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WINDOWS

Dozens of skaters took to the frozen surface of Amsterdam's historic Prinsengracht canal at Amsterdam in Netherlands as the deep freeze gripping Europe briefly made it possible to skate on a small section of the canal for the first time since 2018. People skated and walked on a small stretch of ice between two bridges close to the landmark Westerkerk before growing cracks in the ice forced all but the most daring off the ice

19 more Covid vaccines in pipeline

NEW DELHI: Nearly 19 coronavirus vaccine candidates are in different clinical trial stages and may be available in the coming months, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Monday. Addressing the media, Vardhan said that in the next 2-3 weeks, vaccination against Covid-19 will be started for people above 50 years of age. "About 18-19 vaccine candidates against Covid-19 are in the pipeline and are in preclinical, clinical and advanced stages. We are hopeful that we will be able to offer newer vaccines to India in the coming months," Vardhan said.

NTPC to pay ₹20 lakh to kin of Tapovan victims

JOSHIMATH: State-run power giant NTPC on Monday said it would pay a compensation of Rs 20 lakh each to the families of labourers who died in the recent flash flood at its Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project in Uttarakhand. A workforce has been set up at the plant to coordinate with the administration and gather all required information about every missing worker, NTPC's spokesman RP Jayada said. He said rescue work is underway on a war-footing at Tapovan-Vishnugad project site by multiple agencies to reach people believed to be trapped inside the tunnel. Real-time information is being shared with the agencies involved in the exercise to expedite it, Jayada said.



Centre may put 4 banks on sale

P11



SC slaps notice on WhatsApp, Facebook

WhatsApp may be worth \$2-3 tn, people value privacy more, says the apex court

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court issued notices to popular social media platforms WhatsApp and Facebook on a plea against its new privacy policy here on Monday. The apex court said people had grave apprehensions on loss of privacy, making it clear that it was the court's duty to protect this right as it heard an application against WhatsApp's new privacy policy. The observation came as senior advocate Shyam Divan, representing petitioner Karmanya Singh Sareen, sought direction to restrain WhatsApp from implementing its new privacy policy in India. "They have come up with new differentiating



privacy policy for the Europeans and different set of rules applicable to Indians," Divan argued. He added that till the time new data protection law came into force in India, WhatsApp should not bring its new privacy policy. At this, Chief Justice SA Bobde replied, "We will issue notice in the matter." A bench, headed by the

Sibal and Arvind Datar, appearing for WhatsApp, strongly contested Divan's argument, saying that the Delhi High Court is already seized of the matter. Sibal said that Europe had a different set of data privacy laws, and WhatsApp's new privacy policy for India is similar to policy applicable in the US, Australia and other countries. "The fact is that this policy was applicable to the rest of the world except Europe. In Europe, it is different because they have a special law," he argued. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the right to privacy was a fundamental right and they cannot compromise with the privacy of people.

'Turbidity in upper Ganga canal reduced by 90%'



PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Jal Board (DJB) claimed on Monday that high turbidity in water from the upper Ganga canal has been reduced by up to 90 per cent and the water supply from Bhagirathi Water Treatment Plant will resume by Monday evening. DJB vice chairman Raghav Chadha, who was at Bhagirathi WTP for an inspection, said, "Turbidity that had increased to unprecedented levels of 8,000 NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Unit) has been reduced by up to 90 per cent

and we are expecting that Bhagirathi WTP will start treating and supplying water at its full capacity by today evening." Chadha further said that turbidity in water that was measured up to 882 NTU at Sonia Vihar WTP, has been reduced up to 40 per cent. "DJB is still working relentlessly to bring Sonia Vihar WTP to its full function. We had to reduce the capacity of water treatment at both Sonia Vihar and Bhagirathi WTP due to increase in turbidity in the water coming to Delhi through upper Ganga canal," Chadha added.



3 held for duping Kejriwal's daughter

NEW DELHI

Three men have been arrested for allegedly duping Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's daughter, police said on Monday. Sajid, a resident of Nuh in Haryana, Kapil and Manvinder Singh, hailing from Mathura -- were arrested from the Bharatpur-Mathura border with the help of technical surveillance, police said. However, the main accused identified as Waris (25) is still on the run, they said. The chief minister's daughter was duped of Rs 34,000 by one of the four accused, who had approached her as a buyer on an e-commerce platform, where she had put up a sofa for sale. "The three worked on commission basis for Waris. Manvinder got multiple bank accounts opened for Kapil and Sajid using fake documents, for which he received a commission. The cheated amount was transferred to Waris' account," the officer said. According to the police, the victim had put up a sofa for sale on an e-commerce platform. She was approached by a man who showed interest in making the purchase. To check if the account details shared by her were correct, he initially transferred a minimal amount of money into her account and later duped her.

5-day bail to Kerala scribe to visit ailing mother

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court granted 5-day interim bail to journalist Siddique Kappan, arrested on his way to Hathras where a young Dalit woman had died after being allegedly gang-raped, to visit his ailing mother. A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde said the interest of justice would be served if appropriate safeguards are built into the order for the proposed visit of the prisoner. The apex court said that during his visit he shall not give any interview to the media, including social media. "We, accordingly, permit the prisoner - Siddique Kappan to go to Kerala for a period of five days only for the purpose of seeing his ailing mother. "He shall not meet the members of the public."

India to test 160-km strike range Astra missile soon

AJIT K DUBEY
NEW DELHI

IN a step that would establish its superiority in air combat over China and Pakistan, India would start testing the Astra Mark 2 beyond visual range air-to-air missile, which would be capable of taking down enemy aircraft from a range of 160 kilometres. The extended range Astra Mark 2 would give India an edge over its adversaries and



would add more lethality to its fighter jets in aerial combat, like the one which happened a day after the Balakot airstrikes on February 26, 2019. "The trial for the Astra Mark would be starting in the second half of this year and we are hoping to see the missile fully developed by 2022," government officials said. The next-generation missile is expected to be operational by the next year-end,

former Central Air Commander Air Marshal SBP Sinha (Retd) said. The retired officer has been associated with the Astra missile programme for a long time now. The Astra is a beyond visual range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM), which flies over four times the speed of sound at Mach 4.5. Efforts are now on to integrate the over 100-km strike range missile on the indigenous fighter aircraft LCA Tejas.

The all-weather day and night capable Astra, which currently has a strike range of around 100 km, will eventually replace the expensive Russian, French and Israeli BVRAAMs that are currently imported to arm IAF fighters. The Indian Air Force and Indian navy have already given orders for 288 Astra Mark-1 Missiles which are already "proven" on the Russian-origin Sukhoi-30MKI fighters. (ANI)

Kejriwal to address 'kisan mahapanchayat' on Feb 28

NEW DELHI

AAP national convener and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal will address a 'kisan mahapanchayat' at Meerut on February 28 in support of farmers protesting the Centre's new agri laws, the party

said on Monday. AAP has strongly come out in favour of the farmers protesting the new farms laws. Kejriwal has visited Delhi's Singhu border, a major protest site, twice and expressed his support to the farmers.

Govt eases curbs on geospatial data for map-making

NEW DELHI

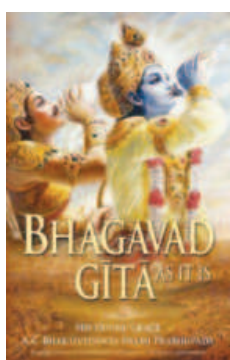
IN sweeping changes in the country's mapping policy, the government on Monday announced liberalisation of norms governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data, a move that will help in boosting innovation in the sector and create a level-playing field for public and private entities. Under the new guidelines, the sector will be deregulated and aspects such as prior approvals for surveying, mapping and for building applications based on that have been done away with, Department of Science and Technology Secretary Ashutosh Sharma said. For Indian entities, there will be complete deregulation with no prior approvals, security clearances, licenses, for acquisition and production of geospatial data and geospatial data services, including

maps, he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the liberalisation of policies governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data is a "massive step in government's vision for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat". The reform will benefit the country's farmers, startups, private sector, public sector and research institutions to drive innovations and build scalable solutions, he said.

Nanosatellite to carry Bhagavad Gita, PM Modi's photograph into space

NEW DELHI

A nanosatellite is all set to take a photograph of PM Narendra Modi and a copy of religious book, the Bhagavad Gita to space. In addition to these, names of 25,000 individuals were also carried by the Satish Dhawan Satellite (SD SAT) that is due of be launched by the end of this month from the space centre at Sriharikota. The nanosatellite has been developed by a private firm



SpaceKidz, reported a national daily. "We have also added the



name and photograph of the prime minister on the top panel with the words

Atmanirbhar mission. This satellite has been completely developed and fabricated in India, including the electronics and circuitry," Dr Srimathy Kesan, founder and CEO of SpaceKidz India revealed to the daily Hindustan Times. The names of Dr K Sivan, Chairperson ISRO and DR R Umamaheswaran, ISRO's Scientific Secretary have also been etched at the bottom panel of the nanosatellite.

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