent duty on certain grades of stainless steel being dumped into the Indian market.

DGTR -- the commerce ministry's investigation arm -- is a quasi-judicial body that deals with anti-dumping duty, safeguard duty, and countervailing duty.

These duties are trade remedy measures, provided under an agreement of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to its member countries.

The MD also said the government had earlier removed import duty (2.5 per cent) on some raw materials like pure nickel and stainless steel scrap. The industry requests the government to con-

tinue with its decision, he said.

On the impact being made by imports, Jindal said the MSMEs in the sector are finding it very hard to compete in the market against cheaper imports and are either becoming traders or are moving out of the industry completely.

The stainless steel demand in India is growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8-9 per cent.

There is a lot of potential for the industry to continue to grow over the next 10-15 years, he said.

However, he added that in the absence of a protectionist measure, the imports will continue to take advantage of this opportunity, he said. "We expect that Budget to be growth-oriented and the government to look into the concerns of the stainless steel industry," Jindal said.

As per official data, from July 2023 onwards, India has been a net importer of finished steel every month except for September 2023.

During November 2023, finished steel exports were lower at 2.34 lakh tonnes, compared to imports of 7.82 lakh tonnes. (PTI)

# On-ground campaigns to screening, corporate houses join Ram Temple consecration fervour

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Many companies are joining the bandwagon of Ram Temple consecration, from declaring a contribution in lighting at the complex to planning to screen the event live on multiplexes.

Some companies are donating a portion of their profit from sales in the region during the inauguration period to distribute special foods across the city of Ayodhya.

Several companies operating in consumer space have activated on-ground marketing campaigns by putting up large numbers of hoardings, gate branding, shopboards, and kiosks offering products to devotees, arriving in the holy city for the Ayodhya Ram Temple.

The 'Pran Pratistha' ceremony commenced on 16 January and will continue till 22 January. Leading multiplex operator PVR INOX has announced live screening of Ram Mandir inauguration during the consecration ceremony on its 160 cinema screens across 70-plus cities on January 22, 2024.

"It will be a privilege for us to be able to connect the devotees

with this celebration in a truly unique manner. We hope that we will be able to recreate the buzz of the temple, the auspicious chants and the breath-taking visuals and bring alive the magic of the most awaited moments in India's contemporary history," said PVR INOX Co-CEO Gautam Dutta.

Homegrown major Dabur India will be donating a portion of the profits from the sale of its products from January 17 to January 31 to Shree Janmabhumi Teertha Kshetra.

"The Ram Mandir consecration is undoubtedly one of the most momentous occasions in our history. To mark this occasion, Dabur, as a home-grown Indian brand, has committed to donate a portion of the profits generated from the sale of our products from January 17 till January 31 to Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra," said Dabur India CEO Mohit Malhotra.

Besides ramping up distribution of products in the city anticipating the demand surge for daily essentials, it is also creating special experience zones where visitors and pilgrims arriving in Ayodhya can



touch, feel and experience its products. It has tied up with dhabas and eateries on the Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Varanasi highways leading to Ayodhya.

Food FMCG company Adani Wilmar has plans to distribute jalebis and organise a one-day event of bhog on a grand scale. It has also plans for BTL activities such as gate branding, hoardings, shopboards, and kiosks to capture the attention of the large congregation of devotees who will gather in Ayodhya. Simultaneously, the brand is also leveraging television

with its sponsorship for the entire duration of the Shrimad Ramayana, which coincides with the celebrations at Ayodhya.

"The consecration of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is a momentous occasion for every Indian. In keeping with Fortune's brand sentiment, we are proud to be a part of this celebration, as this historical event is akin to a festival that celebrates the essence of being Indian," said Adani Wilmar MD & CEO Anghsu Mallick. Conglomerate ITC has associated with Shri Ram Janmabhoomi

Teerth Kshetra and its Agarbatti brand Mangaldeep has donated its dhooop for a duration of six months from the Temple's opening date.

Besides two agarbatti stands have also been installed at 'Ram Ki Pheidi' where devotees can light incense sticks and offer their prayers to Lord Ram. Mangaldeep has also provided platforms for Pujaris at river ghats as well as pooja outlets, hawkers setups and umbrellas for shade in the markets of Ayodhya.

In addition to that Mangaldeep will be also providing 300 barricades at the main Temple and over 100 barricades at the Temple entrance to facilitate the management of large crowds.

"For us at Mangaldeep, it is indeed an honour to be a part of this historic and sacred event. Our mission is to serve as the enablers of devotion in Temples as well as at devotees' homes. We are fully committed to ensuring a harmonious and enriching experience for all those participating in the festivities of the Ayodhya Lord Ram Temple," said Gaurav Tayal, Chief Executive, ITC's Agarbatti Busi-

ness. Several companies such as leading FMCG products maker Havells and RAK Ceramics announced their association with the Ram Mandir project.

Havells has announced successful completion of a landmark project of lighting Shri Ram Mandir at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Complex in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. H

"Marking a significant milestone, Shri Ram Mandir is scheduled for inauguration and opening on January 22, 2024. Havells is honoured to have played a role in supplying and installing the lighting products of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir," said Havells in a statement.

While UAE-based RAK Ceramics said it has participated in several projects in India. However, the Ram Mandir project is considered the grandest of them all, it said. "While our products are used in tens of thousands of projects globally every year, this prestigious association is one of a kind. To be associated with a project embedded in the cultural, religious, and social life of the people of Bharat is a matter of great pride for RAK

Ceramics," said RAK Ceramics India CEO Anil K Beejawat. Ride-hailing app Uber has started operations in Ayodhya by flagging off EV Autos in the temple city. UberGo and Intercity Uber Rides will follow this year. (PTI)

## HIRING

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT FOR NUTRIHOLIC DIET

MIN QUALIFICATION: UNDER GRADUATE  
C O M M U N I C A T I O N  
SKILLS: FLUENT IN ENGLISH, ASSAMESE AND HINDI

COMPUTER SKILLS: EXCEL, WORD, PRESENTATION AND OVERALL DATA HANDLING

EXPERIENCE: 0-2 YRS

LOCATION: ZOO ROAD  
CONTACT: 6003309376

## State gears up for 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of Ram Mandir

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, Jan 21:** Dibrugarh, in sync with the rest of the nation, is abuzz with excitement as it prepares for the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The city has witnessed vibrant celebrations, and the local community is eagerly anticipating the auspicious occasion.

A massive rally, starting from Rani Sati Mandir and traversing through the main routes of the town, marked the celebration of 'Pran Pratishtha'. The participants in the rally echoed the chants of 'Jai Shri Ram', creating an atmosphere of joy and devotion.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) Nagar in Dibrugarh has actively collaborated with various organisations and the Mandir Committee to organise religious programs in connection with the monumental event. The Maithili Samaj orchestrated a 'Kalash Yatra', commencing from Hanuman Garhi Mandir and winding through the town's main routes. Women adorned in traditional attire took part in the Yatra.

On Monday, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, in conjunction with other organisations, has scheduled a Havana which will be performed by Gyatri Paribar at HS Road, Dibrugarh. Additionally, a Maha Arati is planned from 1 pm onwards to signify this historic day.

Pallov Kumar Chakravorty, president of VHP, Nagar, expressed, "We have organised many programs on Monday, which is a his-



toric day for all of us. For the last 500 years, we have been waiting for the Ram Mandir, and now the day has come. Ramayana Bhajan, cultural programs by the students of V.K.V school, and other cultural programs are organised."

Abhijit Paul, secretary of VHP, Nagar, stated, "We are very much excited for the day because for all Sanatanis it is a great day. As per all Hindu rituals, we will conduct the event tomorrow. We are in association with all the organisations to mark the great event."

**Our Margherita correspondent adds:** On the occasion of Ram Mandir Pran

Pratishtha, a grand rally was organised in Margherita on Sunday, drawing the participation of more than 10,000 enthusiastic individuals. The event, marked by fervent Jai Sri Ram slogans, created an Ayodhya-like atmosphere in the town.

The rally, commencing from Adarsha Vidyalaya Margherita, proceeded towards Sri Sri Ram Janaki Mandir Nagathakurbari Margherita, symbolising the collective joy and celebration surrounding the consecration of the Sri Ram Mandir.

The two-day program kicked off with the mass rally, setting the tone for the festivities. On the second day, Monday, the schedule in-

cludes Prabhat Feri (morning procession), Hom Yagya (ritualistic fire ceremony), chanting of Hanuman Chalisa 108 times, felicitation of key contributors to the Sri Sri Ram Mandir Foundation from Margherita, Shankmaad (blowing of conch shells), distribution of Mahaprasad (sanctified food), illumination of 5000 earthen lamps, and concluded with a religious cultural program.

Margherita MLA Bhaskar Sharma inaugurated the rally at Adarsha Vidyalaya Margherita, leading the procession to its culmination at Sri Sri Ram Janaki Mandir Nagathakurbari Margherita.

**Our Demow correspondent adds:** Sri Sri Ramjanki Thakurbari, located in Sukanpukhuri near Demow, is gearing up for a series of programs on Monday, to celebrate the grand ceremony of Pran Pratishtha for the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

The schedule for the day includes a cultural procession in the morning, showcasing the vibrant and festive spirit of the occasion. Following this, there will be a special Lord Ram Puja, and the Ayodhya Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha program will be displayed for the devotees.

As part of the celebrations, a Satyanarayan Puja is also scheduled, and in the afternoon, Prasaad will be distributed among the attendees. The festivities will continue into the evening, with the lighting of earthen lamps in the Mandir premises, creating a serene and illuminated atmosphere.

## Minister Nandita Gorlosa distributes ration cards in Sidli LAC



**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Jan 21:** In a ceremonial program held at the Shanti Committee Field, Saljhora near Kajalgaon in Chirang district, state cabinet minister for Power, Sports & Youth Welfare, and Tourism Department, Nandita Gorlosa, along with Rajya Sabha MP Rungwa Narzary, Sidli MLA Joyanta Basumatary, and Chirang district commissioner Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, distributed 9,574 new ration cards to 48,657 beneficiaries under 19 No. Sidli LAC.

The distribution of ration cards took place under the National Food Security Act, aiming to provide essential food items to those in need

across the state. Nandita Gorlosa mentioned that the central and state governments have collaboratively undertaken humanitarian initiatives to support the people of the state. She highlighted the commitment of the BJP-led NDA government to work towards the comprehensive development of society, implementing various schemes and projects for the welfare of the masses.

The beneficiaries expressed their happiness and gratitude to the central and state governments for the noble initiative of distributing ration cards, recognising it as a crucial step in ensuring food security for the residents of the state.

## Nutriholic Diet opens new clinic in Guwahati

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Jan 21:** Tamanna Jain, a renowned dietician, has inaugurated Nutriholic Diet's newest clinic, aiming to promote healthier lifestyles in Guwahati. The clinic, situated at Zoo Road, underlines Dr Tamanna Jain's commitment to empowering individuals to achieve optimal health through personalised nutritional guidance.

The clinic features state-of-the-art equipment and technology, reflecting Dr Jain's dedication to providing comprehensive and personalised care. Advanced tools like bioimpedance analysis and comprehensive blood tests are utilised to understand each patient's unique needs and goals. The modern design of the clinic is crafted to create a comfortable and welcoming space for individuals embarking on their wellness journeys.

Beyond addressing weight management, Nutriholic Diet Zoo Road Clinic is equipped to assist individuals in managing chronic health conditions and optimising energy levels. Dr Tamanna Jain and her team adopt a holistic approach, considering lifestyle, preferences, and medical history to craft personalised diet plans. Ongoing support is provided to ensure lasting success for the patients.

Dr Tamanna Jain brings a wealth of experience and expertise to Nutriholic Diet. With a passion for empowering individuals through nutrition, she has successfully guided numerous individuals in achieving their health goals. Her warm and friendly demeanor, combined with in-depth knowledge and a practical approach, positions her as a trusted guide on the path to well-being.

## Newly elected chairman of NCHAC

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Jan 21:** In a historic move, during the first meeting of the newly formed 13th North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC), Mohit Hojai was unanimously elected as the chairman. The district commissioner, Simanta Kr Das, declared Hojai as the chairman after a single proposal was moved during the council session.

Mohit Hojai emerged as the uncontested candidate on Sunday, at the Council Session Hall. The members of the Autonomous Council unanimously supported Hojai, leading to his election as the chairman of the 13th North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council.



## Symposium on uniformity in Nepali writing held at Biswanath College

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Jan 21:** A day-long symposium on 'Uniformity in Nepali language' was organised by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, in collaboration with the department of Nepali at Biswanath College. The event took place in three sessions at the Ripunjay Knowledge Hub of the college.

The inaugural session, presided over by Dr Chinta Mani Sharma, the principal of Biswanath College, had Durga Khatiwora, the president of Assam Nepali Sahitya Sabha, as the chief guest. Dr Jivan Rana, a former member of the advisory committee of Sahitya Akademi, delivered the keynote address. Amrita Rana, a member of the advisory committee of Sahitya Akademi, and Biswajit Roy, officials of Sahitya Akademi, were also present as guests. Chandramani Upadhyaya, another member of the advisory committee of Sahitya Akademi, offered a vote of thanks, and Hem Kumar Goutam, the head of the department of Nepali, conducted the proceedings. In the first session, chaired by Gyan Bahadur Chetry, an eminent critic, Dr Jamadagni Upadhyaya and Dr Jayanta Krishna Samah, presented papers on uniformity in Nepali writing in India. The presenters discussed the issues and challenges faced by Indian Nepali writers while striving for standard Nepali and proposed solutions to address these concerns.

## Religious gathering 'Hobha' attract thousands in WKA

**HT Correspondent**

**DONGKAMUKAM, Jan 21:** The Bishop of Diphu, Rt Rev Paul Mattekot, graced a religious gathering known as 'Hobha' in West Karbi Anglong. The event brought together over five thousand Catholic believers at Rengthama, near Satgaon in West Karbi Anglong, where a Holy Mass was conducted.

The Parish Priest Fr CA John of Satgaon Parish, Fr CB John, the Parish Priest of Sojong, and others were present during the Holy Mass. The theme of the 'Hobha' was derived from Mark 10-14, focusing on the passage 'Let children come to me... and do not hinder them'.

In his sermon, Bishop Paul Mattekot urged the believers to maintain steadfastness in their faith. He mentioned the role of parents in caring for the overall welfare of their children, encouraging education, and fostering a connection to the church.

The religious gathering was attended by Fr Albert Thymning, Fr Justin Chinapa-raj, Fr Charles Sangma, Fr Bernard Sangma, and nuns, contributing to the spiritual atmosphere of the event.

## Apna Manch felicitates four youths for success in APSC CCE

**HT Correspondent**

**HOJAI, Jan 21:** Apna Manch, a local community organization felicitated four outstanding youths from Hojai - Rohit Choudhury, Shagun More, Abhi Saha, and Ramanand Kumar Singh - for their remarkable achievements in the Assam Public Service Commission Combined Competitive Examination 2022. The examination results were officially declared on January 17.

A dedicated team of advisors from Apna Manch, including Dr Manoj Kumar Swami, Shivsankar Bora, Ramesh Munda, Ashok Kejriwal, Shivdayal Singh, and esteemed members Nikhil Kumar Munda (founder), Mayank Kayal, and Chaitanya Bora, visited the residences of all four achievers on Saturday to extend their heartfelt congratulations. The felicitations included the presentation of traditional phulam gamosa, a letter of appreciation, and thoughtful gifts to each of the honoured youths and their proud parents.

Rohit Choudhury, son of Bikash and Mita Choudhury, secured the first rank in the Assam Police Service. Abhi Saha, son of Narayan and Shikha Saha, achieved an impressive 72nd rank in the Assam Civil Services. Shagun More, daughter of Mohan and Rekha More, emerged successful as a block development officer. Ramanand Kumar Singh, son of Ramjanki Devi and Dilip Singh, earned the position of assistant account officer.

## Sanskrit Janapad Sammelan held in Haflong

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Jan 21:** The 'Sanskrit Janapad Sammelan', an event dedicated to the promotion of Sanskrit, unfolded on Sunday, at the Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Haflong. Organised by Sanskrit Bharati, Dima Hasao, the day-long program was chaired by Nirmal Singh, with Nintihal Hojai serving as the chief guest.

The event kicked off with a welcome speech by Ganesh Joishi, the in-charge president of Sanskrit Bharati, outlining the objectives of the gathering. Joishi also announced plans to introduce spoken language classes in Haflong, Dima Hasao. Rithanglal Hojai, addressing the audience, stressed the importance of Sanskrit as an ancient language that should be integrated into the curriculum through weekly classes. He proposed submitting a memorandum to the NC Hills Autonomous Council to establish Sanskrit language learning centers in educational institutions.

Nirmal Singh, the president of the meeting, highlighted that Sanskrit is not just a language but a cultural repository of wisdom embedded in ancient Indian scriptures. He expressed concern over the declining interest of youth in Sanskrit due to a lack of awareness and underscored the need to revive its study for mental, spiritual, and intellectual development. Singh urged the youth to embrace Sanskrit, citing the 'Vedas' as foundational texts written in this ancient language.

The event saw the presence of Dhaneswar Nath, the Sanskrit teacher from the Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Haflong, along with members of Sanskrit Bharati and intellectuals well-versed in Sanskrit, including Chobhal Pandey, Arjun Upadhyay, Nirmal Dunge, Bhanu Sharma,



Narain Ghimire, Indu Joishi, Bed Prakash, and Gopinath Pandey. All speakers emphasised the necessity of learning Sanskrit and encouraged parents to motivate their children to embrace the language.

In addition to the discussions, the program featured a vibrant dance performance by students representing different communities, each adorned in traditional attire. The event attracted significant attendance from students and teachers alike. The gathering concluded with a resolution to enhance Sanskrit Bharati's advocacy efforts, aiming to extend the reach of Sanskrit language education beyond the immediate locale.

## Ankurita Asom Awards celebrates outstanding farmers in state

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Jan 21:** The Ankurita Asom Awards-2024 ceremony unfolded in Guwahati, recognising and celebrating the exceptional achievements of progressive farmers from various regions of the state. These farmers were honoured for their remarkable contributions to agriculture and allied sectors.

Sharing details of the event on his social media X, Atul Bora, minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, expressed his heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to all the deserving awardees. He hoped that this recognition would serve as a catalyst, inspiring them to intensify their efforts in their respective fields.

Minister Atul Bora commended Ankurita Asom for its commendable initiative and conveyed sincere wishes for its continued success. He highlighted the state government's unwavering commitment, under the leadership of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, to the comprehensive development of agriculture and

allied sectors. The government has implemented robust measures to ensure the prosperity and dignity of farmers.

During the ceremony, notable individuals were present, including environmentalist Padma Shri Jadav Payeng, senior journalists Manoj Goswami and



Nitumoni Saikia, ALPCO chairman Manoj Saikia, Paragmoni Aditya, one of the organisers and senior journalist Pronoy Bordoloi, Agriculture Department director, Horticulture director, CVSc dean, and other dignitaries. The event showcased the collective dedication required for the advancement of agriculture in the state.

## Batadroba Thaan Committee grants afternoon access to Rahul Gandhi

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Jan 21:** The Batadroba Thaan Management Committee has imposed restrictions on Rahul Gandhi's visit to the historic Batadroba Thaan on Monday until 3 pm, on the occasion of the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of Sri Rama Temple at Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.

Rahul Gandhi, as part of his 'Bharat Jodo Nyai Yatra' across the nation, had planned to visit the historic Batadroba Thaan, the birthplace of the great saint Srimanta Sankardeva, on Monday morning to offer prayers. The Congress icon sought permission for the visit through local Congress MLA Sibamoni Bora.

In response, the Thaan Management Committee held an urgent special meeting on Sunday morning to discuss the matter. During the meeting, the Committee decided to permit Rahul Gandhi to visit the historic Batadroba Thaan just after 3 pm. A letter was sent to local Congress MLA Sibamoni Bora, informing that there would be no issue with Gandhi's visit to Batadroba Thaan.

This decision by the Thaan Management Committee has elicited strong reactions among Congress party workers in the district.

## Soft skills workshop concludes at Lokra

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Jan 21:** A two-day extravaganza of extracurricular activities and competitions, organised by the North East Educational Trust (NGO) in collaboration with the Assam Rifles, concluded on Sunday. The vibrant event, held at the Community Centre in Labarghari, Lokra, aimed to provide students from various educational institutions a platform to showcase their talents.

Participating schools included Naya Labarghari ME School, Karmabir HS, Chengelimora HS, Dafala LP School, and Anubhav, Chengelimora HS. The initiative not only facilitated competitions in poster making, poetry, and drama but also encouraged a sense of community and camaraderie among the participants. This holistic approach to development within the educational sphere was a key focus of the event.

## Guinness World Record set for longest moving line of people walking on stilts



**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Jan 21:** In a remarkable achievement, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS) secured a place in the Guinness Book

of World Records for organising the longest moving line of people walking on stilts. This traditional game is an integral part of the Karbi tribe's heritage in Assam and was conducted as part of the 50th Karbi Youth Festival

(KYF) at Volongkom Aji (Bukulia) bypass NH-29.

A total of 721 participants, adorned in Karbi traditional costumes, walked in a line covering half a kilometer on the NH-29 bypass for one minute without any intervention. Spectators gathered on both sides of the road to witness this extraordinary feat.

Rishi Nath, the adjudicator from Guinness Book of World Records, presented the certificate of recognition and achievement to Tuliram Ronghang, chief executive member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, in the presence of Chandrasing Kro, president of Karbi Cultural Society (KCS).

After the successful record-setting event, CEM Tuliram Ronghang expressed his appreciation for the participants, stating, "I like the spirit and momentum of the participants for creating a world record. We broke the existing record of the longest-moving line of people walking on stilts. The previous record was 250 persons, and today a new record is set with 721."

## Novel 'Tololing To Kargil' inaugurated by Diganta Biswa Sarma

**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAON, Jan 21:** Noted author and Sahitya Akademi awardee, Diganta Biswa Sarma, ceremonially inaugurated the Assamese novel 'Tololing To Kargil' written by Ami Barthakur in a well-attended function at Morigaon College on Sunday.

The novel, based on the life of Captain Jintu Gogoi, who made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation, was officially released by Sarma in a ceremony that drew the attention of literature enthusiasts in Morigaon. Captain Jintu Gogoi led the second Rajput Rifles and valiantly fought against the Pakistani Army in the Kargil sector in 1999.

The book release event commenced with a melodious Assamese song performed by local popular singer Namrata Kashyap. Subsequently, author Ami



Barthakur felicitated Diganta Biswa Sarma with a xorai and a gamosa in the presence of distinguished guests at the gathering.

Diganta Biswa Sarma, in his address, captivated the audience with his valuable insights. His speech not only highlighted the significance of the novel but also provided a deeper understanding of

the sacrifices made by individuals like Captain Jintu Gogoi for the greater interest of the nation.

Following Sarma's address, Ami Barthakur, a lecturer at Morigaon College, expressed her gratitude and spoke about the novel in detail. The novel, titled 'Tololing To Kargil', was published by Srishti Publication of Ajit Kr Rai.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot; but make it hot by striking. -William Butler Yeats*

## IMF Report: A Boost for Modi Govt

In a timely revelation, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has presented a positive assessment of India's economic landscape, providing a potential boon for the Modi government ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Amidst the backdrop of recent youth protests and opposition criticism, the IMF's findings stand as a testament to the resilience of India's economic fundamentals. Concluding its standard Article IV consultations with India, the IMF forecasts robust growth for the nation. Projections indicate a 6.3% growth in the fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25, instilling confidence in the strength of the economy despite global uncertainties. Notably, the IMF's predictions align with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) concerns about inflation, projecting a rise of 5.4% in 2023-24 and 4.6% in the subsequent year, both within the central bank's target range. The significance of controlled inflation is paramount as it provides leeway for a more proactive monetary policy. The RBI, having expressed concerns earlier in the year, can now consider fostering growth with a stable price environment. The IMF's endorsement of India's overall savings and investment trends further fortifies the economic outlook. Gross savings remain steady at approximately 30% of the GDP, with investments showing a marginal uptick, expected to reach 32% in the coming year.

The buoyancy in investment is attributed to increased public sector outlays, both at the central and state government levels, a sentiment echoed by both the RBI and the IMF. Additionally, the IMF applauds the government's commitment to maintaining a sustainable fiscal profile, anticipating a decrease in the fiscal deficit from 6% to 5.8% of GDP next year. While acknowledging India's favorable debt composition, the IMF Directors recommend ambitious medium-term consolidation efforts due to elevated public debt levels and contingent liability risks. The government's emphasis on accelerating capital spending while maintaining fiscal discipline receives commendation from the IMF, a key element in effective macroeconomic strategy. Addressing concerns on the external front, the IMF reports a stable situation with a current account deficit of 1.8% of GDP. Notably, the inflow of foreign direct investment and portfolio investments is expected to surge to \$80 billion in 2024-25, a substantial increase from the current year's \$63 billion.

However, the article underscores the need for caution, considering potential underestimations in the wake of developments in the US and Chinese economies. With the US Federal Reserve signaling possible rate cuts and a shift from debt instruments to equities, India's secondary markets are witnessing a surge in foreign institutional investments. The IMF warns of potential fluctuations in response to quick money flows, prompting the RBI to consider intervention in the foreign exchange markets. The foreign exchange reserves, already at an impressive \$619 billion, are projected to reach close to \$700 billion in the next year. As India's equity market soars, the IMF advises caution to avoid creating an artificial sense of abundance and expansion. The impending general election adds another layer of complexity, raising questions about the government's approach in the face of an optimistic economic report. While the temptation might be to exploit this sense of ebullience, prudence remains crucial to ensure overall stability. In summary, the IMF's positive outlook on India's economy provides the Modi government with a favorable backdrop ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. However, the need for caution and strategic economic management is underscored, especially in the context of global economic uncertainties and the approaching elections.

## Rama being inspiration behind formation of Khalsa Panth

By: Er. Rajesh Pathak

Divided into 26 chapters, consisting 864 verses is the treatise on the episode of the life of Rama which is called 'Ramavtar' written by Sikh guru Shri Guru Govind Singh. Half of the verses in the book are based on war-stories.

Guru Govind Singh wanted to inspire people against the Mughals' atrocities, and he found the way to it through reminding them the war tradition of their great Hindu ancestors. And most suitable of them in the given condition could be the character of Rama, the very embodiment of organization-valour-provess. And he choose to write 'Ramavtar' to fulfill the cause of inspiring national selfhood among the common-mass, therefore.

Initially who drew towards Sikhism of Guru Nanakdev [its exponent] by instinct were peace-loving, and religiously devotional. But latter the way with heart rending cruelty Guru Arjundevaneone who did great historic work of compilation of Guru Granth Sahib was killed by Jahangir; and then Guru Tegbahadur by Aurangzeb that the course of Sikhism underwent transformation.

It was no longer untenable to those at the helm of the affair of Sikhism to have learnt that bhajans [devotional songs], keertan [prayers] and fast may bring spiritual peace to mind. But as far as security of community is concerned that can't be achieved without arousing the spirit of organisation, fearlessness and martialism among the people, as Rama once did against demonic tendency then ruling the roost in his time. Thus came into being Khalsa-Panth initiated by Guru Govind Singh.

First five who came forward to fulfil the resolutions of Khalsa were venerably known as 'Panj-

Pyare'. One among them was from Dhobi-community; second, Bhisti; third, Darji; fourth, khatri; fifth from Jat community. As also three among them were from Beedar, Dwarkapuri and Jaggannath Puri respectively; and other two from Punjab.

Having been initiated in Khalsa, it was mandatory keeping kesh [long hair], kataar [dagger] and kangri [comb]; and wearing kachha [small-piece of loin-cloth] and kada[bracelet], which are popularly known as five 'Kakaar'.

Based on Veer rasa (the verses that triggers brevity), the latter part of the composition is predominantly refer to the victories of Rama in the wars he fought. Guru Govind Singh wanted to see country free of bondage of Mughal-rule. Fighting against Aurangzeb and his sons and their hard core cunning followers he and his four sons sacrificed their lives.

However the eternal ideals laid by Shri Ram and the motivation gained from the life of Guru Govind Singh never let fighting spirit among his followers die out a bit. Following the path shown by him, his descendent, great Maharaja Ranjit Singh later fulfilled his dream. Though Marathas liberated Punjab in 1755-56 from Mughals but credit for strengthening of Indian sovereignty in the region actually goes to subsequent Sikh rule there.

Not only this, breaking the Muslim dominion, invading army of Mahahraja led by Harsingh Nalwa even entered deep inside Afghanistan up to Kabul and earned the glory of bringing back after centuries the jewel studded Gate of Somnath temple back to India, establishing it to its original place. Likewise Hari Mandir Sahab Gurudwara of Amritsar that was once burnt down by Ahmad Shah Abdali was renovated and as well as embedded with the gold, giving it the form of 'Swaran Mandir'.

# Return to glory: Ram Temple and the resurgence of Bharatiyata

On January 22, 2024 (today), Bharat will regain its lost vigor and prestige after nearly 1500 years, when Ram Lalla will formally be placed in his rightful home at Ayodhya. The occasion will also turn on its head centuries of domination of the Hindus and the country's ethos and beliefs, at the hands of invading Islamic armies and marauders who considered burning temples and religious institutions as the surest way of weakening morale and belief. Razing down of temples and libraries was but a representation of a philistine culture alien to the people of this great land, since none of our kings ever were keen on invading foreign lands and appropriating their religious symbols and wealth. That was and still is the essence of Bharatiyata.

Whereas today's will be the biggest and most important religious ceremony of all time in the country, for me, and I am sure for many others, it will be among the biggest episodes—culturally, politically, and historically—in the history of our nation.

The subdued psyche that characterized India for centuries after the Islamic and English rules will finally be rid of on this day. It will signal to the world a resurgent civilization and humanity. It will not merely be a case of a deity being imbued with divine significance, but it will be akin to the prestige of the country being imbued with the essence of dignity. The Ram Temple was a demand not of the Hindus alone, as the Leftist historians or so-called intellectuals would make most believe, but it was the demand of

140 crore Bharatvasis to restore to them their Bharatiyata (Indianness), their sabhyata (civilization), and their akhandata (integrity).

I, too, will be joining billions of my fellow Bharatvasis on the day in prayers. At the same time, I will be fondly recalling my association with the struggle to restore this pride, the weeks leading to December 6, 1992.

Ever since my student days, I was politically active within groups that believed in the cultural renaissance of a resurgent India. This was not merely an ideology. It was a belief in the glorious history of a Bharatvarsha that I had read about in my childhood without distortion. In 1985, I joined Ram Janki Rath Yatra to remind people about the Ram Mandir locked up inside a mosque at Ayodhya. In 1989, when I was 21, I played a leading role in organizing Ram Sila Poojan wherein a brick from each village, besides Rs 1.25 as a token, was taken to Ayodhya. The significance of the event was not lost on anyone. It rekindled a lost spirit among the masses. Even people in Assam were no less enthused. When I now look back on those small and big steps, I realize how the present time has come, one moment at a time, just as a beautiful construction like the present Ram Mandir is about carefully laying one brick at a time.

In the same year, in the month of October, the call for a Kar Seva was taken by Vishwa

Hindu Parishad, of which I was also a member, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevaksangh, and other like-minded organizations. On October 24, 1990, when I was 22, I joined my fellow brethren in participating in the Kar Seva slated for October 30 to start the construction of the Temple at Ayodhya. It was a challenge, but we were determined. Although we could not accomplish what was originally planned, we significantly laid the foundation for the D-Day which came on December 6, 1992. The divine powers of thousands of kar sevaks resulted in their storming the Babri Masjid and laying the foundation stone of what is today the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Not many in the state know till date that I was among the handful of people from Assam who were given an opportunity to be part of a historical movement that will have a major bearing on modern Indian history.

If one considers the significance of the event, it goes much beyond the sanctum sanctorum of the temple and permeates our individual lives. The life of Lord Ram, which represented humility, integrity, forgiveness from a position of strength, compassion, humanity, and much more, is something we need to imbibe in our day-to-day conduct. This humility in every Indian is what we should be aiming at as an outcome of today's landmark ceremony.

If the Opposition in the country is claiming that the Bharatiya Janata Party or the

Sangh Parivar is playing politics over Ram, they are all grossly mistaken. They have, since the beginning, never understood the significance of the very essence of Bhagwan Sri Ram. He stands for the highest form of human dignity. He belongs to all, as the saying goes: Ram Sab Ke, Sabke apne apne Ram (Ram belongs to all. Each one has his own Ram). No wonder, there are so many forms of Ramayana, as there are so many avatars of Ram. Each revered.

We in the BJP have 'played' with pride the politics of development: Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. It is the opposition parties that play the game of religious appeasement and do politics around it. The tremendous economic growth and that of the downtrodden achieved in the last decade of the present Government at the Centre led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a testimony to the kind of 'religion' we practice. A religion that calls for the development of one and all that of the nation. It is the same political practice that the Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, believes in. The development trajectory of our State is a testimony to this practice of human development.

Today, when the world chants paean for Ram and his people-centric policies which led to what we call Ram Rajya, I am forced to consider the fact that in this Amrit Kaal, Prime Minister Modi is leading from the front to ensure that he fulfills the ideals of the great Maryada Puroshottam (Ideal Human) in his bhoomi.

## Triumph and legacy: The epic journey of Ram Janmabhoomi movement

By: Dipak Kurmi

The long-anticipated consecration of Lord Ram in Ayodhya on January 22 stands as a testament to a five-century-long, challenging journey. This historic milestone, symbolized by the completion of the majestic Ram temple, represents the end of a tumultuous saga marked by disputes, violence, and protracted legal battles. The road to this monumental achievement was laid by the steadfast determination of devotees and a landmark court ruling that finally brought resolution to longstanding conflicts.

The historical roots of the Ram Janmabhoomi struggle run deep, with the site's dispute serving as a focal point for centuries. Central to this conflict was the contention that the Babri Masjid was built on the sacred birthplace of Lord Ram, evolving into a catalyst for communal tensions. This sparked a series of events that profoundly shaped the trajectory of the struggle over time.

The enduring commitment of devotees became a formidable force that propelled the movement through successive generations. The steadfast belief in Ayodhya as the hallowed birthplace of Lord Ram served as a powerful motivator for those engaged in the cause. Despite facing a spectrum of challenges, from political resistance to societal discord, their dedication stood unwavering over the course of decades.

Within the movement, key figures emerged as instrumental players, assuming central roles in its narrative. These individuals not only devoted their lives to the cause but also adeptly navigated the complexities and challenges inherent in the struggle. Their leadership, particularly in the face of adversity, played a pivotal role in guiding the movement toward its ultimate objective.

A significant turning point occurred in 2019 with a landmark court ruling that definitively addressed the legal disputes concerning the site. The judgment recognized the historical and religious importance of the land, clearing the path for the construction of the Ram temple. This legal triumph represented a pivotal moment in the struggle, opening avenues for reconciliation and fostering unity.

As Ayodhya gears up for the consecration of the Ram temple, it becomes a symbol of victory in the face of challenges and a testament to the unyielding spirit of those who devoted themselves to the cause. The culmination of the grand temple is more than just a religious milestone; it mirrors the resilience and determination that have defined the history of the Ram Janmabhoomi struggle.

Throughout the saga, notable contributors emerged as pivotal figures who played crucial roles in molding the movement and guiding it towards triumph. Among these individuals are key figures whose personal journeys mirror the complexities and challenges encountered during this transformative period.

The architect of the Rath Yatra, former Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani, played a pivotal role in the Ram temple movement

during the watershed year of 1984. Following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Advani's Rath Yatra emerged as a crucial catalyst, firmly establishing the foundation of the movement. Despite the BJP securing only two seats in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, Advani took up leadership, highlighting Hinduva policies. Guided by him, the BJP incorporated the objective of constructing the Ram temple into its manifesto.

In 1990, Lal Krishna Advani declared the Rath Yatra, commencing from Somnath in Gujarat and culminating in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. Despite encountering hurdles, such as the arrest of Advani by Lalu Prasad, the then Chief Minister of Bihar, the Rath Yatra garnered fervent support. Nevertheless, the journey had set the wheels of the movement in motion, emerging as a defining moment in the history of the Ram temple struggle.

Following Advani, Muri Manohar Joshi took up the mantle as a prominent leader deeply engaged in the Ram temple movement. Witnessing the demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya, Joshi played a pivotal role in crafting the movement's strategies. His commitment extended to a comprehensive study of all aspects connected to the Ram Mandir movement, contributing to thorough planning and effective implementation.

Joshi's impact reached its zenith during a pivotal gathering convened in Lucknow in December 1992, where he passionately called upon the masses to journey to Ayodhya the following day. His unwavering position, encapsulated in statements like "there is no power that can impede the construction of the Ram temple," highlighted his steadfast dedication to the cause. Joshi's political journey encompassed representing multiple constituencies as an MP, including Varanasi, Allahabad (now Prayagraj), and Kanpur.

Unyielding Devotion: During the pinnacle of the Ram Mandir movement in 1991-92, the then Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Kalyan Singh, played a pivotal role in rallying Ram devotees. Initially anticipated to abstain from the yatra to evade potential arrest, Singh defied expectations by actively joining the procession near Hanumangarhi. His fervent speech underscored the unwavering commitment to the construction of the Ram temple, providing added vigor to the movement.

Despite the triumph of the movement, Kalyan Singh bore political consequences and relinquished his position due to his steadfast dedication to the cause. Regrettably, he departed in August 2021, not witnessing the consecration of the Ram temple.

Bajrang Dal's Vanguard: In 1984, Vinay Katiyar took on the mantle of the inaugural president of Bajrang Dal, established for the Ram Mandir movement. Entrusted with mobilizing support, Katiyar traversed villages, orchestrating meetings and rallying people for the cause. His endeavors proved fruitful as, under Vinay Katiyar's guidance, Bajrang Dal effectively united individuals nationwide in support of the Ram Mandir move-

ment. His political prominence expanded in the aftermath of the movement, propelling him to the position of National General Secretary of the BJP. He secured election as a Member of Parliament three times, representing the Faizabad (Ayodhya) Lok Sabha constituency.

The Dynamic Leader: Revered for her impassioned speeches during critical moments, Uma Bharti emerged as a key figure in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Following the movement, Bharti continued her political engagement, assuming ministerial roles in the central governments of both Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi. Additionally, she held the esteemed position of Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh from 2003 to 2004.

Passionate Advocate: Serving as the second fiery female leader in the Ram Mandir movement, Sadhvi Ritambhara's fervent speeches echoed throughout the nation. Despite stepping back from active political involvement, she persists in her spiritual pursuits, overseeing an ashram named Vatsalya Gram in Vrindavan.

Mastermind Leader: Ashok Singhal, who held the position of international president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad for two decades, is acknowledged as a key architect of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. His adept strategic planning and influential leadership played a pivotal role in molding the movement, highlighted by the orchestration of the parliament held at Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi in 1984. Singhal's responsibilities included spearheading the Kar Sevaks who participated in the demolition of the disputed structure in 1992. He departed on November 17, 2015.

Champions of the Saffron Flag: Hailing from Kolkata, the real brothers Ram Kumar Kothri and Sharad Kumar Kothri made notable contributions to the movement. As members of the inaugural group of Karsevaks in 1990, they hoisted the saffron flag on the disputed structure. Unfortunately, both brothers were fatally shot during the kar seva on November 2, 1990, becoming martyrs and igniting a wave of support for the movement.

Unseen Mastermind: Champat Rai, the General Secretary of Ram Mandir Trust, toiled tirelessly behind the scenes, amassing documentary evidence pertaining to the Ram temple well before the demolition of the disputed structure. Rai's thorough endeavors involved scrutinizing thousands of documents, delving into scriptures, and supplying crucial evidence to the legal team navigating the battle for Ram Janmabhoomi.

Dynamic VHP Figure: In tandem with Vinay Katiyar, Praveen Togadia made substantial contributions to the Ram Mandir movement as a leader linked with Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Noted for his energetic oratory, Togadia played a crucial role in galvanizing public support and kindling enthusiasm throughout the movement. While presently not aligned with Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Togadia's legacy remains intertwined with the fervor of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. (The writer can be reached at dipaknewslive@gmail.com)

## Narendra Modi is chanting 'make the temples great again' on the lines of Trump

By: Sushil Kutty

Is India awash in religion? India cannot help itself. Religion is so mixed with politics and everyday life in India that it bristles. This, despite the country's apex court asserting in 1994 that mixing religion with politics was fraught with danger. Today, the same Supreme Court has by far a far more liberal attitude on mixing politics with religion, which the international media labels as "Modi's illiberalism".

Come to think of it, India has become one huge temple-town and much of the global media cannot take this transformation without panic showing. Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself is leading what can be called the 'Make The Temple Great Again' movement currently unfolding in "Bharat", much like Donald Trump's MAGA in the United States.

In fact, for yet another time, Trump and Modi are being spoken of in the same breath and this is disturbing stout hearts. And "anybody heard of Ram?" is not asked; for, everybody—from the squirrel to the fish—has heard of Ram, thanks to the opposition INDIA bloc, which has made famous the story of Ramayana linking it not just with the BJP but also with that of the fortunes of the opposition alliance.

India's opposition leaders have virtually adopted Ramayana's epic hero as their own. It is uncanny, this affinity for Ramayana among secular opposition politicians. And everybody thought Congress leader and ex-Rajasthan Chief Minister was the magician. That mantle now rests easy on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's grey head. The question plaguing level-heads: Has the opposition INDIA bloc forgotten the demolished 450-year-old mosque which—by 200 million believers are to be believed—awaits resurrection at the same spot where it was reduced to dust?

Fact is, where Ram was born has become an international hotspot and India has a Hindu evangelical Prime Minister under whose leadership Indian Muslims are being exhorted to "show big heart"—give up their claims on other temples allegedly buried beneath other mosques. Only then will Modi's 'Make The Temple Great Again' movement take on the epic proportion it aims for.

Modi is spreading the MTTGA movement through 'Ram Rajya', which is taking shape across the landscape, much to the delight of Hindutva folks who refuse to see the clear distinction between Hindu and Hindutva. In fact, Hindutva got a big boost only after Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor and Salman Khurshid warned of the yawning gap between Hindu and Hindutva.

Today, in north India at least—in the reviled "gaumutra states"—Hindutva blurs with 'Hindu' and nobody can stop the temple movement. Not when Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi is breathing fire into temples with fire-breathing speeches and, "Lo Behold", the opposition parties are also "Ram-May". The question is, what is 'Ram Rajya' other than 'Hindu Rashtra'?

If Prime Minister Narendra Modi manages to secure 400+ Lok Sabha seats before this May, it will be axiomatic of a "Hindu Rashtra". With that kind of brute majority, the rest of the RSS manifesto would be enacted quicker than the crow flies in a straight line. And considering the extent and spread of the temple movement, the time is nigh.

Some global media are calling the temple movement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "triumphant moment". For, which other world leader—a bona fide head of state—can breathe "life" in an idol for a billion and more people to worship? Can Joe Biden, can Vladimir Putin, can Xi Jinping? Why, can even Kim Jong Un, the North Korean dictator with the chubby cheeks, breathe life in a stone idol and proclaim the stone 'God Almighty'?

The reality is, there are degrees and degrees of authoritarianism and Prime Minister Narendra Modi allegedly practices one that is in a class all its own, in a class all his own. Post-January 22, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the 'Father of God', with the temple consecrated and the temple movement on its way to declare India 'Hindu Rashtra' under the benign tenets of 'Ram Rajya, which have the "blessings of the Constitution".

Modi will also launch the BJP's election campaign with the unsaid "by this time 2025, India will be 'Hindu Rashtra' if the BJP gets the brute majority Modi expects to garner in the 2024 general elections". Modi has asked Indians to light lamps on January 22 to celebrate the temple movement to commemorate, ahead of time, Modi's triumphant return to power for a third straight term.

By then would all the "secular demons" be slayed? There are people who insist that "only 80% of Indians are Hindu", so nary a worry should darken the brows of non-Hindus. There are also large numbers of Hindu Indians for whom 'Make The Temple Great Again' does not count. These are the eternal optimists, for whom the temple is not axiomatic of victory.

The 'Shankaracharyas' are the leading lights of this set. Most opposition leaders—who have no reason to flatter Narendra Modi—have found their own temples to lay siege to.

As a last resort, India's combined opposition is banking on the 6000-km cross-country 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to blunt the dangers of 'Make The Temple Great Again'. It is rare, indeed, to have a religious shrine as the enemy. But, then, this is 'Incredible India' aiming for 'Hindu Rashtra' in the guise of 'Ram Rajya'. (IPA Service)

# Combining erectile dysfunction and chest pain drugs may be bad for the heart

By: Robby Berman

Men who are taking erectile dysfunction (ED) medications alongside nitrate medications for angina are at higher risk for cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, according to a new study from Sweden.

Taking ED drugs and nitrates at the same time effectively doubles their blood-vessel dilating effects, potentially resulting in an extreme drop in blood pressure.

The study analyzed data from 61,487 men in the Swedish Patient Register. Of these men, 55,777 men were treated only with nitrates, while 5,710 men were treated with nitrates and an ED medication.

In the study, men taking both drug types together were far more likely to die. Compared to men receiving nitrates only, their risk of mortality in general increased by 39%, cardiovascular mortality by 34%, and non-cardiovascular mortality by 40%.

In addition, the same group was 72% more likely to have a heart attack, 67% more likely to experience heart failure, 95% more likely to require cardiac

revascularization, and 70% more likely to experience major cardiac events.

The study is published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

**Does erectile dysfunction signal heart problems?**

While many men think of ED drugs only in the context of sexual function, it signifies more than that to cardiologists. The study's first author Dr. Ylva Trolle Lagerros of the Karolinska Institute explained, "ED can be a clinical marker for future heart health issues."

"It is sometimes called the harbinger for cardiovascular events," said Dr. Lagerros.

Cardiologist Dr. Glenn N. Levine of the Baylor College of Medicine, who was not involved in the study but wrote an accompanying editorial, explained, "In many cases, they both involve the same basic process, namely vascular disease, a combination of atherosclerosis and endothelial dysfunction."

Endothelium dysfunction describes a hardening of the endothelial cells lining blood vessel walls, making the vessels less flexible and less able to accommodate changing levels of



blood flowing through the vessels.

Atherosclerosis is the buildup of cholesterol plaque on artery walls, narrowing them and affecting a healthy blood flow.

Yu-Ming Ni, board certified general cardiologist and lipidologist, who was also not involved in the study, said that while some may assume that ED is a result of a narrowing of blood vessels in the penis, "the blood flow is really through very few actual arteries, which sort of expand in order to achieve an erection."

The greater concern, he said, is that "if you have cholesterol plaque in the arteries that lead to

the penis, you very well might have cholesterol plaque in the other arteries throughout your body as well." These include the arteries of the heart, potentially leading to a heart attack or — via the arteries in the brain — a stroke.

**Chest pain and the heart**  
"If you have cholesterol plaque build-up in the arteries of your heart," said Dr. Ni, "and it's fairly significant, you're going to get inadequate blood flow in times of stress or in times of increased oxygen demand. Let's say, [when] you're exercising, or you're having sex."

"In these scenarios, your heart needs more oxygen, and if there

are blocked arteries impeding that blood flow, you're going to get pain, and that pain is angina," said Dr. Ni.

**Why ED and chest pain drugs conflict**

ED drugs are phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors (PDE5i), and they help improve blood flow to the penis by temporarily dilating the body's blood vessels. Nitrate drugs also dilate blood vessels throughout the body.

Each type of medication individually results in a lowering of blood pressure — together, the effect is dangerously doubled.

"I think," said Dr. Ni, "from a patient standpoint, the bottom line is if you're taking a nitrate and an erectile dysfunction medication, you have to stop one or the other."

Cardiologist Dr. Cheng-Han Chen, who was also not involved in the study, meanwhile said, "I would caution against prescribing a PDE5i in these patients. If necessary, an alternative to the nitrate should be considered if a PDE5i is prescribed."

**What alternatives are there?**  
While PDE5i drugs are the recommended medications for

ED, there are alternatives to nitrates for angina.

Dr. Levine said, "There are three basic types of antianginal therapy (plus an occasionally used fourth type)."

"Thus, at least some patients on chronic nitrate therapy can be tried on a different type of therapy to see if this adequately controls their angina," he said.

There are, fortunately, also lifestyle changes that may improve both ED and angina.

If a man is experiencing ED and has obesity, addressing the second problem may address the first. Dr. Ni said, "I find that many patients who [have obesity] have issues with erectile dysfunction because of the conversion of testosterone into estrogen by body fat, which makes it difficult to achieve an erection."

He further noted that obesity is a risk factor for numerous cardiovascular precursors, such as insulin resistance, localized inflammation, metabolic dysfunction, liver issues, and fat surrounding the heart capable of causing direct damage to the heart.

Dr. Lagerros cited several non-pharmaceutical approaches

to resolving angina. These include not smoking, being physically active, and eating in a healthy manner, with more fruits, vegetables, and fish.

**Keeping track of ED drugs can be tricky**

Dr. Ni noted that partly due to the sporadic nature with which men go on and off ED drugs, it can be difficult for doctors to monitor the safety of a patient's drug interactions.

"We have medication lists that we try to keep updated, and for various reasons, erectile dysfunction meds don't make it to the list," said Dr. Ni. "For example, patients will get the medication from a different pharmacy because of cost considerations." "This is where we have pharmacists review the medication list and ask the patients 'are there any other medications that you are taking?'" said Dr. Ni.

"I do think," he said, "there's room for improvement on all fronts because of the known risks with the combination of nitrates and erectile dysfunction medications. I do think that it's something that has become more and more of an issue as time has gone on." (Courtesy: Medical News Today)

## All you need to know about stomach cancer treatment

By: Prof.(Dr.) Atul Sharma

**How common is gastric (stomach) cancer?**

Worldwide about 1 million people are diagnosed with gastric cancer. It is ranked as the 5th most common cancer. In India it accounts for about 60,000 new cancer cases (6th most common) and about 53,000 deaths.

**How is this diagnosed?**

This is diagnosed after endoscopic biopsy.

**What is the treatment for stomach cancer?**

Stomach cancer treatment depends upon the stage of the disease. For early or locally advanced disease this is surgery, chemotherapy with or without radiotherapy. For stage 4 disease this is chemotherapy with or without targeted therapy. Sometimes immunotherapy is also used with or without chemotherapy. This is based on various factors.

**How is the choice of treatment determined for stomach cancer patients?**

Treatment decisions are based on factors like the cancer stage, tumor location, patient's overall health, and the presence of specific genetic mutations.

**Is surgery the primary treatment for stomach cancer?**

Surgery is often the main treatment for stomach cancer, with the goal of removing the tumor and nearby lymph nodes. This is possible in the early stage or what we call locally advanced disease.

**What types of surgeries are performed for stomach cancer?**

Common surgeries include gastrectomy (removal of part or all of the stomach) with lymphadenectomy (removal of lymph nodes), and palliative surgery for symptom relief.

**Can stomach cancer be treated with chemotherapy?**

Yes, chemotherapy is often used to shrink tumors before surgery, kill cancer cells, or manage advanced cases of stomach cancer.

**Is radiation therapy effective for stomach cancer treatment?**

Radiation therapy can be used to target and destroy cancer cells, either alone (to prevent bleeding) or in combination with surgery and chemotherapy.

**What is targeted therapy in stomach cancer treatment?**

Targeted therapy drugs specifically target cancer cells' abnormalities, such as overactive proteins, to inhibit their growth.

**Are immunotherapy options available for stomach cancer patients?**

Immunotherapy drugs like checkpoint inhibitors can stimulate the immune system to recognize and attack cancer cells.

**Can stomach cancer be treated with alternative or complementary therapies?**

While some patients explore alternative therapies, they are not considered primary treatments and should be discussed with a healthcare provider and at this time lack credible scientific evidence.

**Is precision medicine used in stomach cancer treatment?**

Precision medicine analyzes a patient's genetic profile to identify targeted treatment options, which can be beneficial in advanced cases of stomach cancer.



**What is neoadjuvant therapy in stomach cancer treatment?**

Neoadjuvant therapy refers to treatment administered before surgery to shrink tumors or improve surgical outcomes.

**Can stomach cancer spread to other organs, and how is metastatic cancer treated?**

Stomach cancer can metastasize to other organs. Treatment for metastatic stomach cancer may involve chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy.

**What is adjuvant therapy in stomach cancer treatment?**

Adjuvant therapy is given after surgery to kill any remaining cancer cells and reduce the risk of recurrence.

**Is stomach cancer treatment different for early-stage and advanced-stage cases?**

Yes, treatment approaches vary based on the stage of the cancer. Early-stage cases may require surgery alone, while advanced stages often involve multimodal therapies.

**What is the role of palliative care in stomach cancer treatment?**

Palliative care focuses on relieving symptoms, improving quality of life, and providing emotional support, especially in advanced cases.

**Can nutritional support be part of stomach cancer treatment?**

Yes, nutritional support, including dietary changes and supplements, can be important for managing malnutrition and side effects of treatment.

**What are the potential side effects of chemotherapy used for stomach cancer treatment?**

Side effects may include nausea, vomiting, fatigue, hair loss, changes in appetite, and gastrointestinal issues, depending on the treatment used.

**Are there long-term effects or complications of stomach cancer treatment?**

Some treatments may lead to long-term complications, such as digestive problems, nutritional deficiencies, and potential effects on quality of life.

**Is follow-up care necessary after completing stomach cancer treatment?**

Yes, regular follow-up appointments are essential to monitor for cancer recurrence and manage any lasting side effects.

**What is the success rate of stomach cancer treatment?**

The success rate varies depending on the stage, type of treatment, and individual factors. Early detection and treatment offer better outcomes and possibilities of cure in many patients.

**Is stomach cancer treatment influenced by a patient's age or overall health?**

Age and overall health play a role in treatment decisions, and older adults may have tailored treatment plans to manage comorbidities.

**Are there patient support groups for stomach cancer survivors and those undergoing treatment?**

Yes, support groups can provide valuable emotional support, information sharing, and coping strategies for stomach cancer patients and their families. (The author is a Vice Chairman, Medical Oncology, Cancer Care / Oncology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket)

## Understanding ankle sprains: Causes, complications, and successful interventions

By: Dr. Pradeep Moonot

Ankle sprains are a common injury that can affect individuals of all ages, often occurring during physical activities or due to accidents. While many cases can be effectively treated with conservative measures, there are instances where recurrent sprains can lead to complications, such as ankle instability, arthritis, and, ultimately, irreversible damage.

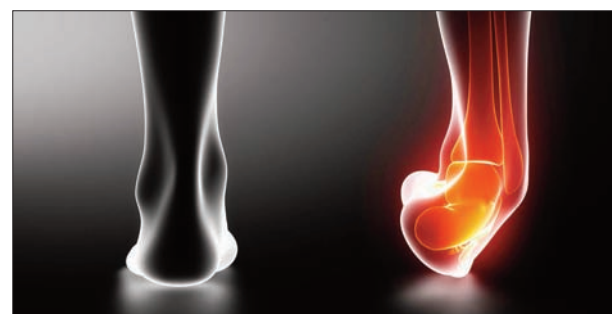
**The Anatomy of Ankle Sprains:**

Ankle sprains typically occur when the ligaments supporting the ankle are stretched or torn, causing pain, swelling, and difficulty in walking. Immediate treatment, including rest, ice, compression, and elevation (R.I.C.E.), is crucial to reduce inflammation and promote healing.

However, in some cases, despite proper initial care, individuals may experience repetitive ankle sprains, leading to more severe consequences.

**Complications and Recurrences:**

One significant complication



associated with recurrent ankle sprains is ankle instability. This condition arises when the ligaments fail to heal adequately, causing persistent looseness in the joint. Over time, untreated ankle instability can contribute to the development of arthritis, a degenerative joint disease that can result in pain, stiffness, and loss of joint function.

Consider the case of a 25-year-old patient who, despite receiving conservative treatment for repetitive ankle sprains, found no relief. The persistent instability and discomfort led the patient to seek specialized care.

After a thorough examination, it was determined that the ligaments were not healing

properly. The patient underwent a successful ligament repair procedure, addressing the underlying issue and preventing further damage. This case underscores the importance of early intervention when conservative measures prove insufficient.

On the other hand, a 42-year-old individual experienced an ankle sprain and sought immediate medical attention. Following a thorough assessment, the patient underwent a six-month course of physiotherapy to strengthen the ankle and improve joint stability.

Fortunately, this conservative approach proved effective, and the patient experienced a complete recovery without the

need for surgery. This case highlights the significance of prompt and appropriate initial management in preventing complications.

**Preventing Ankle Sprains and Complications:**

While some ankle sprains may be inevitable, there are steps individuals can take to reduce the risk of recurrence and associated complications. Engaging in regular strength and flexibility exercises, wearing appropriate footwear, and seeking prompt medical attention for any ankle injury are key preventive measures.

**Importance of Rehabilitation:**

It is crucial to emphasize that not every ankle sprain necessitates surgical intervention, as demonstrated by the second case study of the 42-year-old individual who successfully recovered without undergoing surgery.

Conservative approaches, such as physiotherapy, can be remarkably effective in strengthening the affected ligaments, improving joint stability, and promoting a full recovery. The decision to pur-

sue surgical or non-surgical treatment depends on the severity of the injury, the individual's overall health, and the response to initial management.

A comprehensive evaluation by a specialist is imperative to determine the most appropriate course of action, ensuring that patients receive tailored care that aligns with the specific nature of their ankle sprain.

By recognizing the spectrum of treatment options, we can better cater to the diverse needs of patients and optimize outcomes in the management of ankle sprains.

Understanding the potential complications of ankle sprains, such as instability and arthritis, emphasizes the importance of early and tailored intervention. Each case is unique, and treatment approaches should be personalized to the individual's needs.

By addressing ankle injuries promptly and effectively, we can minimize the risk of long-term complications and improve the overall quality of life for those affected. (The author is a Knee, Foot, and Ankle Specialist MKFAC, Mumbai)

## Shifting image of cannabis: Balancing societal acceptance with the growing concerns of addiction

By: Dr. Ratnarakshit Ingole

In recent times, our society has witnessed a perceptible shift in attitudes towards cannabis, a plant deeply rooted in cultural history. Traditionally, cannabis, often referred to as ganja or bhang, has held a complex position, being both celebrated in certain cultural and religious contexts and prohibited under the law. However, as perceptions evolve, concerns arise about the potential negative consequences of increased acceptance, particularly the risk of addiction.

**1. Normalization and Perceived Harmlessness**

As societal norms around cannabis become more lenient, there is a risk of normalization, with individuals perceiving cannabis use as harmless or even socially acceptable. This perception can contribute to increased experimentation, especially among younger demographics.

**2. Vulnerable Demographics**

Younger individuals may be more susceptible to the changing societal attitude towards cannabis. The developing adolescent brain is particularly vulnerable, and early exposure to cannabis is associated with an increased risk of dependency. The acceptance of cannabis in society may inadvertently expose more individuals to these risks.

**3. Addiction Risks**

While not everyone who uses cannabis becomes addicted, there is a subset of individuals who are more susceptible to developing dependency. The relaxing of societal norms around cannabis may contribute to increased usage among those prone to addiction, leading to dependence and potential negative health outcomes.

medicinal or industrial use, while others maintain stringent prohibitions.

**Concerns of Increased Acceptance:**

While the evolving acceptance of cannabis may align with a more progressive approach to drug policies, it also raises concerns about potential negative consequences, particularly the risk of addiction.

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**Erosion of Taboos**

Traditionally regarded as taboo in Indian society, cannabis is now infiltrating the upper echelons, eroding legal boundaries. The normalization of cannabis within affluent families not only defies historical norms but also raises serious concerns about the consequences of this shift in attitude.

**Drug-Induced Psychosis**

One of the most alarming consequences of cannabis dependence among the youth is the heightened risk of drug-induced psychosis. Cannabis, with its psychoactive properties, can induce hallucinations, delusions, and impaired cognitive function in susceptible individuals. The blurred line between recreational use and dependency intensifies the potential for psychosis, unravelling the very fabric of mental well-being.

The journey from youth attraction to cannabis, rooted in its cultural significance, demands a careful examination of the associated risks. As recreational use blurs into dependency, and the spectre of drug-induced psychosis looms, a collective effort is needed to foster awareness, dispel misconceptions, and provide targeted support.

By navigating this complex intersection with sensitivity and informed action, society can guide its youth towards choices that safeguard mental well-being, recognizing the shadow that lurks beneath the allure of cannabis. (The author is a Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Tulasi Healthcare)

## Recognizing the signs: When social drinking crosses the line into alcohol dependence

By: Dr. Gorav Gupta

Social drinking is becoming a common and widely accepted practice in our culture, often serving as a means of relaxation, celebration, or socializing. While moderate alcohol consumption is generally considered safe for most adults, it's important to be aware of when social drinking may evolve into a more serious issue like alcohol dependence.

**Recognizing the signs of alcohol dependence early on is crucial for taking proactive steps towards a healthier lifestyle:**

**1. Increased Tolerance:**

One of the early warning signs that social drinking might be turning into alcohol dependence is an increased tolerance to alcohol. If you find yourself needing more drinks than before to achieve the desired effect, it could indicate a developing dependence. The body adapts to the presence of alcohol, requiring larger amounts to produce the same level of intoxication.

**2. Frequent Cravings:**

Craving alcohol, especially during non-social situations, is another sign of potential dependence. If thoughts about having a drink become persistent and difficult to ignore, it may indicate a psychological reliance on alcohol to cope with stress, anxiety, or other emotions.

**3. Loss of Control:**

Loss of control over your drinking behaviour is a key red flag. If you find it challenging to limit the amount you consume or have difficulty stopping once you start, it may signify a shift from social drinking to dependence. Loss of control can contribute to risky behaviours, impaired judgment, and negative consequences.

**4. Withdrawal Symptoms:**

Experiencing withdrawal symptoms when not drinking is a clear indicator of alcohol dependence. These symptoms can include irritability, anxiety, shakiness, sweating, and even nausea. The presence of withdrawal symptoms suggests that the body has become physically dependent on alcohol.

**5. Neglecting Responsibilities:**

Alcohol dependence often leads to neglecting personal and professional responsibilities. If you consistently prioritize drinking over work, family, or other obligations, it may be a sign that alcohol is exerting a significant influence on your life.

**6. Continued Drinking Despite Negative Consequences:**

Persisting in drinking despite experiencing negative consequences is a classic sign of alcohol dependence. This might include strained relationships, health problems, legal issues, or job-related troubles.

The inability to cut back on drinking, even when fully aware of these negative outcomes, is a strong indicator that the line between social drinking and dependence has been crossed.

Recognizing the signs that social drinking is transforming into alcohol dependence is crucial for early intervention. If you or someone you know is exhibiting these signs, seeking professional help and support is essential. Whether through therapy, counselling, or support groups.

Addressing alcohol dependence early on can lead to successful recovery and a healthier, more balanced life. It's important to remember that help is available, and taking that first step towards acknowledging the issue is a crucial part of the journey towards recovery. (The author is a Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Founder & Director of Tulasi Healthcare)

# Trump is joined by South Carolina leaders at New Hampshire rally as he tries to undercut Haley

## 'Almost every politician from South Carolina's endorsing me'

MANCHESTER (US), Jan 21: Donald Trump surrounded himself with leaders from Nikki Haley's home state in a show of strength ahead of Tuesday's New Hampshire primary.

Trump was joined at a rally at the NHU Arena in Manchester Saturday night by South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, the state's lieutenant governor and a slew of other senior officials, including the state's attorney general, treasurer and House speaker. The statewide officials, along with U.S. Reps. Joe Wilson, William Timmons and Russell Fry, appeared on stage with Trump.

"Almost every politician from South Carolina's endorsing me," Trump declared.

The South Carolinians urged the voters to carry Trump to a win in New Hampshire before the contest moves to their state and its decisive early contest set for next month.

"If you do that and you win by a big margin here, we'll finish the job in South Carolina," said Murrell Smith, the speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives. The appearances are yet another



blow from South Carolina against Haley, who is hoping her appeal among independent and unaffiliated voters will propel her to a strong enough finish in New Hampshire to turn the race into a two-person contest against Trump.

It comes a day after Trump received the endorsement of South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, who joined him at a rally in Concord. Scott dropped his own bid for the Republican nomination in November. A dozen years ago, Haley, then serving as governor of their state, elevated Scott from the House by appointing him as senator, making

him one of the nation's most prominent Black Republicans.

McMaster and other top officials had already endorsed Trump. Haley has a famously fractious relationship with many of her state's Republican power brokers even as she was twice elected governor — defeating McMaster in the GOP primary the first time.

Her response on Saturday made clear she hadn't forgotten that rivalry. "I'm sorry, is that the person I ran against for governor and beat?" she said. "Just checking."

Haley campaign manager Betsy

Ankney also brushed off the appearances at an event hosted by Bloomberg News, insisting endorsements had "never been Nikki's game."

Trump on Saturday repeatedly railed against Haley and New Hampshire's voting laws, which allow unaffiliated voters to participate in either the Republican or Democratic primary. The state's more moderate electorate is expected to make the contest much closer than it was in leadoff Iowa.

"Don't listen to polls. Get out and vote. We need a big big win against these terrible people," Trump said. Haley, meanwhile, highlighted on Saturday a gaffe Trump made at his rally the night before.

Trump repeatedly suggested Haley had been in charge of keeping the Capitol secure on Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of Trump supporters stormed the building to try to stop his election loss from being certified. Haley was not at the Capitol that day. And Trump has consistently downplayed his administration's failure to keep the Capitol safe or his delay in trying to call off the rioters. (AP)

# Imran Khan warns of further instability in Pakistan in absence of fair polls

ISLAMABAD, Jan 21: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has sought a level playing field for his party in the run-up to the February 8 general elections, saying a lack of fairness in conducting polls would lead to further "instability and uncertainty".

The remarks by Khan, 71, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, came during an informal media interaction at the Adiala Jail on Saturday.

Internet users faced major interruptions during the virtual event. The cricketer-turned-politician claimed that the PTI is facing obstacles in conducting its election campaign, with restrictions preventing the party from holding public gatherings.

He said the PTI candidates "are being harassed and detained" by the authorities to stop them from contesting elections and warned that if fair polls were not conducted then it would lead to further "instability and uncertainty", the Dawn newspaper reported.

Khan said the establishment could not "dismantle the party since it has roots in the masses".

He also warned "turncoats" that their politics would end if they parted ways with the PTI.

Khan also claimed that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)



deliberately delayed the matter related to the PTI's intra-party elections to take "a stern and sudden action" to deprive the political party of its electoral symbol.

Pakistan's Supreme Court on January 13 stripped the PTI of its iconic "bat" election symbol, a move after which those contesting in elections from the party will have to fight as independent candidates.

This ruling comes after a continued legal tussle between the ECP and PTI over the electoral symbol and rejection of intra-party polls. In a reference to attempts by the presidency to bring down the political temperature, Khan said that President Arif Alvi had made efforts to mediate but to no avail.

Speaking about his rival Nawaz Sharif, the PTI founder said that the country would suffer "irreparable loss" if attempts were made to impose an "absconder" on the country.

Khan said that Sharif cancelled his Layyah rally because his party

did not have the strength to organise a power show.

He claimed that the PTI would hold the "biggest ever" gathering even if he was released from jail only a couple of days before the elections.

"Set me free for just three days before the election and allow me to hold only one public gathering, and everyone will see what we can achieve," The Express Tribune quoted Khan as saying.

Talking about his cases in courts, he said despite the disposal of his plea by the Lahore High Court on the rejection of nomination papers, the order on the matter was not released.

Imran also raised concerns about the selective application of justice, pointing to his disqualification while Sharif was cleared of his conviction. He questioned the delays in hearing appeals against his disqualification, emphasising the perceived lack of democracy in the country.

He said that another petition filed by him against violations of human rights was also pending before the Supreme Court for a long time.

Khan claimed that there was no rule of law in the country but still, he would not take the law into his own hands, as he was a politician and would "play till the last ball". (PTI)

# North Korea stresses alignment with Russia against US and says Putin could visit at an 'early date'

SEOUL, Jan 21: North Korea said Sunday it has agreed to further strategic and tactical cooperation with Russia to establish a "new multi-polarised international order," as the two countries work to build a united front in the face of their separate, intensifying tensions with the United States.

In describing North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui's meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and foreign minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow last week, the North's Foreign Ministry said Putin also reaffirmed his willingness to visit Pyongyang and said that could come at an "early date."

North Korea has been actively strengthening its ties with Russia, highlighted by leader Kim Jong Un's September visit to Russia for a summit with Putin. Kim is trying to break out of diplomatic isolation and strengthen his footing as he navigates a deepening nuclear standoff with Washington, Seoul and Tokyo.

In a separate statement on Sunday, the North's Foreign Ministry condemned the U.N. Security Council for calling an emergency meeting over the country's latest ballistic test, which state media described as a new intermediate-range solid-fuel missile tipped with a hypersonic warhead. The ministry said the test-firing on Jan. 14 was among the country's regular activities to improve its defense capabilities and that it didn't pose a threat to its neighbors.

South Korea on Thursday urged the Security Council "to break the silence" over North Korea's escalating missile tests and threats. Russia and China, both permanent members of the council, have blocked U.S.-led efforts to increase sanctions on North Korea over its recent weapons tests, underscoring a divide deepened over Russia's war on Ukraine.

The alignment between Pyongyang and Moscow has raised international concerns about alleged arms cooperation, in which the North provides Russia with munitions



to help prolong its fighting in Ukraine, possibly in exchange for badly needed economic aid and military assistance to help upgrade Kim's forces. Both Pyongyang and Russia have denied accusations by Washington and Seoul about North Korean arms transfers to Russia.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry, in comments published by state media, said Choe and the Russian officials in their meetings expressed a "strong will to further strengthen strategic and tactical cooperation in defending the core interests of the two countries and establishing a new multi-polarized international order."

Russia expressed "deep thanks" to North Korea for its "full support" over its war on Ukraine, the North Korean ministry said. It said Choe and the Russian officials expressed "serious concern" over the United States' expanding military cooperation with its Asian allies that they blamed for worsening tensions in the region and threatening North Korea's sovereignty and security interests. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years, after Kim in recent months used Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a distraction to ramp up his weapons tests and military demonstrations. The United States, South Korea and Japan have responded by strengthening their com-

bined military exercises, which Kim portrays as invasion rehearsals, and sharpening their deterrence plans built around nuclear-capable U.S. assets.

In the latest tit-for-tat, North Korea on Friday said it conducted a test of a purported nuclear-capable underwater attack drone in response to a combined naval exercise by the United States, South Korea and Japan last week, as it continued to blame its rivals for tensions in the region.

Choe's visit to Moscow came as Kim continues to use domestic political events to issue provocative threats of nuclear conflict.

At Pyongyang's rubber-stamp parliament last week, Kim declared that North Korea is abandoning its long-standing goal of a peaceful unification with war-divided rival South Korea and ordered the rewriting of the North's constitution to cement the South as its most hostile foreign adversary. He accused South Korea of acting as "top-class stooges" of the Americans and repeated a threat that he would use his nukes to annihilate the South if provoked.

Analysts say North Korea could be aiming to diminish South Korea's voice in the regional nuclear standoff and eventually force direct dealings with Washington as it looks to cement its status as a nuclear weapons state. (AP)

# Officials report at least 25 dead in shelling of a market in Russian-occupied Ukraine

KYIV, Jan 21: At least 25 people were killed on Sunday by shelling at a market on the outskirts of the city of Donetsk in Russian-occupied Ukraine, local officials reported on Sunday.

A further 20 people were injured in the strike on the suburb of Tekstilshchik, including two children, said Denis Pushilin, head of the Russian-installed authorities in Donetsk. He said that the shells had been fired by the Ukrainian military.

Kyiv has not commented on the event and the claims could not be independently verified by The Associated Press.

Emergency services continue to work on the scene, Pushilin said. Also Sunday, fire broke out at a chemical transport terminal at Russia's Ust-Luga port following two explosions, regional officials said. Local media reported that the port had been attacked by Ukrainian drones, causing a gas tank to explode.

The blaze was at a site run by Russia's second-largest natural gas producer, Novatek, 165 kilometers southwest of St. Petersburg.

In a press statement to Russian media outlet RBC, the company said that the fire was the result of an "external influence". It also said that it had paused operations at the port.

Yuri Zapalatsky, the head of Russia's Kingisepp district, where the port is based, said in a statement that there were no casualties, but that the area had been placed on high alert.

News outlet Fontanka reported that two drones had been detected flying towards St Petersburg on Sunday morning, but that they were redirected towards the Kingisepp district. The Associated Press could not independently verify the reports.

The Russian Ministry of Defence did not report any drone activity in the Kingisepp area in its daily briefing. It said that four Ukrainian drones had been downed in Russia's Smolensk region, and that two more had been shot down in the Oryol and Tula regions.

Russian officials previously confirmed that a Ukrainian drone had been downed on the outskirts of St. Petersburg on Thursday. (AP)

# Vivek Ramaswamy says 'lot of ways to drive change in the US'



WASHINGTON, Jan 21: Indian-origin former US presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has declined to say what job he would want if former president Donald Trump made it back into the White House but insisted that there are a lot of ways to drive change in this country.

Ramaswamy earlier this week announced that he was leaving the Republican presidential race and endorsing Trump.

In an interview with Fox News on Friday about a possible job in a second Trump administration, the 38-year-old biotech entrepreneur said: "There are a lot of ways to drive change in this country, inside and outside government."

"For the last few years, I've been doing it through the market," The Hill quoted Ramaswamy as saying.

Ramaswamy, who campaigned as the most Trump-friendly, "America first" alternative in the Republican field, just one day after ending his presidential campaign gave a passionate speech and asked voters to vote for Trump.

"We are in the middle of a war in this country," Ramaswamy said, portraying a country divided between "those of us who love the United States of America and a

fringe minority who hates this country and what we stand for."

"And right now we need a commander in chief who will lead us to victory," he said.

"Trump, who had accused him of "deceitful campaign tricks" and not being "MAGA", soon returned the favour by praising Ramaswamy.

Make America Great Again or MAGA is an American political slogan and movement popularised by Trump during his successful 2016 presidential campaign and is used to refer to his political base.

"I've been a friend of his even though we were competing against each other," Trump said. "But I was a friend of his and we got along and ... I kept saying, 'Why is he running? He keeps calling me a great president.' But he's a fantastic guy, a very smart guy. He's got some tremendous ideas."

"He's going to be working with us for a long time," Trump said Tuesday after one day in the crowd chanted "VP, VP, VP".

The race for the Republican presidential nomination makes its next stop in New Hampshire, where Haley is 11.4 points behind Trump, according to a poll average from Decision Desk HQ/The Hill. (PTI)

# Russian private jet carrying six people believed to have crashed in Afghanistan, officials say

ISLAMABAD, Jan 21: A Russian private jet carrying six people is believed to have crashed in a remote area of rural Afghanistan, authorities said Sunday.

The plane had been operating as a charter ambulance flight on a route from Gaya, India, to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, onward to Zhukovsky International Airport in Moscow.

The crash happened Saturday in a mountainous area near Zebak district in Badakhshan province, regional spokesman Zabihullah Amiri said, adding that a rescue team had been dispatched to the area. Zebak is some 250 kilometers (155 miles) northeast of Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, a rural, mountainous area, home to only several thousand people.

Badakhshan police chief's office also confirmed the report of the crash in a statement.

In Moscow, Russian civil aviation authorities said a Dassault Falcon 10 went missing with four crew members and two passengers. The Russian-registered aircraft "stopped communicating and disappeared from radar screens," authorities said. It described the flight as starting from Thailand's U-Tapao-Rayong-Pattaya International Airport.

Russian officials said the plane belongs to Athletic Group LLC and a private individual. The Associated Press could not immediately reach its owners. They also said the Falcon 10 involved in the crash had been built in 1978.

A separate Taliban statement from Abdul Wahid Rayan, a spokesman for the Taliban's Information and Culture Ministry, described the plane as "belonging to a Moroccan company." Indian civil aviation officials similarly described the aircraft as Moroccan-registered. The



discrepancy could not be immediately reconciled.

Rayan blamed an "engine problem" for the crash, without elaborating.

Tracking data from FlightRadar24 for the aircraft, analysed by the AP, showed the aircraft's last position just south of the city of Peshawar, Pakistan, at around 1330 GMT Saturday.

International carriers have largely avoided Afghanistan since the Taliban's 2021 takeover of the country. Those that briefly fly over rush through Afghan airspace for only a few minutes while over the sparsely populated Wakhan Corridor in Badakhshan province, a narrow panhandle that juts out of the east of the country between Tajikistan and Pakistan, before continuing their way.

Typically, aircraft heading toward the corridor make a sharp turn north around

Peshawar and follow the Pakistani border before briefly entering Afghanistan. Zebak is just near the start of the Wakhan Corridor.

Though landlocked, Afghanistan's position in central Asia means it sits along the most direct routes for those traveling from India to Europe and America. After the Taliban came to power, civil aviation simply stopped, as ground controllers no longer managed the airspace. Fears about anti-aircraft fire, particularly after the 2014 shootdown of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine, saw authorities around the world order their commercial airliners out.

While nations have slowly eased those restrictions, fears persist about flying through the country. Two Emirati carriers recently resumed commercial flights to Kabul. (AP)

# Indonesia's Mount Merapi unleashes lava as other volcanoes flare up, forcing thousands to evacuate

## Merapi is the most active out of more than 120 volcanoes across the country

YOGYAKARTA (INDONESIA), Jan 21: Indonesia's Mount Merapi erupted on Sunday, spreading searing gas clouds and avalanches of lava down its slopes as other active volcanoes flared up across the country, forcing the evacuation of thousands. On the densely populated island of Java, Merapi unleashed clouds of hot ash and a mixture of rock, and lava that travelled up to 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) down its slopes, said Agus Budi Santoso, the head of Indonesia's Geological Disaster Technology Research and Development Centre.

A column of hot clouds blasted 100 metres (about 109 yards) into the air as ash blanketed several villages without casualties, he added.

Merapi is the most active out of more than 120 volcanoes across the country. Sunday's eruption is the latest since authorities raised its alert level to the second-highest in November 2020 after sensors picked up increasing activity.

Residents living on the slopes were advised to stay 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) away from the crater's mouth and be aware of possible threats from flowing lava.

In 2010, an eruption killed 347 people and displaced 20,000 villagers. The 2,968-metre (9,737-foot) mountain is about 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Yogyakarta, an ancient centre of Javanese culture and the seat of royal dynasties going back centuries. About a quarter million people live within 10 kilometers (6 miles) of the volcano.

Several other active volcanoes also



blew up this weekend, prompting authorities to evacuate thousands of residents, said Indonesia's Centre for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation in a statement released on social media platform X, formerly Twitter. No casualties were reported, it said. The agency said Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki in East Nusa Tenggara province spewed hot clouds as high as 700 metres (2,300 feet) into the air on Sunday, as more than 6,500 people fled to shelters.

Also on Sunday, Mount Marapi in West Sumatra province erupted again, its third biggest flare-up this month, albeit without discharging lava. About 500 residents living near it were evacuated. Last

month, it erupted, killing 23 climbers and injuring several others. Mount Semeru in East Java province released searing gas clouds and rivers of lava on Saturday, as did Mount Ibu on Halmahera island in North Maluku province which shot a column of hot ashes as high as 1,300 metres (4,265 feet) into the air.

In December 2021, Mount Semeru, the highest volcano on Java island, erupted, leaving 48 people dead and 36 missing.

Indonesia, an archipelago of 270 million people, is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity because it sits along the "Ring of Fire", a horseshoe-shaped series of seismic fault lines around the Pacific Ocean. (AP)

# 'State benefited among the northeastern states as it received highways, I-way, railway and airway' Tripura govt working to ensure that last mile people get justice: CM

**AGARTALA, Jan 21:** The Tripura government is working to ensure that even the last mile people get justice, chief minister Manik Saha said on Sunday.

The CM said this while speaking at the statehood day programme at Rabindra Bhawan here.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been trying to run the country like 'Ram Rajya' where even the last mile people get justice and find scope to express their views. We are also trying to follow him to run the state", he said.

Saha said the government has already launched a good governance programme (Sushan programme) to reach out to the people with central and state government welfare schemes to ensure that no one is left out.

Calling upon the people to strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said that boosting the PM's hands means strengthening the country and the states.

Saha claimed that the prime minister is generous when it comes to the development of the Northeast region, particularly Tripura. "Tripura is the most benefited state among



the northeastern states as it received highways, I-way, railway and airway. Now, the state has national highways covering a distance of 923 km and four more national

highways of 229 km are in the pipeline", the CM said.

Saha said the Indo-Bangla railway connectivity is about to kick start after making

some minor works. "Tripura (Sabroom) will be the gateway to Southeast Asian nations once Maitri Setu is made operational as it will give direct access to Bangladesh's Chittagong sea port", he said.

"It was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who gave broad-gauge railway facility to Sabroom, the state's southern-most border with Bangladesh without any movement or demand. Now, many express trains are running up to Agartala boosting the state's rail connectivity", he said.

Taking a dig at the Left regime without naming, the chief minister said the Manikya dynasty had done wonders for the people of the northeastern state during their rule but their contribution was suppressed for unknown reasons.

"The Manikya dynasty had done good for their prajans during their rule but their contribution was not evaluated properly for unknown reasons. It was the BJP who gave due recognition to the Manikya dynasty for the state's development after it came to power in 2018 uprooting the 25-year (Communist) rule", he said. (PTI)

## Can't stop Centre from fencing India-Myanmar border: Mizoram CM



**AIZAWL, Jan 21:** Mizoram chief minister Lalduhoma recently stated that said his government does not have the authority to stop the Centre from fencing the India-Myanmar border and scrapping the Free Movement Regime (FMR), but maintained that he was opposed to it.

Addressing a press conference hours after Union home minister Amit Shah made the announcement in Guwahati, he said the border with Myanmar in Mizoram was "imposed" by the British, and the Mizo people living on the two sides of it do not accept it.

"If the Centre goes ahead with its plan to fence the India-Myanmar border and scrap the FMR, we have no authority and we cannot stop it," he said.

Lalduhoma said that his govern-

ment and different organisations in the state were opposed to the fencing of the border and scrapping of the FMR as Mizos share ethnic ties with the people of the Chin community in Myanmar.

He said that Mizos living in different parts of the world "dream of reunification", and fencing the present border will amount to approval of the boundary "imposed" by the British.

The chief minister said that he had discussed the matter with PM Narendra Modi and the Union home minister during his visit to Delhi recently, and they did not oppose his appeal regarding it.

The Free Movement Regime allows people living on both sides of the border to travel 16 km into each other's territory without a visa.

He said the idea of scrapping the

FMR mainly stemmed from cross-border trafficking, and that he also believes that the smuggling of drugs and other contrabands has increased due to it.

Shah, while addressing a programme in Guwahati, said the Centre will end the free movement of people at the India-Myanmar border, and fence it completely so that it can be protected like the country's boundary with Bangladesh.

"The Narendra Modi government has decided that the India-Myanmar border, which is open, will be protected by barbed fencing. The entire border will have barbed fencing like what we have at the India-Bangladesh border," he said.

"The Indian government is re-thinking the free movement agreement with Myanmar. Now, the Government of India is going to stop this facility," he added.

More than 31,000 people from Myanmar, mostly from the Chin state, have taken refuge in Mizoram following the military coup in the neighbouring country in February 2021. Four Indian states -- Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, share a 1,643-km-long border with Myanmar. Mizoram has a border of 510 km with Myanmar.

Mizoram's largest civil society organisation Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) and the state's apex students' body Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) have also voiced their opposition to the Centre's decision. (PTI)

## 38 people surrender air guns in Arunachal's Lohit



**ITANAGAR, Jan 21:** As many as 38 people surrendered their air guns during an event organised at Tezu, the district headquarters town of Lohit district in Arunachal Pradesh.

The air gun surrender campaign is an initiative of the state's environment and forest department to dissuade wildlife hunting and create awareness of the ill effects of killing wildlife.

Speaking on the occasion, state environment and forest minister Mama Natung, who spearheaded the abhiyan, emphasised on the importance of biodiversity protection in Arunachal Pradesh, home to one of the largest forest covers.

Natung also voiced concern over the rapid decline of wildlife due to unchecked hunting, urging active public participation and awareness campaigns to instil the idea of biodiversity protection.

The initiative got a major boost when it featured in the 84th edition

of the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 26, 2021, where the PM appreciated the effort of the state government.

The airgun surrender initiative had garnered international recognition, with UNESCO recently acknowledging the efforts of the Arunachal Pradesh government in the conservation of wildlife.

Under this initiative, people were invited to voluntarily surrender their air guns and licensed guns to stop the use of these guns to kill birds and other wild animals.

The programme was officially launched on March 17, 2021, at Lumdung in East Kameng district wherein 46 air guns were surrendered and Lumdung was declared the first air gun-free village of the state.

So far, more than 2,400 air guns and 9 licensed guns have been surrendered by the people of the state. (PTI)

## NDPP clarifies on party MP's remark on Art 371 (A)

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIMAPUR, Jan 21:** The ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) distanced itself from the remark made by its Lok Sabha MP Tokheho Yephomi "I wish the government of India do away with Article 371(A)" at a recent programme in Chumoukedima.

In a statement, issued by its media and communication committee on Saturday, the NDPP put on record that the statement of the MP is neither the view nor the opinion of the party or its leadership.

The party asserted that it stands firm in its commitment to protect the rights and privileges of the people of Nagaland by upholding and safeguarding all the provisions under Article 371(A) of the Constitution of India.

The NDPP further put on record that it is its considered opinion that at a time when the Indo-Naga political settlement is at its crucial stage, there should be no dilution to Article 371(A), but rather it should be further strengthened in order to ensure a more permanent protection of "our traditional customary practices along with safeguarding of our land and resources".

## 3 die as vehicle falls into gorge in Arunachal

**ITANAGAR, Jan 21:** At least three persons were killed when the vehicle in which they were travelling skidded off the road and fell into a gorge near Hawaii in Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district, police said on Sunday.

The incident happened about 5 km from Hawaii on the Hawaii-Chingwanti road on January 18, Anjaw SP Rike Kamsi told PTI over the phone. (PTI)

## RPF recovers smuggled goods worth ₹ 9.14

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Jan 21:** The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway has recovered contraband goods worth more than ₹ 9.14 lakhs during the period from January 15 to 18. RPF also apprehended six persons for alleged involvement in transportation of contraband goods during this period.

In an incident on January 18 RPF of Agartala jointly with GRP/Agartala conducted checking at Agartala Railway Station. During checking, they apprehended four persons and recovered 39 kgs of Ganja worth about ₹ 3.90 lakhs. Later, the recovered Ganja and the apprehended persons were handed over to OC/GRP/Agartala for further action.

In other incident on January 17, RPF of Kamakhya conducted checking in train No 15658

DN (Brahmaputra Mail) at Kamakhya railway station. During checking, they recovered 6 unclaimed bags containing 124 liquor bottles, valued about ₹ 26 thousand from the train. Later, the recovered liquor bottles were handed over to OC/GRP/ Kamakhya for necessary legal action.

Moreover, in different drives and checks conducted during the period, RPF of N F Railway also recovered 36.7 kgs of Ganja worth ₹ 3.67 lakhs, 625 bottles cough syrup worth ₹ 1.22 lakhs and 28 bottles liquor worth approx. ₹ 8960.00 from different trains and stations. One person was apprehended on January 15, 2024 for carrying Ganja and other on January 16, 2024 for illegal possession of liquor bottles during drive. Later, recovered contrabands along with apprehended persons were handed over to concerned department for further legal action.

## Tripura museum and cultural centre gets ₹ 6.38 crore

**AGARTALA, Jan 21:** The Tripura government has sanctioned ₹ 6.38 crore to expedite retrofitting works on century-old Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya State Museum and Cultural Centre, an official said on Sunday.

Around 30 per cent of retrofitting work on the heritage building has so far been completed while the remaining part is expected to be completed by next year.

The Pushpabati Palace which was built by Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya in 1917, was turned into a museum by the state government last year.

Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, who had close ties with the Tripura royal family, stayed in the palace in 1926.

"Tripura State Disaster Management Authority (TSDMA) has sanctioned ₹ 6.38 crore to undertake retrofitting works on Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya State Museum and Cultural Centre under state disaster mitigation fund to the Tourism department", Uttam Paul,



the executive engineer of the Tourism Department told PTI.

"Since the building has become fragile, it needs to undergo major retrofitting works as part of a re-vamping plan. The Raj Bhavan which was housed at the erstwhile Pushpabati Palace was relocated to a new location because of its vulnerability", he said.

According to Paul, the pace of retrofitting work on the heritage

building is tardy because of its unique nature of materials used in the building. "Around 30 per cent of work has been completed so far and one more year is required for the retrofitting work", he said.

Earlier, the state government sanctioned ₹ 40.13 crore for the development of the heritage structure of Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya Museum and Cultural Centre. The museum, to

be developed as a digital museum under the guidance of the National Council of Science Museums will showcase the rich heritage of all the Northeastern states, the fine arts of Southeast Asia, contemporary photography, and national as well as international archives.

"Once the retrofitting works are done, it will take only six months to turn the heritage structure into a digital museum...", he added. (PTI)

## APWWS expresses concern about polygamous practices in Arunachal

**ITANAGAR, Jan 21:** The Arunachal Pradesh Women's Welfare Society (APWWS) has expressed deep concern about the "surge in polygamous practices" in the state. In a letter to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi during his Arunachal leg of 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' here on Saturday, the women's body emphasised on the adverse impact of polygamous practices on the state's social fabric, highlighting the exploitation of women and the degradation of gender equality. The APWWS in the letter pointed out the concerning trend of using women as political tools, a matter against which the society has consistently advocated since its establishment in 1979.

The women's body in its letter highlighted a key point of contention regarding the withdrawal of the Arunachal Pradesh Monogamy Election Bill 2023 from the Assembly proceedings on September 6, last year.

"The bill, introduced by Congress MLA Ninong Ering aimed to make individuals with only one spouse eligible to run for elections. It sought crucial amendments to the Representation of People's Act, 1951, as well as the inclusion of the Panchayat Act, 1997, and the Municipal Act, 2007," the APWWS said in the letter. The APWWS pleaded with Gandhi to consider addressing polygamy-related issues under his leadership within the Congress party. It also urged active support for the eligibility of individuals with one spouse to run for elections as a significant step towards empowering and improving the status of women in Arunachal Pradesh. (PTI)

## Zero tolerance approach to drug trafficking: NSCN-IM

**DIMAPUR, Jan 21:** NSCN-IM stated that it stands committed to zero tolerance approach to drug trafficking. NSCN-IM then warned its members today that "severe penalty" will be given if they indulge in "illegal drug trade or drug trafficking". NSCN-IM also said that no members, "high or low" will be spared if they indulge in such activities.

"The illegal drug trade or drug trafficking is a serious crime, more so for the Naga national workers," a statement from the NSCN-IM said. NSCN-IM also said it would "henceforth" stands committed to zero tolerance approach to drug trafficking. "Any member(s) of NSCN found involved in illicit drug trafficking shall face severe penalties, sparing none, high or low," it sternly warned. (NNN)

### NAME CORRECTION

I, Rafiqul Islam do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the below mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my actual and correct name is Rafiqul Islam. That my name has been inadvertently recorded in my school documents as Md Rafiqul Islam in place of Rafiqul Islam. That both Rafiqul Islam and Md Rafiqul Islam are the same and one person. That this affidavit is required to be produced before the authority concerned as a piece of document to substantiate the above facts.

Sd/-  
Rafiqul Islam  
SO- Abul Hussain  
Vill- No. 1/2 Baraujhar  
PO- Jangalpara, PS- Dalgaoan  
Dist- Darrang (Assam)

### NAME CORRECTION

I, Abul Khayer do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the below mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my actual and correct name is Abul Khayer and my father's name is Talep Ali. That my name has been inadvertently recorded in my school documents as Md Abul Khayer and my father's name as Md Taleb Ali in place of Abul Khayer and Talep respectively. That both Abul Khayer and Md Abul Khayer are the same and one person and Talep Ali and Md Taleb Ali are the same and one person who is my father. That this affidavit is required to be produced before the authority concerned as a piece of document to substantiate the above facts.

Sd/-  
Abul Khayer  
SO- Talep Ali  
Vill- No. 1/2 Baraujhar  
PO- Galandi, PS- Dalgaoan  
Dist- Darrang (Assam)

### NAME CORRECTION

I, Mainul Hoque do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the below mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my actual and correct name is Mainul Hoque and my father's name is Gias Uddin Ahmed. That my name has been inadvertently recorded in my school documents as Md Mainul Hoque and my father's name as Md. Giasuddin Ahmed in place of Mainul Hoque and Gias Uddin Ahmed respectively. That both Mainul Hoque and Md Mainul Hoque are the same and one person and Gias Uddin Ahmed and Md Giasuddin Ahmed are the same and one person who is my father. That this affidavit is required to be produced before the authority concerned as a piece of document to substantiate the above facts.

Sd/-  
Mainul Hoque  
SO- Gias Uddin Ahmed  
Vill- No. 1/2 Baraujhar  
PO- Galandi, PS- Dalgaoan  
Dist- Darrang (Assam)

**KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL  
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY  
KAAC SECRETARIAT  
DIPHU - 782460  
No.KAAC/Accounts/Misc-Pt-III/2023-24/2  
Expression if Interest (EOI)**

Invitation for Expression of Interest of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council invites sealed Expression of Interest (EOI) for development, training and maintenance of the software package for Guide Management System from reputed National Software Development Vendors (SDV). The EOI Document containing the details of qualification criteria, submission requirement, brief objective & scope of work and evaluation criteria etc. can be collected from Department of Finance, Council Sector Sr. Cashier (C ) during working hours. Last date for submission of EOI is 6th February, 2024 upto 1400 hrs. Sealed envelope marked to the undersigned containing EOI and non-refundable fee of Rs 5000.00 by way of DD/Pay Order in favour of "Principal Secretary, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu", payable at Diphu may be submitted mentioning "EOI for Review/Appraisal of KAAC" on the top cover". Applicants meeting the qualification criteria may be invited for presentation / proposal before the selection committee of KAAC. Bid Document will be subsequently issued to the short listed applicants only.

Sd/-  
Principal Secretary,  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,  
Diphu

Memo.no. KAAC/Accounts/Misc-Pt-III/2023-24/2/38-A

## No adverse orders be passed on January 22 due to non-appearance of lawyers: SCBA chief

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Supreme Court Bar Association President Adish C Aggarwala on Sunday requested Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud that no adverse orders be passed due to non-appearance of lawyers in cases listed in the apex court on January 22, the day of the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

In a letter to the Chief Justice, Aggarwala said simultaneous ceremonies will take place in temples not only in India but throughout the world.

"I am writing this letter on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) to request your lordship to advise all benches of the Supreme Court not to pass any adverse orders due to non-appearance in any matter listed on January 22, 2024, in light of the 'pran pratishtha (consecration)' of Shree Ram Temple in Ayodhya," he said in his letter. The senior advocate said the celebrations will commence early in the morning on Monday and continue till late evening.

The letter stated, "Your lordship is undoubtedly aware of the significance of this celebration. Some of my Muslim brethren have also approached me to request your lordship to declare it a holiday. While acknowledging the importance of maintaining an adequate number of working days, we are specifically requesting that no adverse orders be passed in any case due to the absence of anyone -- lawyer or litigant."

He said, "I understand that many judges and senior law officers have been invited to Ayodhya, and they may also be participating in the prayers."

Aggarwala said he will also be attending the prayer ceremony in Ayodhya.

"The central government and most state governments (including the Kejriwal government of Delhi) have declared a half-day holiday to provide citizens with the opportunity to participate in this prayer ceremony," he said.

The consecration ceremony at the Ram temple will be held on Monday with the "pran pratishtha" of the idol of Ram Lalla in the temple. (PTI)

## Man held in Bihar for threatening to blow up Ram temple

**ARARIA, Jan 21:** A 21-year-old man has been arrested in Araria district of Bihar for calling up the police and threatening to "blow up" the Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22, a senior official said on Sunday.

Intekhab Alam, the caller, was arrested from his home at Balua Kaliyaganj in Palasi police station area late on Saturday. Superintendent of Police of Araria, Ashok Kumar Singh, said.

"The man had on January 19 dialled 112, the number on which citizens can seek emergency help. He claimed his name was Chhota Shakeel and that he was a close aide of Dawood Ibrahim," Singh told PTI. "Alam said over phone that he would blow up the Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22... he does not have a criminal record, but seems to be mentally unstable," the SP said.

Singh said "in view of the sensitivity of the issue", a case has been registered at Palasi police station. His mobile phone has also been seized by police.

The police officer said "as soon as the call was received, details were shared with the cyber cell. The mobile number from which he had made the call was found to be registered in the name of his father."

The consecration ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya is scheduled to be held on January 22. (PTI)

## Pixxel to launch six home-built hyper-spectral satellites from June

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Bengaluru-based space start-up Pixxel plans to launch a series of small, home-built satellites -- Fireflies -- from June that could have a finer look at the Earth with its five-metre resolution hyper-spectral imagery. Pixxel recently launched its satellite manufacturing unit -- Mega Pixxel -- in Bengaluru where it can assemble, integrate and test 40 satellites weighing 100 kilograms every year as the nascent company aims to take a leap in the space sector.

"If you are looking at 100-kilogramme micro-satellites which are able to do a whole lot of stuff in terms of actual commercial viability, we can do 20 of them at a single point in time. The turnaround time from getting them assembled to ship-to-launch is about six months. That makes it 40 every year," Awais Ahmed, founder and CEO of Pixxel, told PTI.

Ahmed said Pixxel aims to launch six 100-kilogramme satellites, named Fireflies, by June, and add another 12 next year to monitor in over 250 spectral

# 'Rammay' Ayodhya set for consecration ceremony, temple town decked up

**AYODHYA, Jan 21:** The much-awaited Ram temple consecration will be held here on Monday in a grand ceremony with Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending the rituals, following which the shrine will be opened for the public a day later.

The "Pran Pratishtha" ceremony will begin at 12.20 pm and is expected to end by 1 pm. The prime minister will then address a gathering of more than 7,000 people, including seers and prominent personalities, at the venue.

Lakhs of people are expected to watch the event live on TV and online platforms as BJP-ruled states and Odisha have declared a holiday while the central government has announced a half-day off. As authorities made final preparations in a decked-up Ayodhya, considered the birthplace of Lord Ram, temples across the country and abroad have announced special festivities to mark the occasion.

From Washington DC to Paris to Sydney, events have been planned in various parts of the world on January 22. These programmes are either being organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) or Hindu diaspora groups in 60 countries.

Fourteen couples from various parts of India will be the "yajmans" (hosts) for the "Pran Pratishtha".

The rituals ahead of the consecra-

tion ceremony began on January 16, and according to temple trust general secretary Champat Rai, these will end on January 21.

The new 51-inch idol of Ram Lalla, sculpted by Mysuru-based Arun Yogiraj, was placed in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple on Thursday afternoon. The first image of the new idol with eyes covered with a cloth was released on Friday.

Rai has said the entry into the temple will be from the east side and exit from the south side. The entire temple superstructure will eventually be three-storeyed -- G+2. Visitors will climb 32 steps from the eastern side to reach the main temple.

The temple complex, built in the traditional Nagara style, will be 380 feet long (east-west direction), 250 feet wide and 161 feet high. Each floor of the temple will be 20 feet high and have a total of 392 pillars and 44 gates. The government is pulling out all stops to prepare for the big day with police personnel deployed across the city as part of a multi-layered security plan.

Movable barriers with barbed wires attached to them can be spotted at every prominent crossroad in the temple city, as police use them to regulate traffic, especially during VVIP movements.



Multiple NDRF teams trained to tackle chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks, drowning incidents and disasters like earthquakes have been deployed.

The administration has made arrangements to deal with any health emergency, especially in view of the biting cold. Beds have been reserved at city-based and district hospitals and the medical college here. Specialists from AIIMS have provided focused emergency response training to doctors at healthcare institutions.

The grand Ram temple has been decorated with "rich stocks" of flowers and special lights and the entire city is drenched in religious fervour or as is the common refrain among the

locals, "Ayodhya Rammay ho raha hai".

Streetlights on flyovers have been decorated with artworks depicting Lord Ram, including cutouts of bow and arrow, and ornamental lamp posts carry designs themed on the traditional "Ramanandi tilak".

"Shubh Ghadi Aayi", "Tiyar hai Ayodhya dham, virajenge Shree Ram" and "Ram fir lautenge", "Ayodhya me Ram rajya" are among the slogans on posters and hoardings splashed across the city.

Various verses from the Ramayana are also printed on posters at prominent places like the Ram Marg, the Saryu River bank and Lata Mangeshkar Chowk.

Ramlilas, Bhagwat Kathas, Bhajan sandhyas and cultural programmes are going on at different places here. The banks of the Saryu River are also decked up where thousands flock every evening for the "aarti".

On January 22, public sector banks, insurance companies, financial institutions and regional rural banks across the country will also remain closed for half the day. Stock exchanges NSE and BSE have also announced a trading holiday.

While more than 7,000 people are in the long list of invitees, the select list features 506 A-listers.

Those attending the "Pran Pratishtha" also include people linked to the agitation for the temple at the Ram Janmabhoomi.

Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan, business tycoons Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani, and sporting icon Sachin Tendulkar are among the prominent people to be invited. Almost all opposition leaders invited to the ceremony have declined to attend the ceremony, with the Congress calling it a BJP-RSS event.

But there are others, not on the list, who are heading to Ayodhya in their unique ways -- walking, cycling and even skating.

Covering long distances amid bone-chilling cold, people from all

over the country and cutting across religions are flocking to the temple town driven by their faith in Lord Ram and carried through by the overwhelming religious mood in the country.

From Lord Ram image-adorned bangles to 56 varieties of "petha" and from traditional items like a 500-kg iron-copper "nagada" and the "Onavilla" bow to offerings of rice, ladoos and vegetables, a diverse array of gifts are flooding in from across the country. Also featured in the list of gifts for the January 22 event are special perfumes from Kannauj, 500 kg "kumkum" leaves from Amravati, grains collected at a Ram temple in Delhi, flowers from Bhopal and papers with Lord Ram written 4.31 crore times from Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara.

The Ram temple management committee has received other offerings such as a 108-foot incense stick, a 2,100-kg bell, a giant lamp weighing 1,100 kg, gold footwear, a 100-foot-high lock and key and a clock that simultaneously denotes time in eight countries, among others.

More than 3,000 gifts from Sita's birthplace in Nepal's Janakpur have also arrived. A Sri Lankan delegation brought a special gift from the Ashok Vatika, a garden mentioned in the Ramayana. (PTI)

## Isolated incidents of corruption in coop sector due to some people's greed: Kerala CM

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Jan 21:** At a time when various cooperative sector banks in the state are facing allegations of irregularities and frauds, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday said such corrupt acts were isolated and committed by those who are "greedy". Vijayan also said that a bad mark on one establishment in the cooperative sector may erode people's confidence in the entire sector and therefore, it is necessary to ensure that does not happen.

The chief minister said that while the government is clear that those who engage in corrupt practices do not go unpunished, it also needs to safeguard the cooperative sector enterprises and ensure public trust in them is not eroded.

"For that, requisite steps are being taken as and when necessary," he said while speaking at the 9th Cooperative Congress at Kanakakunnu here.

He said that while the isolated incidents of irregularities and corrupt prac-

tices were inevitable as the cooperative sector grew rapidly in the state, it also resulted in some becoming envious of the unprecedented growth.

Vijayan further said that while agencies from outside the state were welcome to probe such incidents of irregularities, it should be done properly.

In an apparent reference to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe into the multi-crore fraud in the Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank, the chief minister said that the investigative agency turned the prime accused into an "approver" in order to obtain material from him for political gains. Such acts should be avoided, he said.

This remarks by the chief minister comes less than a week after the ED told the Kerala High Court that irregularities in the multi-crore scam that hit Karuvannur cooperative bank were committed at the behest of the party leaders of the ruling CPI(M) in the

state. The ED, which is investigating the fraud, had told the court that during its investigation "it was found that many of the accused are office-bearers and members of the ruling political party CPI(M) and there was a deep-rooted conspiracy to embezzle money from the public and make gains for the party as well as its leaders."

It also blamed the Registrar of Cooperative Societies in the state for "turning a blind eye" to the irregularities of various societies in Kerala.

This case of alleged fraud, beginning in 2010, at the Thrissur-based Karuvannur Cooperative Bank triggered a political row in Kerala two years ago.

The money laundering case stems from 16 FIRs registered by the Kerala Police (Crime Branch) in Thrissur.

After the Kerala police registered the FIR in July 2021, the registrar in their audit found "diversions" of more than ₹ 100 crore, the ED had said in 2022. (PTI)

**RAMESWARAM (TN), Jan 21:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday completed his spiritual journey to temples with a Ramayana link in southern parts of the country by worshipping at a Lord Ram shrine near Arichal Munai, where he prayed and paid floral tributes at seashore.

Marking completion of his visits to temples ahead of the consecration of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 22, Modi performed puja and had darshan at the Sri Kothandaramaswamy temple, which is on the way towards Dhanushkodi and Arichal Munai, from where Sri Lanka is a stone's throw away.

Kothandaramaswamy in Tamil denotes Lord Ram with bow and arrow. The PM laid flowers on the Arichal Munai beachfront and also paid floral tributes at a pillar with the national emblem.

Arichal Munai is on the southern tip of Rameswaram island in Ramanathapuram district in southern Tamil Nadu.

The Prime Minister performed 'pranayama' (breathing exercise) at the

beach and offered prayers using the sea water.

Earlier this week, he prayed in temples in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala that have a Ramayana relevance.

Modi, who stayed at Rameswaram on Saturday night, drove to Arichalmunai, which is said to be the place from where the Ram Setu was built.

Ram Setu, also known as Adam's Bridge, is said to have been constructed by Lord Ram with the help of the 'Vaananasa' to travel to Lanka to wage war against Ravana.

Following his visit to the Kothandaramaswamy temple and Arichal Munai, the Prime Minister reached Madurai and boarded an aircraft to New Delhi. Temple priests said Modi carried with him 'kalash' of holy waters from Tamil Nadu.

Modi arrived in Chennai on January 19 and inaugurated the Khelo India Games 2023. On Saturday, he visited the Sri Ranganathaswamy and Arulmigu Ramanathaswamy temples in Srirangam and Rameswaram, respectively. (PTI)

## MHA think tank alerts against 'hijack', sextortion, impersonation scams on WhatsApp

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** A police think tank that functions under the union home ministry has issued an advisory and alert against a variety of scams that take place on popular social media messaging platform WhatsApp leading to cyber crimes and financial frauds.

The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) has identified seven types of such frauds that includes tricking through missed calls, video calls, in the name of job offers and investment plans, impersonation, hijacking and screen share.

As part of the 'hijacking' scam, the eight page advisory-cum-alert said, the scammers take unauthorised access to the victim's WhatsApp (WA) account and request money from their contacts.

"Some people also witnessed WhatsApp video calls from unknown numbers. These were basically sextortion-based nude video calls which were then used to threaten the user."

"The hackers blackmail the user and ask for money in return," the BPRD said in the communication accessed by

PTI.

The BPRD is a think tank on policing subjects under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

WhatsApp, on its part, has launched a number of public message campaigns in the recent past to advertise to the public about the safety features brought in by the platform, owned by technology major Meta.

The BPRD said through missed calls made from numbers starting with country codes mostly belonging to Vietnam, Kenya, Ethiopia and Malaysia, the hackers use 'code scripted bots' to find active users and then target them for various cyber threats.

As part of the impersonation scam, the scammers contacts the victim pretending to be the CEO or senior officer of their organisation and target top management executives like CFO (chief financial officer), COO (chief operating officer), CTO (chief technical officer) and high-ranking police and government officers, it said.

The fraudsters get personal information of the personnel they are pretending to be by surfing their social media handles and



create similar profiles and seek immediate payments to some links citing their occupancy at some important meeting or a problem in their old number in order to convince the victim to transfer the funds, the BPRD said.

It also published, in the alert, pictures of some WA accounts where such attempts were made.

The communication expressed a particular concern about a recently released feature of 'screen share' by WhatsApp. "In the past, numerous frauds were witnessed where scammers get victims' screen access fraudulently to commit illicit activities," the BPRD said.

It added that scammers imper-

sonate as officials from banks, financial institutions, government bodies etc., and once they convince the victim to share their screen, a malicious app or software is installed "surreptitiously" and the victims sensitive information like bank details, passwords and banking services are compromised.

As part of the do's and don'ts, the communication asked users to activate "two factor authentication or 2FA" on their WA account while it suggested not replying and answering suspicious or unknown WA calls and reporting and blocking the numbers that approach the user.

"The officials associated with messaging app WhatsApp have already been informed for this data breaching act. As numerous government bodies and ministry officials are already working on it, official communications are sent to the concerned authorities for the same."

"As a precautionary measure, unknown communications on WhatsApp without verifying their authenticity should be avoided. Still, any appropriate solution to such problems is not yet recognised," it said. (PTI)

## Aircraft crashed in Afghanistan not Indian, did refuelling at Gaya: Govt

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** A small aircraft that crashed in Afghanistan did not belong to any Indian carrier and the plane did refuelling at the Gaya airport while it was flying to Moscow from an airport in Thailand, the government said on Sunday.

Amid reports that it was an Indian plane that was involved in the crash, the civil aviation ministry said the aircraft was registered in Morocco. "As per available information, the crashed aircraft is a DF-10 (Dassault Falcon) small aircraft registered in Morocco. It is not an aircraft of Indian carriers."

"The aircraft was an air ambulance and was flying from Thailand to Moscow and did refuelling at Gaya airport," the ministry said in a statement. A source in the know said the plane had started from Utapao airport in Thailand.

In a post on X, the ministry said the "unfortunate plane crash that has just occurred in Afghanistan is neither an Indian Scheduled Aircraft nor a Non-Scheduled (NSOP)/Charter aircraft. It is a Moroccan-registered small aircraft. More details are awaited."

Quoting authorities, news agency AP said a Russian private jet carrying six people is believed to have crashed in a remote area of rural

Afghanistan. The plane had been operating as a charter ambulance flight on a route from Gaya, India, to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, onward to Zhukovsky International Airport in Moscow, as per the report. The aircraft crashed on Saturday in a mountainous area near Zebak district in Badakhshan province, regional spokesman Zabihullah Amiri said, adding that a rescue team had been dispatched to the area, it added.

As per the report, Badakhshan police chief's office also confirmed the report of the crash in a statement.

Quoting Russian officials, the report said the plane belongs to Athletic Group LLC and a private individual. Further, the report quoting Russian civil aviation authorities said the plane "stopped communicating and disappeared from radar screens".

Earlier, Afghanistan's television network Tolo News, in a post on X, claimed that an Indian passenger plane crashed in the mountains of Tophkana alongside the districts of Kuran-Munjan and Zibak of Badakhshan province.

Quoting the head of the Department of Information and Culture of Badakhshan, Zabihullah Amiri, Tolo News said that a team has been sent to the area to investigate the incident. (PTI)

## AAP govt inspired by 'Ram Rajya', says Delhi CM Kejriwal

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** The AAP government in Delhi is inspired by the concept of "Ram Rajya" and draws motivation from it in providing various facilities to the people of the national capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday.

Kejriwal made the remarks at the three-day Ramlila event being organised by the Delhi government's Art, Culture and Languages department.

The conclusion of the event, which began on Saturday, will coincide with the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Kejriwal said, "Tomorrow (Monday), there is the 'pran pratishtha (consecration)' ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Many people will not be able to attend it despite wanting to. I am happy that the Delhi government has organised this event." (PTI)

### PUBLIC NOTICE

No. SSA/IE/RT & Vol/254/2014/10017

In pursuance of the advertisement published vide No. SSA/IE/RT & Vol/254/2014/5522 Dated : 10.06.2023, it is for general information of all concerned that the date of interview for the post (i) Additional Resource Person (ARP), (ii) Assistant Additional Resource Person (AARP) under Samagra Shiksha Axom will be held on 22.01.2024 from 2.30 pm onwards at the State Mission Office, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19 instead of 9.30 am.

Sd/-Mission Director,  
Samagra Shiksha Axom  
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog/DF/2484/23/22-Jan-24

# Modi shifts political agenda every poll year; failed to protect borders from China: Tharoor

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Jan 21:** Congress Working Committee member and MP Shashi Tharoor on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of shifting the political agenda every election year and alleged that the BJP-government at the Centre was unable to protect the nation's borders from Chinese encroachment.

The hard hitting accusations from the MP from Thiruvananthapuram came on the eve of the Ram Temple consecration ceremony at Ayodhya on Monday.

Tharoor said that Modi contested and won in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls in the name of development and in 2019 in the name of national security by ordering surgical strikes on Pakistan.

But now he cannot talk of development, following the problems caused to the public due to demonetisation nor can he raise the issue of national security as the government was unable to take back territory occupied by China, Tharoor claimed.

"So this time round, the only thing they have is their original cause -- Hindu Friday Samrat. There is no doubt that would be their propaganda," he said.

He further contended that the



BJP's agenda was always politics.

"On January 22 the PM will officiate the ceremony at Ayodhya, then in February he will inaugurate a temple in Abu Dhabi and then elections will be announced. That is what I believe and I have said so earlier too," he told reporters.

Tharoor said that the Congress plans to point out to the people the problems they are facing daily like scarcity of jobs, price rise and will ask them whether they have benefited from the development claimed by the Central government.

On being asked by reporters about the Congress leadership de-

clining the invite to attend the consecration ceremony at Ayodhya, Tharoor said that the party felt it was a political programme.

The MP from Thiruvananthapuram said that the party has always shown respect for religious beliefs of every individual.

"Each of us have our own religious beliefs and act accordingly. As a party, the stand is very clear. The Prime Minister is officiating what has become a very political exercise and we do not believe that is a good thing," he said.

Asked whether he plans to offer prayers at a temple tomorrow on the occasion of the Ram Temple

consecration ceremony, Tharoor said, "I go to the temple to pray and not to play politics."

He said people's faith and religious beliefs were a personal issue and he does not find fault with that.

The Congress MP also found fault with the Central government closing the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi on January 22 till 2.30 pm saying it would affect the large number of patients always waiting outside it for getting admitted or those requiring urgent medical aid.

"The government should withdraw the order. No hospital should be closed down. If people want to pray or watch the event on TV, that option is always available to them," he said.

Meanwhile, AIIMS in Delhi has decided to remain open on Monday, reversing its earlier decision to shut OPD services till 2:30 pm on the occasion of the consecration ceremony at the Ayodhya Ram temple. The Ram temple complex, built in the traditional Nagara style, will be 380 feet in length (east-west direction), 250 feet in width and 161 feet in height.

Each floor of the temple will be 20 feet high and have a total of 392 pillars and 44 gates. (PTI)

## Gujarat boat tragedy: HC seeks action taken report from state by Jan 29

**AHMEDABAD, Jan 21:** The Gujarat High Court has directed the state government to submit an action taken report on the death of students and teachers in a recent boat tragedy, observing that it has "shocked the conscience" of the public.

As many as 12 students and two teachers of New Sunrise School at Waghodia near Vadodra drowned, while 18 students and two teachers were rescued after an overloaded boat capsized in Motnath Lake in Harni area on the city's outskirts on Thursday. The students were on a picnic at the time.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the incident, the court of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal said in an order on January 19 observed that it was disturbing to note that safety norms were completely flouted as the children were not provided life jackets. The order, which was made available on the court's website on Sunday, said that the incident has "shocked the conscience of the public in general".

"We call upon the secretary,

home department, state of Gujarat, to submit an action taken report in the matter along with an affidavit of the gazetted officer from the home department, government of Gujarat, by the next date fixed," the order said.

The court has fixed January 29 as the next date of hearing.

On Friday, the president of the Gujarat High Court Advocates' Association, Brijesh Trivedi had brought to the notice of the court news reports regarding the Harni boat tragedy.

The police have registered an FIR under sections 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) of the Indian Penal Code against 19 persons.

They have so far arrested six persons, while efforts are on to nab the others, an official had said earlier.

In its complaint, the Vadodra Municipal Corporation (VMC) has said that the firm which developed, operated and maintained the lake-front for recreational purposes, its

owners, managers and boat operators indulged in criminal negligence on several counts.

VMC pointed to lapses, including non-maintenance of boats and not keeping adequate number of life-saving equipment and life jackets, on the part of the contractor.

It was also revealed that only a few students were given life jackets and no instructions were given to them. Due to overload, the FIR said, the boat first started swaying and then capsized following water ingress from the front side.

Among those booked are officials of Kotia Projects, which had been given the contract to operate the Harni Lake Zone by the VMC under public-private partnership (PPP) model.

While VMC has terminated the contract of Kotia Projects, officials have found that it had sub-let the contract for boating activities to another company. According to police, the boat operator had no prior experience and his helper did not even know how to swim. (PTI)

## Kerala govt employee Khan scales world's highest volcano



**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Kerala government employee Shaikh Hassan Khan has now climbed Ojos del Salado, the world's highest volcano that is more than 22,600 feet high.

Ojos del Salado is also the highest peak in Chile.

This is the seventh highest peak that has been scaled by 36-year-old Khan.

Talking to PTI, Khan said that by summiting the world's highest volcano on Saturday, he wanted to spread the message of climate change in a different way.

"I wrote the slogan Climate Change is Real on my chest and showcased it at the top of Ojos del Salado," he said from Chile.

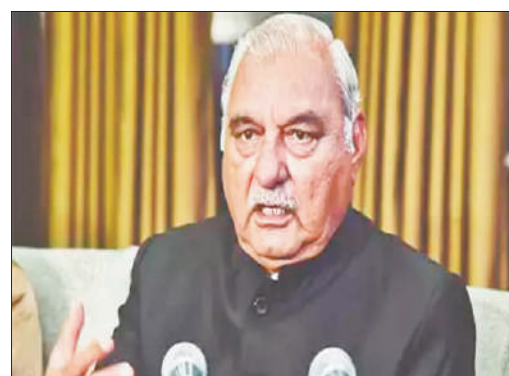
According to him, at 22,615 feet, Ojos del Salado is the world's highest volcano.

He summited the highest peak of South America, Mount Aconcagua earlier this month.

Prior to that, Khan scaled Mount Vinson, the highest peak in Antarctica, in December.

Besides, he has climbed four other highest peaks -- Mount Everest (Asia), Mount Denali (North America), Mount Kilimanjaro (Africa), and Mount Elbrus (Europe). (PTI)

## Congress will revive Dadupur Nalvi canal project if comes to power in Haryana: Hooda



**KURUKSHETRA, Jan 21:** Former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday asserted that the Congress will return to power in the state this year, and when it does, it will revive the Dadupur Nalvi canal project and ensure that sugarcane farmers get Rs 450 per quintal for their produce.

Addressing a gathering in Kurukshetra, the Leader of Opposition said, "The massive turnout despite extreme cold weather is an indicator of the changing political mood of the state, which shows that the BJP is on its way out, and Congress is coming to power."

He said that Congress left the state on top of every indicator of progress, but all that was undone in nine years of BJP government.

"The state, which was on top of every indicator of development, is today counted among the top states in terms of unemployment, inflation and poor law and order," the Congress leader alleged.

He targeted the BJP led government in the state for shelving the Dadupur Nalvi canal scheme, which he said Congress will revive if it comes to power later in the year when the assembly poll is due.

Hooda also alleged that his party's 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' was attacked in Assam. "It is not an attack on Rahul Gandhi's yatra, but on democracy."

Assam Pradesh Congress president Bhupen Kumar Borah was allegedly assaulted by unknown men in Sonitpur's Jamugurihat area on Sunday during the party's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

Earlier in the day, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh's vehicle was also allegedly attacked, and reporters accompanying the party's yatra were "manhandled" by

unknown men in Sonitpur district, according to All India Congress Committee (AICC) communications coordinator Mahima Singh.

The groundwater level in Dadupur-Nalvi canal-spread across Ambala, Kurukshetra and Yamunanagar -- is going down rapidly, Hooda said. "If this continues, not a single grain of grain will be produced in the future."

The Dadupur Nalvi Canal, built during the Congress government, was scrapped by the state BJP government.

"Dadupur Nalvi Canal was built for the prosperity of this area, but the present government scrapped the scheme and sent the farmers on the verge of ruin. When our government comes, Dadupur Nalvi canal will be revived and rebuilt," he said.

Hooda also championed the farmers in northern Haryana, which is known for growing paddy, potato, sunflower, sugarcane, saying they are not getting just price.

"BJP had promised to double the income of the farmers by 2022, but it's not the income, input cost that doubled.

"During our government, we gave the highest price for sugarcane, but today this government creates drama in the name of increasing the rate of sugarcane. Once the Congress government comes back to power in Haryana, the rate of sugarcane will be at least ₹ 450 per quintal (as against present ₹ 386)," Hooda said.

If the Congress government is formed in Haryana, it will give a ₹ 6,000 per month pension to the elderly, an LPG cylinder for ₹ 500, free electricity up to 300 units to every family, he said.

Addressing the gathering, State Congress President Uday Bhan said the present government wants to "divide people and spread hatred" as he called on people to spread the party's 'Ghar-Ghar Congress, Har Ghar Congress' campaign.

Bhan called on party workers to be active on social media and raise the problems of villages and common people.

Congress' Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Singh Hooda said, "Change is necessary in the state because the BJP-JJP government has proved to be a complete failure. Haryana, which was known for development, mutual brotherhood and prosperity, has fallen behind in several developmental parameters." (PTI)

## TMC, BJP to test their political might as Bengal politics heats up

**KOLKATA, Jan 21:** Months before the Lok Sabha polls, the TMC and BJP in West Bengal will evaluate their political prowess on Monday, aligning with the Ram temple consecration in Ayodhya, with Mamata Banerjee slated to lead an "all-faith" rally seeking to project a counter-narrative to BJP's hindutva politics. The much-awaited Ram temple consecration will be held in Ayodhya on Monday, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending the rituals, following which the shrine will be opened for the public a day later.

The TMC, which has accused the BJP of trying to politicise a religious event by attempting to put up a "gimmick show" ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, has announced to hold a mega all-faith harmony rally in the metropolis led by West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee.

The party will also hold similar rallies in every block of the state.

The Bengal BJP, which has unsuccessfully demanded that the day be declared a holiday in the state, along with several other Hindu outfits, has planned several events and programmes across the state to celebrate the day, including setting up LED screens in various areas where the Ram temple inauguration will be telecast live. The opposition BJP has accused the TMC of trying to create distraction and divert attention from the historic Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Lord Ram through the "all-faith rally". The party also accused the state government of impeding programmes to celebrate the scheduled inauguration of the temple.

"The BJP is trying to vitiate the atmosphere of the country. Everybody loves Lord Ram. But the BJP mixes politics with religion, we are against

this trend. And the all-faith rally by our party supremo is just a precursor to Republic Day celebrations," TMC MP Sougata Roy said.

Echoing him, TMC minister Shashi Panja said the all-faith rally should not be viewed as a counter to any programme, as projected by the BJP.

"The all-faith rally is not aimed at countering any other programme. Allegations that the state government is trying to stop programmes by the BJP are baseless and untrue," she said. The BJP, however, felt that the TMC's rally was aimed at appeasing a particular community in the state.

"The TMC's rally is aimed at appeasing a particular community, especially the minorities of the state. Otherwise, what was the need for organising a rally on the same day? The TMC wants to create a law and order situation in the state ahead of the Lok Sabha polls," Suvendu said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Cong pins Himanta's plea

monitor the situation, he said. "The apprehension is genuine and with great risk, I am allowing the Yatra tomorrow. If there is a law and order problem, nothing will happen to Gandhi as he will be surrounded by security personnel but my neck is at stake. The government of India will ask me why permission was granted for the Yatra on this sensitive route on Monday," Sarma said.

Nellie had witnessed a carnage during the height of Assam agitation in 1983 when nearly 2000 people, mostly belonging to Muslims stated to be of Bangladeshi origin, were killed.

District Commissioners and superintendents of police of these areas have been directed to increase patrolling and maintain a strict vigil, Sarma added.

"Maybe nobody will come out as people of Assam have matured. But as a law enforcer, we cannot discount any possibility," he said.

He said that he was planning to visit a temple tomorrow and watch the consecration ceremony in the Harijan colony "but now I have to monitor the situation". On denying permission to the Congress to take the Yatra through Guwahati city, the chief minister said they have been just asked to avoid the main thoroughfares.

"They had asked for permission at 9:30 am during school and college times. There are hospitals in the area and we cannot allow any traffic snarl during that period. If it were a Sunday, we could have allowed it," he said.

The Congress hardly gets votes in Assam and "if they create problems for the people, they will get even less votes", Sarma added.

Regarding Gandhi attacking him and his family on corruption, the chief minister said, "Earlier, I thought he was afraid of me but now it seems he is scared of my children too who are not even in politics".

He claimed that the Yatra has so far hardly seen much crowd but in certain minority-dominated Lower Assam areas, Muslims of Bangladeshi origin join the march.

"Muslim women and girls are grateful to us as we have taken several steps for their welfare which include abolition of triple talaq, measures to end polygamy and child marriage, along with setting up schools and colleges for girls in minority-dominated areas," Sarma said. (With inputs from PTI)

## Himanta distributes ration

cards to under-privileged. "With the help of these cards, every member of the eligible family will be entitled to 5 kg of rice every month along with medical facilities in empanelled hospitals for Rs 5 lakh under Ayushman Bharat and Ayushman Asom programme and LPG connections under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana," he added. He also said that the state government under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unleashed unprecedented initiatives of taking the welfare of the people to a new level.

"In the coming days more such welfare schemes will be initiated to empower the people of the state socially, economically and academically," he said.

The chief minister said that after the Bodo Peace Accord signed under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah, both peace and development in BTR areas have achieved an unprecedented proposition. He further informed that the implementation of the decisions taken in the Cabinet meeting in Udalguri will be reviewed during his next visit to the district in the month of February.

"Accordingly steps will be expedited to execute all the cabinet decisions for the development of BTR areas. For the immediate resolve of water logging problem in Mazbat town, government will take a pragmatic step. Moreover, district stadium of Udalguri will be constructed to enable the district to hone the sporting skills of the players along with holding national level sporting competitions in Udalguri," he avowed.

Speaker Assam Legislative Assembly Biswajit Daimari, CEM BTC Pramod Boro, MP Dilip Saikia also spoke on the occasion.

MLA Mazbat Charan Boro, deputy chief BTC Gobinda Chandra Basumatary, and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

## KA Police seize heroin

at 9 Mile Diphu-Manja road. The operation was carried out under the supervision of key officials, including superintendent of police (SP), Karbi Anglong, Sanjib Kumar Saikia; ADC, Chandan Burghain; 20 Bn CRPF commandants, Swarn Singh; additional SP (Crime), Nayanmoni Burman, and others.

The destruction of these drugs, which received clearance from the State Pollution Control Board, serves as a strong message in the fight against illicit substances within the region.

Notably, that operation underscored the relentless commitment of the Karbi Anglong District police in tackling the challenge of drug trafficking. The eradication of this significant quantity of narcotics demonstrated a proactive stance in shielding the community from the adverse effects of illicit substances.

## Delhi Cong to hold rally at Ramlila Maidan on Feb 3 to woo voters

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** The Delhi Congress will hold a rally at Ramlila Maidan on February 3 to woo the voters of the national capital months ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

Addressing a press conference here, Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely said the party will organise a rally at Ramlila Maidan near Geeta Colony on February 3 which will be addressed by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

He said that Kharge will start the Lok Sabha elections campaign from east Delhi in the same way as former prime minister Indira Gandhi began the election campaign from east Delhi in 1979 after the Congress lost the polls in 1977.

The Congress leader claimed the Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP) will be defeated in all seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi.

"This rally would be the invocation to remove the Bharatiya Janata Party from all seven seats in Delhi," he said.

Lovely said the seat-sharing formula for Delhi will soon be announced by the national leaders of the Congress.

"However, we will be preparing our base in all seats. Fighting in an alliance will also mean helping our partner win the polls," he said.

The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), both partners of the opposition INDIA bloc, have been holding seat-sharing talks for the states, including Delhi. (PTI)

## TN govt has denied nod to hold Ram temple related events, public screening, claims BJP

**CHENNAI, Jan 21:** The BJP on Sunday alleged the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department and police are denying permission, across the state, to private groups, individuals and party workers to hold events on January 22 to celebrate the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Police department has refused permission to show the Ayodhya event on Monday, on LED screens in public places, the Saffron party alleged. Tamil Nadu BJP President K Annamalai alleged that a senior state police official has given instructions to police superintendents to prevent 'live streaming' of the temple consecration.

Sharing screenshots on 'X', he challenged the state government to disprove his statement and dared police to file a case against him. He said he would submit 'conversations' in this regard in the court.

Police did not react immediately to the accusations. The BJP, led by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman alleged Tamil Nadu government administered temples have barred puja for Lord Ram on the day of the consecration of the grand temple in Ayodhya.

Dismissing the accusation, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Minister, P K Sekar Babu said the HR & CE Depart-

ment has not imposed any kind of ban for conduct of puja for Shri Ram. Also, there is no bar to distribute 'Annadhanam' and 'Prasadam.' He dismissed the claim as false news with ulterior motives. BJP office-bearer A Ashvatham contested Sekar Babu's statement and alleged that police have prevented them from going ahead with worshipping on Monday at the Sri Sita Devi temple in the Kalvarayan hills in Kallakurichi district.

Sitharaman, in a post on X indicated that public screening of the Ayodhya consecration event is 'banned' in Tamil Nadu.

Sekar Babu, however, did not react to the allegation on police stopping public screening and other related events.

Annamalai alleged the Tamil Nadu police has been citing 'frivolous reasons for rejecting request' to telecast the programme live on large LED screens that the BJP and other organisations have arranged for devotees.

Annamalai posted on X, 'samples' of letters from police to applicants denying permission for events related to the Ayodhya ceremony. He alleged that "a new rule by TN Police for denying permission: Private schools who wish to celebrate the consecration at Ayodhya even within their school

premise should seek permission from either the District Collector or the Judiciary."

"The DMK Govt should stop using the Police Department as their proxy & stop harassing the devotees of Bhagwan Shri Ram."

Annamalai alleged the HR & CE has 'denied permissions verbally.' The DMK government has taken its anti-Sanathana Dharma stand to an extreme level by 'imposing a blanket ban' on conducting special pooja and annadhana (distribution of food) in temples during the 'Pran Pratishtha' in Ayodhya.

The state BJP chief alleged that the ministers in the DMK government are 'liars, inefficient, corrupt.' Also, he claimed: "Below are the screenshots of instructions passed on by ADGP L&O (Additional Director General of Police in charge of law and order) to his SPs instructing to obstruct the celebration of the Pran Pratishtha across TN. TN has become a draconian state under the DMK Government, and Thiru @mkstalin's actions are synonymous with the actions of the Tyrant Joseph Stalin. I challenge the TN Govt to disapprove (sic) the below screenshots & to file an FIR on me & I will submit the entire sequence of conversations to the court."

Sitharaman alleged in a post on

X: "TN govt has banned watching live telecast of #AyodhyaRamMandir programmes of 22 Jan'24. In TN there are over 200 temples for Shri Ram. In HR&CE managed temples no puja/bhajan/prasadam/annadhanam in the name of Shri Ram is allowed. Police are stopping privately held temples also from organising events. They are threatening organisers that they will rip off pandals. Strongly condemn this anti-Hindu, hateful action." The Union Minister tagged a Tamil newspaper's report in this regard.

"TN govt is unofficially claiming law and order issues to justify the live telecast ban. False and fake narrative! There was no L & O issues on the day of #Ayodhya verdict (in 2019)..." she alleged.

Sekar Babu further said: "A rumour is being disseminated to divert people's attention from the DMK's youth wing conference, underway now at Salem". Further, he dubbed the reportage in the Tamil daily referred by Sitharaman as completely false, which had ulterior motives.

He said it was regrettable that Sitharaman, who holds a high office, was circulating such fake news. The state government has said it would take legal action against the Tamil daily for its 'false' report. (PTI)

# 'Merry Christmas' one of most gratifying moments of my career: Katrina Kaif

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Working with Sriram Raghavan has been one of the most gratifying moments of her career, says Katrina Kaif who approached the director with the belief that he would bring out a different side of her as a performer in "Merry Christmas" that is getting her some of her best reviews ever.

The movie, a thriller with elements of dark humour, drama, romance and a bit of Christmas magic, is the latest from the filmmaker, known for thrillers such as "Ek Hasina Thi", "Johnny Gaddar", "Badlapur" and "Andhadhun". Katrina said she reached out to Raghavan with a wish to be a part of his cinematic world as she had been a fan for the longest time. "I'm a big fan of Sriram's work because I love the quirky kind of

genre that his films are in. I also feel there's something in all of his characters on screen, which is very real, honest and visceral," the actor told PTI.

"His characters are as flawed as they can be and yet they will still be relatable because of some incredible humane quality that they have, which is why I wanted to work with him. I wanted to have that experience to be under his vision and his process. I believed that he will bring out a different side of me as a performer," she added. Katrina, who plays the mysterious Maria in the film, is paired opposite South superstar Vijay Sethupathi. He is Albert, a stranger that her character Maria meets in a restaurant and brings home on Christmas Eve.

"Merry Christmas" marks



an important moment in Katrina's career, peppered with commercial successes like "Namaste London", "Welcome", "Race", "New York", "Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara", "Jab Tak Hai Jaan", "Tiger" franchise and "Bharat". But "Merry Christmas" stands out. "It's been one of the most gratifying experiences of my career so far. And work-

ing with Sriram and the story was, I think, a very important moment for me," she said. When she signed the movie, she chose not to focus on how the movie would perform at the box office.

"I always try to focus on what I'm doing because if I look for the end, then I get lost. My energy is diverted and I cannot focus and con-

centrate on what I'm doing at the present.

So when the film came to me, I loved this story and instantly connected to it." The actor said she read the source book, author Frederic Dard's famous French novel "Le Montecarlo", which also inspired the 1962 film "Paris Pick-up", and instantly fell in love with the story. (PTI)

## Jason Reitman's 'SNL 1975' movie adds Gabriel LaBelle, Cooper Hoffman



**LOS ANGELES, Jan 21:** "The Fabelmans" star Gabriel LaBelle will play "Saturday Night Live" creator Lorne Michael in filmmaker Jason Reitman's upcoming movie "SNL 1975". The film, penned by Reitman and Gil Kenan, is about the early days of the long-running late night comedy sketch show, reported entertainment news outlet 'Deadline'. The movie will also feature actor Cooper Hoffman of "Licorice Pizza" fame as former NBC executive Dick Ebersol, while Rachel Sennott has been cast as Michaels' ex-wife

Rosie Shuster. "SNL 1975" will chronicle the true story of what happened on October 11, 1975, when a ferocious troupe of young comedians and writers changed television forever. It will showcase behind-the-scenes moments leading up to the first broadcast of SNL.

The screenplay is based on an extensive series of interviews conducted by Reitman and Kenan with all the living cast, writers and crew. "SNL 1975" will be produced by Reitman, Kenan, Jason Blumenfeld, Erica Mills and Peter Rice. (PTI)



## Discovery Channel to air 'Legends of The Ramayana with Amish'

**MUMBAI, Jan 21:** "Legends Of the Ramayana with Amish", a docu-series that seeks to uncover lesser-known mysteries around the epic Ramayana, is returning on Discovery Channel.

The three-part docuseries, hosted by noted author Amish Tripathi, will air on the Discovery Channel and DTamil from Saturday till January 23. It will also be available for streaming on Discovery+, a press release said.

The docu-series traverses 5000 kilometers, delving deep into ancient stories around the Ramayana. Amish Tripathi decodes intriguing information that has persisted around the Ramayana for millennia, inspiring faith, philosophies, and lifestyles across India and beyond.

Featuring stunning visuals,

the docuseries unfolds the mystery around Lord Ram's thrilling Ayana (journey), Discovery Channel said.

"Mapping myth with geology, customs, and belief, Tripathi travels to key locations across India and Sri Lanka to piece the journey together, bringing history to life and showcasing the rich cultures, social diversities, and landscapes in each of the regions," it added.

"Legends Of the Ramayana with Amish", which has been shot in locations like Sri Lanka, Ayodhya, Nashik, and Hampi, had premiered in Discovery+ on April 2022 before airing on Discovery Channel in October 2022. (PTI)

## Rashmika thanks Delhi Police after deepfake video creator arrested

**HYDERABAD, Jan 21:** Actor Rashmika Mandanna has expressed gratitude towards Delhi Police after it arrested a B-Tech graduate from Andhra Pradesh in connection with a deepfake video of the "Animal" star that was widely circulated on social media.

The video went viral on social media in November which showed a woman, dressed in a black workout onesie, stepping inside an elevator.

The accused, who has been identified as 23-year-old Eemani Naveen, a native of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, had morphed British-Indian social media personality Zara Patel's face using artificial intelligence (AI) to resemble the actor.

On Saturday, Mandanna shared a note on her official X page and tagged the handle of Delhi Police's Cyber Crime Unit. "Expressing my heartfelt gratitude to @DCP\_IFSO. Thank you for appre-

hending those responsible. Feeling truly grateful for the community that embraces me with love, support and shields me," the 27-year-old wrote. "Girls and boys - if your image is used or morphed anywhere without your consent. It is wrong! And I hope this is a reminder that you are surrounded by people who will support you and action will be taken!" Mandanna added in her post.

The accused had created the video to increase the followers on his fan page of Rashmika Mandanna on Instagram, an official said. Deepfake is a digital method where users can replace one person's likeness convincingly with that of another using AI technology.

The accused had created the video to increase the followers on his fan page of Rashmika Mandanna on Instagram, an official said. Deepfake is a digital method where users can replace one person's

likeness convincingly with that of another using AI technology.

On 10 November, an FIR was registered under sections 465 (punishment for forgery) and 469 (forgery for the purpose of harming reputation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and sections 66C and 66E of the Information Technology Act at the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) Unit of the Delhi Police's Special Cell.

The case was registered on the complaint of the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW). Mandanna had received support from her colleagues including Amitabh Bachchan, Mrunal Thakur and Naga Chaitanya when the deepfake video went viral on social media.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), IFSO, Dr Hemant Tiwari, said that Naveen created the deepfake video of the actress just to increase the follow-

ers and posted it on the fan page on 13 October. He had used the AI (artificial intelligence) technique with the help of YouTube to make the video, he added.

The DCP said that the fan following of this page increased from 90,000 to 1,08,000 within two weeks due to the deepfake video. When Naveen later realised that it became a national sensation and also saw tweets from famous film stars against the said Deepfake video, he got scared and deleted the said posts from the Instagram Channel and also changed the name of Insta channel, he added. (PTI)

## 'Emily in Paris' star Ashley Park in recovery after health scare



**LOS ANGELES, Jan 21:** Hollywood actor Ashley Park, best known for starring in "Emily in Paris" and "Beef", is recovering after experiencing a serious medical scare earlier this month. In an Instagram post on Friday, the 32-year-old actor said she suffered from a critical septic shock, a severe form of sepsis in which the body overreacts to an infection.

Park was on vacation in the Maldives when the case of tonsillitis cascaded into a serious health crisis.

"As I sit here processing and recovering from the first few weeks of 2024, the only word I can think of is grateful. While on holiday in December into New Years, what started as tonsillitis spiralled into critical septic shock, which infected and affected several of my organs.

"I am grateful that my health has improved despite what we had initially been told," Park wrote.

The actor said her health has improved despite what we had initially been told and thanked her Emily in

Paris co-star and partner Paul Forman for being unconditionally by her side during the crisis.

"You calmed my fears and held me through ambulances, three foreign hospitals, a week in the ICU, scary ERs, countless scans and tests and injections, excruciating pain, and so much confusion all while we were alone on the other side of the world far from those we know. I love you Paul. More than I can ever say," she wrote.

Park also shared a series of photos and videos from the hospital.

She further said that she is deeply grateful to the ICU nurses and doctors for their aid.

"Infinite thanks to my personal team of heroes at home who were on calls with insurance, Paul, my parents, and doctors at all hours (you know who you are). I hesitated to share what's been happening as I'm still in the throes of recovery but I now know I'm safely on the other side of the worst," she added. (PTI)



# Lemi, Mineswo lead Ethiopia's domination in Mumbai Marathon

**MUMBAI, Jan 21:** Ethiopian runners expectedly dominated the Mumbai Marathon as defending champion Hayle Lemi Berhanu and Aberash Minsewo won the men's and women's titles respectively, here on Sunday.

Among Indian men, Srinu Bugatha recorded the best finish with a timing of 2:17:29 and was followed by Gopi Thonakal (2:18:37) and Sher Singh Tanwar (2:19:37).

The top 10 elite men's runners featured two Indians with Srinu placed at the eighth spot and Gopi at the 10th. "I was aiming for the course record but the last five kilometres were not good," Indian Army's Srinu told media after his win, adding that he was not aware of marathon racing until 2013 but he has been working hard to improve his timing.

Gopi and Srinu were together until the 27 kilometre mark but

the former faced fitness issues and was forced to take a few breaks.

"I was cramping, I had to stop for a bit for stretching and then I continued," Gopi told media.

In the men's elite event, Lemi recorded a second consecutive win in the gold label race with a timing of 2:07:50. Haymanot Alew (2:09:03) came second while Mitku Tafa (2:09:58) finished third.

Lemi said he was aiming for the

course record too but missed beating the mark in the last three kilometres or so.

However, he enjoyed a massive gap between him and the second-placed Alew in the ending stages, which he credited to being focussed on beating the course record. "I was focussed on beating the course record and nothing else. That helped me in building such a big gap," Lemi told PTI.

Lemi became only the second

athlete in the history of the race to win with a time of two hours and seven minutes.

Among women, Minsewo clinched the gold medal with a timing of 2:26:06 while compatriots Muluhabt Tsega was second with 2:26:51 and Medhin Bejene 2:27:34 came in third.

While the victory was more memorable for Minsewo for the fact that she won it on her debut at the race, it was a special finish for

the third-placed Bejene.

In a final thrust, Bejene gained 28 seconds in the last two kilometres to move to the third spot from the fourth.

Nirmaben Thakor Bharatjee was the first among the Indian women runners to finish the elite race with a timing of 2:47:11, which was personal best for the 26-year-old.

"I had to move from Gujarat to Nasik since my results were not

good enough back home. But the move has helped me clock results consistently," said Nirmaben, whose father is a farmer. She had to work hard to arrange funds for her training.

"I wanted to finish the race in around 2 hours 40 minutes or so but could not push towards the end," added Nirmaben, who now aims to get her numbers in range of the Olympic qualification mark. (PTI)

# India Open: Satwik-Chirag pair ends runner-up

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Home favourites Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty went down in a tense final against world champions Kang Min Hyuk and Seo Sang Jae at India Open, settling for their second successive runners-up finish, here Sunday.

Satwik and Chirag, the Asian Games champions, lost 21-15 11-21 18-21 to Kang and Seo after the two pairs fought for 65 minutes in what was some breath-taking badminton at the KD Jadhav Indoor stadium here.

The Indian duo, which won the 2022 edition, had finished second best at the Malaysia Super 1000 last week as well.

Satwik and Chirag always had tough matches against their Korean rivals though they boasted a 4-1 head-to-head count in five meetings coming into the match with the latest being at the Malaysia Open last week.

The Indian duo played some breath-taking rallies, displaying amazing reflexes as they kept the Korean pair under the pump with some relentless hitting in the opening game.

Chirag dazzled in the front court with some brilliant net interceptions as the duo led 11-9 and soon jumped to 19-13 after the break before pocketing the game when the Koreans netted a shot.

The Indian pair made a sloppy start in the second, falling behind 1-5 but change of pace and angled returns helped them make it 5-7 with Satwik standing tall at the front court and producing a net kill.

A couple of net errors from Chirag during flat exchanges gave the Koreans a six-point advantage.

The Koreans defended well, while India's attack seemed to lose a bit of sting as Kang and Seo grabbed a 10-point advantage at 15-5. Kang stepped up with his serve and showed good variations. The Koreans held 10 game points and they converted in the second chance to roar back into the contest.

In the decider, the Koreans kept a high tempo with Kang flying across the front court as they lead 9-5. The Koreans didn't allow the Indians to play their attacking game. Another exciting rally ensued with the Indians finding the net as Kang and Seo grabbed a five-point cushion at the interval.

After the change of sides, Satwik stepped up at the front court as the momentum seemed to change in India's favour with the Korean committing a service error and then finding the net.

The Koreans opted for low serve but Chirag was upto the task as they brought the equation down to two points at 13-15 soon.



Satwik then sent one to the corners, while Chirag unleashed a smash as one point separated the two pairs at 15-16.

A superb low shot from forehand corner from Satwik was negated by Chirag's net error. Kang then sent one down the line to put themselves two point away from the title.

Kang found the net next, while Chirag dominated a flat exchange as it was 18-19. The Koreans grabbed two championships point when Satwik sent one wide.

It was all over when Chirag sent one to the net and fell on the floor. Tai Tzu, Shi Yu Qi win women's and men's singles titles. (PTI)

**LONDON, Jan 21:** Middle-order batter Dan Lawrence will replace Harry Brook in the England squad for the upcoming five-match Test series against India after the latter returned home because of personal reasons, the ECB announced on Sunday.

Brook had travelled to Abu Dhabi with the team for a preparatory camp ahead of the series, beginning in Hyderabad from January 25.

Lawrence, a 26-year-old from Surrey, will join the rest of his teammates on Monday before travelling to India.

"Harry Brook is set to return home with immediate effect for personal reasons from the England Men's Test tour of India. He will not be returning to India," the England and Wales Cricket Board said in a statement.

"The Brook family respectfully requests privacy during this time. In light of this, the ECB and the family kindly request the media and the public to respect their wish for privacy and refrain from intruding on their private space," it further said.

Brook made his Test debut in 2022 against South Africa while his last appearance in England whites was against Australia at the Oval in July 2023.



The 24-year-old Yorkshire batter has so far played 12 Tests making 1181 runs at an average of 61 with four hundreds and seven fifties.

Brook's impressive effort had helped England clean-sweep the series against Pakistan in late 2022. He was the Player of the Series after making 468 runs from five innings at an average of 93.60.

In comparison, Lawrence has made 551 runs from 11 matches at 29 with four fifties.

It's a bit of a puzzling selection too as Lawrence last played a Test in 2022, when he came out against the West Indies at the St George's Park.

Many were expecting that Keaton Jennings, though an opener, would get drafted into the squad in place of Brook.

Jennings had recently made a free-flowing 154 and a 64 for England Lions against India A in the first of the four-day unofficial 'Test' in Ahmedabad. (PTI)

# Sai Kishore spins Tamil Nadu to big win over Railways

**COIMBATORE, Jan 21:** Skipper R Sai Kishore came up with a phenomenal bowling performance as his seven-wicket match-haul in the Ranji Trophy Elite Group C game helped Tamil Nadu trump Railways by an innings and 129 runs on the third day here on Sunday.

Railways began the day on 126 for two in their first innings against Tamil Nadu's 489 but were bowled out for 246 as pacer Sandeep Warrier and left-arm spinner Sai Kishore shared six wickets equally among them.

Pratham Singh (92 off 94 balls) looked formidable with the bat, but he fell to Warrier.

With the hosts enforcing the follow-on, things went from bad to worse for Railways, as it could manage just 114 in their second essay. Pratham (29) top-scored again for the visitors. But Sai Kishore (4/43) and fellow left-arm spinner Ajith Ram (4/40) mopped up their batting unit.

In another Group C meeting at Mysore, tons from Mayank Agarwal (114), Devdutt Padikkal (103) and Nikin Jose (107) put Karnataka in the driver's seat against Goa.

Resuming the day at 251 for four, with Agarwal and Padikkal having walked back after scoring

their hundreds overnight, Jose gave a hard time to the Goan bowlers before becoming the seventh man to be dismissed, falling to Darshan Misal, who bagged six wickets.

Eventually, the hosts declared at 498 for nine to gain a lead of 177 runs.

In the second innings, the visitors finished the day on 93 for one, trailing by 84 runs. Krishnamurthy Siddharth remained unbeaten on 57 for Goa.

Elsewhere, the remaining two Group C matches between Chandigarh and Gujarat and Punjab and Tripura were called off for the day due to bad light.

Brief scores: In Coimbatore: Tamil Nadu: 489 beat Railways: 246 & 114 (Pratham Singh 29; Ajith Ram 4/40, R Sai Kishore 4/43) by an innings and 129 runs. In Mysore: Goa 321 & 93/1 (Krishnamurthy Siddharth 57 batting; Vijaykumar Vyshak 1/18) vs Karnataka: 498/9 (Mayank Agarwal 114, Devdutt Padikkal 103, Nikin Jose 107; Darshan Misal 6/134).

In Chandigarh: Gujarat: 86/2 (Sunpreetsingh Bagga 39; Jagjit Singh 2/27) vs Chandigarh.

In Mohali: Punjab 78/7 (Nehal Wadhwa 33; Manisankar Muralingh 2/11) vs Tripura. (PTI)

# KSAFCC beat Sonari Town Club 3-2

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Jan 21:** In Khelo India Girls League for under - 13, Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) Football Coaching Centre (KSAFCC) won the final against Sonari Town Club by 3-2 played at KASA stadium on Sunday. The KASA FCC was awarded with a trophy and cash prize of ₹ 50,000.

Earlier, in the semi-final,

KASA FCC defeated A1 of Howraghat by 4-2.

In another semi-final match Sonari Town Club defeated Langhin Tinali Sports Association by 4-1. The trophies and cash prizes to the winning and runners-up teams were given away by KASA, general secretary, Dr. Pankaj Teron and KASA football secretary, Horen Engti Kathar.

# Delhi suffer another embarrassing loss after batting a collapse

**INDORE, Jan 21:** A clueless Delhi suffered another embarrassing defeat in Ranji Trophy, their second in three games this season, with an 86-run loss to Madhya Pradesh in their Elite Group D match here on Sunday.

The loss to MP will hurt Delhi more as they had put themselves in a strong position by bowling out the hosts for 171 on the opening day.

Resuming day three at 157 for five, MP managed to reach 251 in their second innings, setting a 218-run target for Delhi.

Delhi's batters looked ill-equipped even on decent batting conditions and were bowled out for 131 after the umpires extended play beyond regulation close of play.

Vaibhav Kandpal (49 not out off 125) was the only one who could apply himself and eventually ran out of partners as

Delhi were bowled out in 53.5 overs. Delhi had lost to Puducherry in their Ranji opener before sharing a point with Jammu in a game marred by bad light. The season seems to be getting from bad to worse for the struggling outfit.

A change in captaincy after the loss to Puducherry has not been able to transform the fortunes of the team.

The batters have let the team down, starting from U-19 World Cup wining skipper Yash Dhull, who scored 33 off 46 balls on Sunday. His opening partner Salil Malhotra lasted only three balls.

For MP, the star of their second innings was skipper Shubham Sharma whose 73 off 74 balls in the second innings made all the difference.

It was an all-round effort with the ball as MP's Anubhav Agar-

wal, Kulwant Khejroliya, Saransh Jain took two wickets each.

Brief Scores: At Indore: MP 171 and 251 in 78.1 overs (Shubham Sharma 73; Himanshu Chauhan 4/69). Delhi 205 and 131 all out in 53.5 overs (Yash Dhull 33, Vaibhav Kandpal 49 not out; Kulwant Khejroliya 2/30). MP beat Delhi by 86 runs for six points.

At Dehradun: Puducherry: 204 and 131 all out beat Uttarakhnad: 123 all out and 157 all out (Yuvraj Chaudhary 46, Kunal Chandela 45; Gaurav Yadav 7/53) by 55 runs.

At Dharamsala: Baroda: 482 beat Himachal Pradesh: 184 and 280 all out in 70.3 overs (Gurvinder Singh 59, Nikhil Gangta 58, Akash Vashist 43; Bhargav Bhatt 4/32, Akash Singh 3/86) by an innings 18 runs. (PTI)

# For West Bengal's Shyamali Singh, bronze medal in Mumbai Marathon follows a battle with brain tumour

**MUMBAI, Jan 21:** West Bengal's Shyamali Singh overcame all odds to win a bronze medal at the Tata Mumbai Marathon on Sunday, having undergone a brain tumour operation couple of years ago.

It was at the same event four years ago when Shyamali complained of vomiting around the halfway mark of the 42 kilometre stretch, something that she and her husband Sanjay Singh noticed to be developing into some sort of a pattern.

The couple had to go through several rounds of checkups at different hospitals before they learned about the exact cause of the problem, a brain tumour, which inevitably took its toll.

"She ran in a TCS race and won a silver and then she participated in Mumbai. She would vomit after 25 or 26 kilometres. The pressure would increase on the brain but we did not know,"



Santosh told the media here after the 19th edition of the gold-label race.

The couple revealed facing a

severe financial crunch over the last few years but adding that there is nothing which would deter them from their mission of

making Shyamali improve more and more.

"During her operation, I mailed to everyone... from the MLA to the chief minister, but I did not get a response from anyone," Santosh said.

It took some time for Shyamali to get back up on her feet again but she is glad to have found the right doctor who still keeps a close eye on her.

"The doctor who did the surgery was confident that this girl would start running again and she started too, after the surgery in November 2021," Santosh said.

"He is such a big doctor but he keeps calling to check on me," expressed Shyamali, who mentioned her husband's hard work and blessings which has kept her dreams alive.

Santosh said all along there have been naysayers and all

sorts of challenges, but as a couple they remain single-minded to not give up Shyamali's dream.

"Everyone says kill this passion for the sport but I am not bothered about what the others say."

"She was adamant to resume running after the surgery even when she was not able to run at all," said Santosh, who has also been a long-distance runner at the state and national level.

"We understand sports. I always motivate her to do well and not worry about the troubles. I ask her to think as if uske peeche ek pahaad khada hai (that she has mountainous support from me)," he said.

"I sold the land which we had bought earlier for the purpose of making our home. We live in a rented flat. I told her that it was not a bigger thing than her career," Santosh added. (PTI)



**Encouraging Women Entrepreneurship**

**Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyaan**



Helping **39 lakh** women SHG members

become **Micro Entrepreneurs** with minimum annual income of **₹1 lakh** each



**₹10,000**

to be given to eligible **women SHG members** as Entrepreneurship Fund

Benefits to be directly released to bank accounts of beneficiaries



**Eligibility criteria for Entrepreneurship Fund (Seed Capital)**

An active woman SHG member who

- ▶ is registered under ASRLM
- ▶ has Aadhaar-linked savings bank account
- ▶ is not a defaulter of loan from SHG, federations, banks, financial Institutions, etc., those who availed loan from MFI, prior to 2021, shall not be considered defaulter.
- ▶ is involved in minimum one income generating activity on her own
- ▶ has a business plan for her activity/enterprise
- ▶ does not have more than three children (General/OBC) as on date
- ▶ does not have more than four children in case of ST/SC/Moran/Matak/Tea Tribes
- ▶ has enrolled her girl child/ children in a school
- ▶ has planted the sapling(s) during ABA and the sapling(s) is surviving and growing



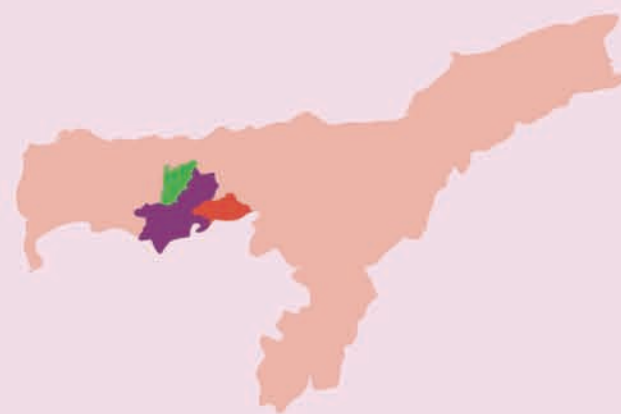
**Monitoring and implementation**

DLMC comprising the following members shall monitor the scheme's implementation at district level

- ✔ Guardian Minister - Chairperson
- ✔ District Commissioner – Member Secretary
- ✔ MLAs of the district – Members
- ✔ CEO, Zilla Parishad/Project Director, DRDA – Member
- ✔ District Project Manager, ASRLM – Member
- ✔ Lead District Manager – Member
- ✔ Three members to be nominated by State Government

List of beneficiaries of the district compiled by District Project Manager, ASRLM will be approved by the Committee

**23**  
**January**  
**2024**



**Districts where application forms will be distributed**

- 📍 **Kamrup**
- 📍 **Kamrup-Metro**
- 📍 **Nalbari**

**Kamrup**

- Bezera
- Bihdia Jajikona
- Boko
- Bongaon
- Chamaria
- Chayani Barduar
- Chaygaon
- Goroimari
- Hajo
- Kamalpur
- Rampur
- Rangia
- Rani
- Sualkuchi

144 GP Offices/Community Hall/School as Distribution Points

**Kamrup-Metro**

- Chandrapur
- Dimoria

16 GP Offices /BDO Office / School/ Community Hall as Distribution Points

**Nalbari**

- Barigog Banbhag
- Barkhetri
- Borbhag
- Madhupur
- Paschim Nalbari
- Pub Nalbari
- Tihu

65 GP Offices as Distribution Points

Nodal Agency: Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM), P&RD Department  
Nodal Officer: State Mission Director, ASRLM