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## Murder of Bajrang Dal's activist sparks violence

2 held; Harsha's funeral procession stokes anger

PNS ■ SHIVAMOGGA (KARNATAKA)/MUMBAI

A 28-year-old Bajrang Dal activist, Harsha, was stabbed fatally in Shivamogga district on Sunday night triggering massive protest from right-wing activists. His funeral procession in Shivamogga turned violent that left a photo journalist and a police woman among three injured.

The police have arrested two persons in connection with the murder and said efforts were on to nab the rest of the suspects at the earliest.

Home Minister Araga Jnanendra said a four-five member group of assailants was suspected to be involved in the killing.

Three persons were injured when miscreants pelted stones during the funeral procession of the deceased Harsha that took place amid tight security. Several vehicles were torched and damaged while there were reports of some shops also being ransacked.

Shivamogga, a town

around 250 km from Bengaluru, had recently seen disruption in some colleges over the hijab row.

Police tried to bring the situation under control and made way for the funeral procession to move further and the final rites to take place.

Harsha, a resident of Seegehatti, was attacked by a group of unknown persons at Bharati Colony here on Sunday night, following which he was taken to McGann Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Continued on Page 2



Vehicles set on fire by rioters during a funeral procession in Karnataka's Shivamogga town over the murder of Bajrang Dal worker, on Monday

PTI

## All religions must adhere to school dress codes: Shah

'BJP forming coalition Govt in Punjab, full majority in UP'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the "hijab" controversy snowballs in Karnataka and outside the State, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said he personally believes all

religions must adhere to school dress codes.

The top BJP leader predicted a coalition Government in Punjab as he foresaw a full majority for his party in Uttar Pradesh.

"The question does not arise, the BJP will come to power with a big margin, with full majority. Then what is the

need of a post-poll alliance? We already have a pre-poll alliance with two parties. And it is our tradition that even if we obtain a majority, we make our Government under the NDA. And we will not need anyone, we will win with full majority," Shah said when asked by the CNN-News18.

Continued on Page 2

## Lalu gets 5 years RI in 5th fodder scam case

RJD chief to move HC against verdict

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Special CBI court on Monday awarded five-year rigorous imprisonment and a fine of ₹60 lakh to former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad in a fodder scam case (RC 47 A/96). So far, Lalu has been convicted in five cases of fodder scam.

The case pertains to the fraudulent withdrawal of ₹139.35 crore from Doranda treasury of Ranchi during 1995-96.

RJD supreme's lawyer Prabhat Kumar said Lalu would challenge the judgment at the Jharkhand High Court besides a bail petition will be filed on behalf of Lalu.

"We will challenge the judgment and a petition will be moved very soon. Lalu has spent three years and 19 days in this case hence he can get the bail," Kumar said.

However, the CBI sources disputed the claim and said Lalu had not spent much time in jail.

Reacting to the judgment, Lalu tweeted, "I've been fighting against injustice, inequality and dictatorial regimes and will continue to fight. Who can break the resolve of someone whose power is truth and who



has the support of the masses?"

Lalu's son and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said his father was convicted because he fought against the RSS and the BJP. "If Lalu would have shaken hands with the BJP then he would have been called Raja Harishchandra but today he is fighting against RSS-BJP hence he is facing imprisonment. We'll not get scared with this," he said.

After he was pronounced guilty on February 15, Lalu was taken into custody. He is now admitted in Rajendra Institute of Medical Science at Ranchi.

On Monday morning, the court premises were jam-packed with lawyers, media persons, and supporters of Lalu. Former RJD MLA from Bihar Bhola Yadav, former Ministers Shyam Rajak, Abdul Bari Siddiqui, and many others were present. They turned disappointed and soon left the court premises when the court pronounced the quantum of punishment.

The court proceedings started at 12 when the court

heard arguments of lawyers of convicts on the point of sentencing. Lalu's lawyers said he is very old and suffering from many diseases hence the court adopts a lenient view. Lalu is currently under treatment at RIMS under judicial custody.

Special CBI judge Sudhanshu Kumar Shashi also pronounced the quantum of punishment to 39 other convicts of this case. All sentences were pronounced through video conferencing.

On February 15, the court held Lalu and 74 other accused guilty, including former MLAs, former Secretary, former Commissioner of Income Tax, the then AHD officials, veterinary doctors, proprietors, and other private persons. The court had acquitted 24 accused from all charges.

The court sentenced 35 convicts to three years of rigorous imprisonment along with a fine. Regarding rest of the convicts, the court fixed February 21 to pronounce the judgment of the remaining 40 convicts.

These 40 convicts include Lalu, Dr Rabindra Kumar Rana (then MLA, Bihar Assembly), Beck Julius (Secretary, AHD) Mahendra Prasad (Treasury Officer, Doranda Treasury), Devendra Prasad Srivastva, (Treasury Officer, Doranda Treasury).

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

COVOVAX: NOD SOUGHT FOR 12-17 YRS GROUP

New Delhi: Serum Institute of India has sought emergency use authorisation from India's drug regulator for its Covid-19 vaccine Covovax for the 12 to 17 year age group, official sources said on Monday.

SIT TO PROBE STUDENT LEADER'S DEATH: DIDI

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that a special investigation team (SIT) will be formed to probe student leader Anish Khan's "mysterious" death that has sparked widespread protests by Opposition parties.

'CARTOON ON BLASTS VERDICT ON FACTS'

Ahmedabad: A day after Twitter removed a caricature tweeted by the Gujarat BJP unit on a court verdict sentencing 38 people to death in the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blasts, the ruling party on Monday claimed the cartoon was based on real photographs and did not target any particular religion or community.

CANCELLATION OF OFFLINE BOARD EXAMS: SC TO LIST PLEA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to list for hearing a plea seeking cancellation of offline physical board examinations for classes 10 and 12 to be held by CBSE and other several boards this year. A bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justices AS Bopanna and Hima Kohli took note of the submissions of a lawyer.

## CPM activist hacked to death in Kannur

BJP councillor among 7 arrested

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Death continued stalking in Kannur district of Kerala as a fisherman was murdered in a gruesome manner in the early hours of Monday. Haridas (51), a CPI(M) activist, was hacked to death by a seven-member team, allegedly BJP-RSS workers, in the former's residence as his family members stood aghast. The marauders did not listen to the pleas by his wife and children and attacked the victim with swords and knives. One of the legs of Haridas was chopped off by the murderers.

This is the second murder happening in the district in a span of one week. Last Sunday (February 13) saw Jishnu, a youth succumbing to a bomb blast in a pitched battle between rival groups that took place in the residence of a bridegroom.

R Ilango, Commissioner of Police, Kannur, was tight-lipped about the cause behind the murder of Haridas. "We are

probing all aspects of the murder and it is not yet time to disclose more details," he told reporters. Seven persons, including a BJP councillor of Thalasseri municipal council, have been taken into custody for interrogation.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan accused the BJP and Sangh Parivar for the murder of Haridas. "There is an attempt to disturb the peace in the State and we know who are the people behind these attacks. They want to turn the State into a riot-torn place," said Vijayan.

CPI(M) Kerala secretary Kodyeri Balakrishnan blamed the RSS for Haridas' murder.

"The RSS has been holding secret arms training for more than 3,000 persons in Kannur for the last one month. This is part of its plan to eliminate our comrades," said Balakrishnan while speaking to the media at the Capital city.

Police said that the murder could be the fallout of a tense atmosphere prevailing in the fishers hamlet following altercation between CPI(M) and BJP/RSS workers during a temple festival.

## Vit C, D or Zinc shield against Covid deaths? No, say researchers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

If you have been banking on your daily dose of immune-boosting supplements to reduce the risk of Covid-19, then it's time to re-think. According to a new study, gulping down such supplements might not help.

In view of several studies claiming the efficacy of vitamins against Covid-19, a new research has said that taking immune-boosting supplements such as vitamin C, D and zinc do not lessen your chance of dying from the virus.

"A lot of people have this misconception that if you load up on zinc, vitamin D or C, it can help the clinical outcome of Covid-19," said Dr Azizullah Beran, an internal medicine resident at the University's College of Medicine and Life Sciences. "That hasn't been shown to be true," Beran added.

In the study, published in journal Clinical Nutrition



ESPEN, the team reviewed 26 peer-reviewed studies from around the globe that included more than 5,600 hospitalised Covid patients.

The analysis found no reduction in mortality for those being treated with vitamin D, C or zinc compared to patients who did not receive one of these three supplements.

While treatment with vitamin D may be associated with lower rates of intubation and shorter hospital stays, the researchers stated that more rigorous study is needed to validate that finding.

Continued on Page 2

## Udta Punjab! Addicts' number soars to 30 lakh

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The second edition of the Roadmap for prevention and control of substance abuse in Punjab which was released by Banwarilal Purohit, Governor of Punjab and Administrator, UT Chandigarh, at PGIMER revealed that the projected number of overall substance use in Punjab is 15.4 per cent. In absolute numbers, more than 3 million people in Punjab are currently consuming one or the other kind of drugs, mainly among the men, it stated.

During the occasion, Surjit Singh, Director PGIMER, Chandigarh and Dr GB Singh, Directorate of Health Services, Punjab, too were present.

The report which was edited by Dr JS Thakur, Professor, Department of Community



Medicine and School of Public Health, PGIMER, highlights the burden of substance abuse in Punjab. Purohit applauded the efforts by Thakur and his team and appreciated the role of public health approaches to deal with these social menaces. He endorsed the very essence of this report — prevention is better than cure in all respects.

According to an official statement released by PGIMER, the report contains comprehensive information on the burden of substance abuse in India and the State of

Punjab, various types of substances abused by people, strategies for prevention and control, the district substance abuse prevention plan and implementation.

The report highlights the burden of substance abuse in Punjab. As per the State of Punjab Household Survey (SPHS) and Statewide NCD STEPs Survey by PGIMER, the projected number of overall substance use in Punjab is 15.4 per cent. Translating it to the absolute number, more than 3 million people in Punjab are currently consuming one or the other kind of drugs, mainly the men. Alcohol is the maximally abused substance by more than 2 million people, followed by tobacco which is consumed by more than 1.5 million people.

Continued on Page 2

## Bribe proof must to book babus: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said the proof of demand for bribe by a public servant and its acceptance by the official is essential for establishing the offence under the provision of the anti-corruption law which relates to government servants taking illegal gratification.

The apex court said that offence under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act relating to public servants taking bribe requires a demand of illegal gratification and its acceptance.

The section deals with offence by public servants taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of an official act.

Continued on Page 2

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# Cong continues stir in K'taka House

## Speaker objects to slogans against RSS

**Bengaluru:** Protests by the Congress, who are demanding the sacking of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister KS Eshwarappa and that he be booked for sedition over a statement on the national flag, continued to rock the Assembly proceedings in Karnataka for the fourth consecutive day on Monday.

The Assembly also saw passage of four bills amidst the din, and Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri took strong exception to Congress members 'unnecessarily' bringing in RSS' name during their protest in the well of the House.

The 'day-and-night' protests by the legislators

whereby they spend the night inside the Assembly began on Thursday demanding Eshwarappa's dismissal.

Recently, Eshwarappa had claimed 'Bhagwa dhvaj' (saffron flag) may become the national flag some time in the future and the same may be hoisted on the Red Fort then.

He however had said the tricolour is the national flag now, and it should be respected by everyone.

As the House met for the day, Congress members trooped into the well of the House and started shouting slogans demanding action against Eshwarappa.

Slogans like - "Down, down BJP", "Suspend Eshwarappa", "Eshwarappa desha drohi (traitor)", "Down Down desha drohi BJP government", "Speaker give justice", "This government is RSS' puppet", "We want constitution, not

Manuvada" - among others marred the proceedings.

Despite protest, Speaker Kageri took up the question hour with no Congress legislator taking part in it.

Then, amidst the din, the assembly also passed four bills - The Karnataka Civil Services (Validation of Selection and Appointment of 2011 batch Gazetted Probationers) Bill, 2022; The Karnataka Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 2022; The Karnataka Stamp (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022; The Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance, 1944, (Karnataka Amendment) Bill, 2022 - without any discussions.

After the passage of bills, the Speaker asked former chief minister and Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah to participate in the discussion on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address, and called on Congress members to go

back to their seats, which went unheard by the principal opposition party members, who in turn demanded "justice" from him.

The Speaker said several attempts have been made by him for the smooth conduct of the proceedings of the house, by calling a meeting of the Leader of the House (CM Basavaraj Bommai) and Leader of Opposition, along with other senior leaders, but it has failed.

"Difference of opinion is common in a democracy, but we are duty bound to conduct the proceedings of this House. If the government has not agreed to your demands, protest outside and cooperate to run the House. We have to discuss developmental issues, issues of the people here", he said.

JD(S) deputy leader Bandedappa Kashempur said his

party has 31 members and wants to raise several key issues concerning the people of the state and farmers, and they should be given an opportunity.

Meanwhile, when Congress members raised slogans taking the RSS' name, Speaker Kageri took strong exception to this. "I want to say to Congress members very strongly - unnecessarily, why are you bringing in the RSS' name. How is RSS responsible for this? Don't repeatedly bring RSS' name unnecessarily," he said.

"RSS is an organisation with a nationalist ideology, they are working towards uniting Hindus. You have to cooperate in their efforts. Don't bring RSS name, if you have political differences, set it right," Kageri added.

As chaos continued, the Speaker then adjourned the House for Tuesday. **PTI**



Lt-Gen Upendra Dwivedi, GoC-in-C Northern Command, visits ground zero at forward areas along LAC to review the security situation. He interacted with all ranks of all security forces & appreciated the professionalism & operational response towards the evolving threat matrix  
Pioneer photo

# Maha inches closer to end of Covid 3rd wave as cases reach below 1K mark

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra on Monday inched closer to what may be the end of the third wave of Covid-19, as the daily infections dropped below 1000 for the first time in nearly 22 months after the break-out of the State. A day after Maharashtra recorded 1,437 infections, the daily cases dropped to 806, while the daily cases came down in Mumbai from 167 to 96.

Available records show that within a few weeks of the break-out of the pandemic, Maharashtra had on April 23, 2020 recorded 778 daily infections.

With 806 fresh infections recorded on Monday, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state rose from 78,58,431 to 78,59,237.

With four fresh deaths, the total number of deaths registered in the state since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the state in March 2020 went up from 1,43,582 to 1,43,586.

With the fresh 96 cases, the total number of cases in Mumbai mounted from 10,55,561 to 10,55,657. While the recovery rate stood static at 98 per cent, the overall growth rate of Covid-19 cases in the metropolis for a period from February 14 and 20 dropped to 0.02 per cent.

As 2,696 Covid-19 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March 2020 increased from 76,94,439 to 76,97,135. The recovery rate in the state rose from 97.91 per cent to 97.94 per cent.

The number of "active cases" in the state dropped from 16,422 to 14,525. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.82 per cent.

The active cases in Pune dropped from 4743 to 4418. The active cases in Mumbai dropped from 1511 to 1415, while the number of active cases in the neighbouring

Thane dropped from 1040 to 994. The active cases in Ahmednagar dropped from 1550 to 1464, while the number of active cases in Nagpur came down from 1530 to 1255.

Of the 7,72,69,104 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 78,59,237 have tested positive (10.17 per cent) for Covid-19 until Monday.

Currently, 1,76,378 people are in home quarantine while 1,036 people are in institutional quarantine.

Meanwhile, 53 fresh Omicron cases were recorded in Maharashtra on Monday, resulting in the total number of the new Covid-19 variant cases going up to 4,509. Of these cases, 3,994 patients have been discharged after they tested negative in the RT-PCR tests.

Till Friday evening, 8904 samples had been sent for genome sequencing, out of which, results of 8,044 patients have been received, while the results of 860 samples are awaited.

## Will launch protests if Guj doesn't withdraw pending cases against quota agitators by March 23, says Hardik Patel

**Ahmedabad:** Patidar leader Hardik Patel on Monday said that state-wide agitations will be launched in Gujarat after March 23 if the ruling BJP Government fails to withdraw all the remaining criminal cases lodged against protesters during the 2015 Patidar agitation for reservation under OBC category.

Patidars form a significant vote bank in Gujarat where elections are due in December this year.

Addressing media persons, Patel, who is Gujarat Congress working president, said that he was raising the demand for the withdrawal of the remaining cases as a quota agitator and not as a Congressman.

Playing down Hardik's threat to launch protests, Gujarat BJP spokesperson Rutvij Patel said Hardik and his party have lost their political base in Gujarat and they are doing such "stunts" only to grab the attention of the media.

As promised, nearly 140 cases against Patidar agitators were withdrawn when Anandiben Patel was the chief minister (till August 2016). Her successor Vijay Rupani had promised to take back the remaining cases but he did nothing. At present, nearly 200 cases involving nearly 4,000 youths, who are shown as accused, are pending," claimed Hardik.

He claimed that prominent Patidar leaders and MPs from the community made a representation before Bhupendra Patel after he became chief minister of Gujarat a few months back on this issue, "Patidar youths are getting harassed due to the false cases lodged against them. Despite such representation from various quarters, the CM has not taken any decision yet," Hardik said. **PTI**

# Murder of...

**From Page 1**

Karnataka Minister KS Eshwarappa, who hails from the district, alleged that "Musalmán goondas" were behind Harsha's murder.

Eshwarappa said, "Recently, DK Shivakumar (State Congress president) had made an instigating statement that on a Government school premises, the national flag was lowered to hoist Bhagwa (saffron) flag and 50 lakh saffron flags were brought from Surat in lorries and were distributed among students. This had given abetment to Muslim goondas. We will not allow such goondagiri in Shivamogga and will suppress it."

To this, Shivakumar hit back at the Minister, saying Eshwarappa cannot sleep without taking his name.

Shivamogga Deputy Commissioner Selvamani said, "Already Section 144 has been imposed (for two days). Additional Director General of

Police (ADGP) himself is monitoring the maintenance of law and order...We are doing all that we can and bring the situation under control at the earliest."

ADGP Murugan said efforts were on to bring the situation under control. The Superintendent of Police (SP) and Deputy Commissioner were visiting various places and using force wherever required, and the administration is taking all the necessary measures to ensure peace and order is not disturbed.

A case has been registered and the investigating team has already arrested two accused in connection with the murder and have gathered complete information about who were all involved in it. Efforts were on to nab the others, Murugan said.

Separate cases will be booked with regard to the damage to properties and whoever was involved, whether it is

a Hindu or a Muslim, merciless action will be taken against them, he said.

"I appeal to everyone to maintain peace. Don't put fire to your own city."

The SP has formed four teams under DSP (Deputy Superintendent of Police) level officers, and the additional SP himself is supervising the investigation, he added.

Earlier, hundreds of people took part in the funeral procession that was joined by Eshwarappa, who is the local MLA and Shivamogga MP BY Raghavendra.

Following the developments, the district administration had clamped prohibitory orders and had declared holiday for schools and colleges in the city during the day. Shops and commercial establishments remained shut in parts of the city.

Speaking to reporters earlier in the day, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai appealed for peace saying the Government will get the murder investigated and punish the guilty at the earliest.

The Home Minister, who met the family earlier in the day said he has not got any infor-

mation about involvement of any organisation behind the murder so far, but that a four-five member group was involved.

"Police have information on who was involved in the murder and were behind them and very soon they will be arrested. According to information, four to five people were involved," he said.

In response to a question, the Home Minister said, Harsha was a Hindu karyakarta and there is information that there were a couple of cases against him, and earlier too he had been attacked. "They are all being looked into," he said.

Congress leader Shivakumar claimed there is information that the murder might have been due to personal issue.

"There is such information, such reports are there in the media also, we don't know. Guilty must be punished and justice should be given to the family of the deceased," he said.

Reacting to Eshwarappa's allegation against him, Shivakumar said the Minister "can't sleep without taking my name....If I have incited people,

let them take action against me. Case should be booked against him (for his recent comments on the national flag) first...He should have been sacked from the Ministry."

Meanwhile, "#JusticeForHarsha" was trending on Twitter, with several users demanding justice for the young activist.

Among them were actor Raveena Tandon and BJP leaders Kapil Mishra and the saffron party's Andhra Pradesh State general secretary Vishnu Vardhan Reddy.

In Mumbai, actor Raveena and filmmaker Manish Munda on Monday condemned the killing of the 23-year-old Bajrang Dal activist in Karnataka.

"#JusticeForHarsha," Tandon tweeted.

Mundra, best known for backing National Award-winning "Newton" and "Masaan", called the killing "another mob lynching" and demanded justice for Harsha.

"We will trend #JusticeForHarsha and sleep. Then will wait for another mob lynching for the new trend. Time to wake up!!" Mundra said in his tweet.

## Udta...

**From Page 1**

This is followed by abuse of opioids by 1.7 lakh individuals, followed by cannabinoids as well as sedative-inhalant-stimulants. The latter are largely a class of pharmacological or prescription drugs being used illicitly. There is also a large number of injecting drug users in the State with high prevalence of HIV (19.5%) in a recent survey.

The book has basic information on various types of drugs and their effect on body and impact of substance abuse on teens, younger and older adults is mentioned in the book. Key features of the book include comprehensive information on development of strategies of prevention and control of substance abuse and implementation guidelines with estimated budget required for a five-year plan. There is a provision for setting up of the State, regional resource and training centres in a decentralised manner, and the service delivery under the plan covers village, block and district level and can

be evaluated every five years.

Supply reduction strategy means to target the illegal drugs, whereby the efforts generally involve attempts to disrupt the distribution and supply chains for these drugs. Demand reduction can be mediated via the efforts aimed at reducing the public desire for illegal and illicit drugs. De-addiction services are contributing to demand reduction measures. Harm reduction or minimization strategy tends to include a range of public health policies designed to reduce the harmful consequences associated with various human behaviors, both legal and illegal. It is time for the Government to actively implement plan as the State is already suffering from a great burden of substance dependence and addiction and only the curative services are not going to break the chain of supply and demand.

"This report was the outcome of a request by the Government of Punjab by the then principal secretary, health and family welfare, Punjab. Book has incorporated a few interesting case studies from different parts of Punjab," officials added.

It was alleged that though the assessment of the society for the year 1997-98 was completed, till February 2000, the returns for the year 1996-97 remained pending for assessment.

The prosecution alleged that the appellant had issued a notice in February 2000 calling upon the society to produce cash book, general ledger and purchase and sales statements for the year 1996-97.

Thereafter, the complainant attended the office of the appellant along with the records and it was alleged that the officer had demanded a bribe of Rs 3,000 for issuing an assessment order.

## Lalu...

**From Page 1**

Other convict Dr Radha Raman Sahay (Drawing and Disbursing Officer), Krishna Mohan Prasad (Assistant Director AHD), Junul Bhengraj (Regional Director) Dr Gauri Shankar Prasad, Dr Ram Prakash Ram, Dr Jaswant Sahay, Dr Rabindra Kumar Singh, Dr Prabhat Kumar Sinha, Dr Lalitshwar Prasad Yadav, Dr Krishna Bihari Lal, Dr Ajit Kumar, Dr Chander Kishore Lal, Dr Birsra Oraon, Dr Shiv Nandan Prasad, Dr Arjun Nandan, Dr Mukesh Kumar Srivastava, Dr Braj Nandan Prasad Verma, Dr Nalini Ranjan Prasad Sinha, Nitya Nand Kumar Singh, Ravi Nandan Kumar Sinha, Md Sayeed, Jagmohan Lal Kakkar, Mohinder Singh Bedi, Dayanand Prasad Kashyap, Suresh Kumar Dubey, Umesh Dubey, Satyendra Kumar Mehra, Rajesh Mehra, Dr Bijayeshwari Prasad Sinha, Tripurari Mohan Prasad, Bal Krishna Sharma, Dr. Ajit Kumar Verma, Ravi Kumar Mehra and Mahendra Kumar Kundan.

There are some convicts on whom the court slapped a fine of Rs one crore and even above. For instance, Md Sayeed (5 years RI, Rs 1.5 crore), Dayanand Kashyap (4 years RI, Rs 1 crore), BB Sinha (4 years RI, Rs 1 crore), Tripurari Mohan Prasad (5 years RI, Rs 2 crore), Krishna Mohan Prasad (5 years, Rs 1.5 crore).

The CBI had taken over the investigation of this case in March 1996 on the instruction of Patna High Court.

# All religions must...

**From Page 1**

In a wide-ranging interview with the television channel where he spoke about Assembly elections in five States, tone and tenor of BJP's campaign pitch, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's charges and a coalition Government in Punjab, he said, "It is my personal belief that people of all religions should accept the school dress code. And the issue is now in court, and the court is conducting its hearings on the matter. Whatever it

decides should be followed by all," the Home Minister said.

"Ultimately, it has to be decided whether the country will function on the Constitution or whims. My personal belief only remains until the court makes a decision. And once the court makes a decision, then I should accept it, and everyone should accept it. But, I still personally believe that every student should function according to the dress code and uniform mandated by the school," Shah told CNN-News18.

Asked about the involvement of Campus Front of India in the issue, Shah said, "These people may have their active involvement, but I'll just say their intentions will not come to fruition. The people of India will accept the court's judgment once it comes."

Coming back to the hard-fought ongoing State Assembly polls, particularly in UP, Shah said UP elections are not about Muslims, Yadavs or Hindus and that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath may have been referring to voting percentages in his "80-20" statement.

"I don't think this election is about Muslims or Yadavs or Hindus. Yogi may have spoken about vote percentages but not about Muslims vs Hindus," Shah said.

Asked if UP elections were being polarised, Shah replied in the affirmative, but said it is the poor and famers who are being polarised.

"Yes, polarisation is happening. The poor and farmers are being polarised. Many farmers are getting money from the Kisan Kalyan Nidhi Yojana. I can see 'polarisation'

clearly."

The top BJP leader who was once in-charge of UP and subsequently headed the BJP also emphasised that "voting pattern can't be termed polarisation".

"We have left no stone unturned. We have extended benefits to every section of society, irrespective of caste and religion. Whoever was eligible has received benefits. Under the PM's initiative, we have given gas to 1.66 crore women in UP. Around 2.62 lakh families did not have proper toilets. Can you imagine that? Today, women don't have to defecate in the open and they are happy. Around 40 lakh women have benefitted from the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana," Shah said.

Speaking about Punjab polls Shah said there could be

a coalition of two-three parties depending on the numbers in case of a hung Assembly.

"Except for fortune tellers, nobody can predict what will happen in Punjab. It was a different type of election. We are positive that we put forth a strong challenge," Shah said.

Asked about the scenario of a hung Assembly in Punjab, he said, "It depends on numbers. There can be a coalition government of 2-3 parties, like there have been in this country."

Answering questions on the BJP's arch political rival Congress leader Rahul and his recent charge in the Lok Sabha that the Narendra Modi Government's foreign policy has brought together China and Pakistan together against India, the Home Minister claimed Rahul does not know

the history of the country and should not have made the statement in Parliament.

"Rahul doesn't know the history of this country. He doesn't know what happened in 1962 and because of whom. The Modi Government has given strong reply to every challenge posed by China," Shah said.

"The Modi Government has protected the borders and sovereignty of the country. I don't think these kinds of statements about neighbouring countries should be made by any national leader. I want to ask him, you are saying all this in Parliament, but you break all protocols to meet a Chinese delegation. What do you discuss with them? Such statements show there is a dearth of serious politicians," Shah added.

## Vit C, D or Zinc shield against...

**From Page 1**

Vitamin C and zinc were not associated with shorter hospital stays or lowering the chance of a patient being put on a ventilator. The researchers also analysed a smaller subset of individuals who had been taking vitamin D prior to contracting the virus and found no significant difference in the mortality rate.

However, they cautioned that the study should not be

interpreted as saying vitamin and mineral supplements are bad or should be avoided, but rather made it clear that they are not effective at preventing deaths due to Covid.

At the same time, they also noted that it's possible that some Covid patients who are malnourished or otherwise deficient in micronutrients may benefit from taking supplements, but that's because their bodies already lack essential nutrients -- not because vitamin D or vitamin C are effective against the virus.

"What we're saying is this: If you don't medically need these supplements, don't take them thinking they're protective against Covid," Beran said. "They're not going to prevent you from getting it and they're not going to prevent you from dying."



# Will tie up with anti-BJP camp: AAP

## ‘In case of hung Assembly in Uttar Pradesh’

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Terming Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s remarks equating the bicycle with terrorism as an attack on the poor, the Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Monday indicated that his party would go with the anti-BJP camp in case of a hung Assembly in Uttar Pradesh (UP).

Kejriwal addressed two massive ‘jan sabhas’ (public meetings) in Lucknow and Barabanki as a part of the party’s campaigns. AAP Rajya Sabha MP and UP in-charge Sanjay Singh was also present at rallies along with the senior party leadership and candidates for the forthcoming polls.

“The politicians are asking for votes by calling me a terrorist because they have not



done anything in 70 years to develop the existing resources. First they called the farmers terrorists, then they targeted those who use cycles. When you go out to vote this time, show them that the real terrorists reside in BJP and nowhere else,” he said. Days after a court convicted 49 people for Ahmedabad serial

blasts, Modi had on Sunday said that BJP had vowed to punish perpetrators even if they took refuge in ‘paatal’ (hell), and accused Samajwadi Party (SP) of being sympathetic to such terrorists. He said he had wondered why the terrorists had opted for the ‘bicycle’, the SP’s election symbol, to plant bombs in the initial blasts

in Ahmedabad.The AAP leader further said, “A man came to me and said Kejriwal ji, you are making big promises this elections, but will you win? I replied that all the surveys are saying that any particular party may not get majority this time. If we get opportunity to form Government or any anti-BJP camp forms it... I will get all my guarantees (promises) fulfilled by whoever forms the Government.”

The Delhi Chief Minister also accused Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of calling him a “terrorist”, saying despite ruling the country for 70 years, these parties do not have a single concrete work to talk about and “that is why, they are calling Kejriwal a terrorist”. “We inaugurated over 12,000 impressive new classrooms in Delhi. Electronic boards, elevators in school buildings, laboratories and multipurpose halls are being provided in Delhi’s

Government schools. At least 12,000 classrooms were added, and 20,000 plus classrooms have been built in past seven years by Delhi Government.

Even if one sums up classrooms built by the central as well as State Governments, they do not come close to Delhi’s performance. These 20,000 classrooms translate into some 400 new Government schools which we have built in past seven years. How many schools has Yogi Adityanath built in his term of five years across the entire State of Uttar Pradesh,” he said.The AAP leader also said that British used to call Bhagat Singh a terrorist. Today, all these corrupt people cannot sleep peacefully due to work done by Kejriwal.

These corrupt people are calling me a terrorist.” Kejriwal began his four-day UP tour from Monday and will be visiting Barabanki, Prayagraj and Gorakhpur during visit and join various election-related programmes of AAP.

# 3 MCDs to regularise 16,346 sanitation workers

## Cong terms move as election stunt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



With the municipal elections round the corner, all the three municipal corporations of Delhi (MCDs) have decided to regularise 16,346 sanitation workers.

The State BJP president Adesh Gupta today said that the appointment letters would be handed over to them very soon. “Sanitation workers play the most important role in keeping Delhi clean and our party always cares for the interest and health of these workers. Regularising their services will be a big reward for them,” he said.

“Our corporations are committed to their welfare as their contribution towards Delhi is very significant,” he added. While congratulating all

he added.

The State BJP president said the sanitation workers have finally been rewarded for their hard work and the corporations have done a commendable job by trying to do away with an atmosphere of insecurity and instability that was surrounding these workers.

Meanwhile, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Anil Kumar said that the BJP-ruled municipal corporations have suddenly realised the need to regularise the services of some ad hoc sanitation workers, though during the BJP’s 15-year rule in the MCDs, the sanitation workers were the most harassed, neglected and humiliated.

Terming the move as an election stunt, Kumar said that sanitation workers risked their lives in checking the spread of the Covid virus, even as Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal relaxed at his residence without stirring out fearing the virus.

# Court notice to police on misleading statement on sanction to prosecute Sushil Ansal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A court here on Monday issued a show cause notice to the Delhi Police for allegedly making a misleading statement before it regarding the sanction to prosecute Sushil Ansal, convicted in the 1997 Uphaar cinema fire which killed 59 people, for purported fraud while getting his passport renewed.

The court issued the notice to the Investigating Officer (IO) of the case on an application moved by the complainant, alleging that the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi had already accorded the requisite sanction on September 16 last year, which was duly communicated to the DCP’s headquarters on the same day. The police on January 31, 2022 submitted before the court that its application seeking the sanction was pending before the L-G’s office and sought more time to procure the documents.

The court had granted three weeks to the IO to procure the sanction. The court passed the order on Monday after the complainant and Association of Victims of Uphaar Tragedy (AVUT) chairperson Neelam Krishnamoorthy informed it that conflicting details had come out from the reply of a Right To Information (RTI)

application filed by her on February 14, 2022. Senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, appearing for the AVUT, pointed out that the chargesheet filed in the court was only under Section 177 (furnishing false information), 181 (knowingly stating to a public servant, on oath as True that which is false) of IPC and 12 (obtaining a passport by suppressing information about his nationality) of Passport Act, whereas the draft chargesheet filed with the office of the L-G on May 22, 2020 was under sections 420 (cheating), 177, 181, 192 (giving or fabricating false evidence), 197 (issuing of sighting false certificate) of IPC and section 12 of the Passport Act.

It was alleged in the complaint that Ansal was getting his passport renewed every 5-10 years. As per rules, the passport application for new/ re-issue/ replacement of lost/ damaged passport issued by the Ministry of External Affairs mandates the applicant to disclose whether he is involved in any criminal case or not and to produce the NOC from the concerned court in case they are involved in any criminal prosecution. The plea claimed that Ansal was holding two passports. The court had also noted in an order that his passport number given to the court in 2018 was different from the earlier one mentioned in 2008.

# Rajendra Pal Gautam directs officials to speed up process of disbursing scholarship

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Social Welfare Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam on Monday directed officials to speed up process of disbursing scholarship to students. The direction came in a meeting chaired by minister regarding disbursement of various student scholarships within department. He also asked them to resolve all issues regarding scholarship as soon as possible. The meeting was attended by Director of SC-ST Welfare Department and high ranking officials of Education Department and Finance

Department. “It had come to his notice that there was certain pendency regarding disbursement of student scholarships under SC/ST/OBC department which was causing inconvenience to students. The Minister took a serious stand against pendency and directed officials to immediately expedite process,” the office of Social Welfare Minister. Gautam said “There has been a delay in disbursement of student scholarships under ST/SC/OBC department. I have ordered the officers to resolve all the issues as soon as possible so that students start receiving their scholarship at the earliest.

# DMRC assures Delhi HC it will deposit ₹600 crore within 2 days for DAMEPL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Monday assured the Delhi High Court that it will deposit Rs 600 crore within two days in an escrow account for Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Limited (DAMEPL), which had initiated execution proceedings against DMRC concerning an arbitral award of over Rs 4,600 crore in its favour.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait took on record the statement made by DMRC’s counsel and reserved the order on the execution petition.

Senior advocate Parag Tripathi, representing DMRC, initially submitted that the corporation will pay Rs 600 crore in 72 hours and urged the court to grant some time to it to approach banks for taking the loan for paying the arbitral award amount.

He said the money received by it from governmental agencies is for the completion of metro projects and the amount cannot be used by DMRC for paying the arbitral award amount.

“I have money in my account but it is earmarked for a project and it is not my money. I do not have to power to dispose of this money,” Tripathi submitted on behalf of DMRC. The court, however, asked the DMRC to deposit Rs 600 crore within two days, and the counsel appearing for it agreed.Meanwhile, senior advocate Ramji Srinivasan, appearing for certain banks, said they are lenders to the project and they need their money, irrespective of the fact that it is paid by DMRC or DAMEPL.

He urged the court to ensure that the money received shall not be disbursed outside and be given to the lenders.

He said the outstanding amount to the lenders was more than Rs 9,000 crores when the amount which has to come from the present proceedings is about Rs 6,000 crore. DAMEPL was represented by senior advocate Rakesh Kumar Khanna. In an earlier affidavit, DMRC has stated that as of February 14, it has a total of Rs 5,694.25 crore as funds which include Rs 1,452.10 crore as DMRC funds

and Rs 2,681.29 has project funds. The court had earlier directed DMRC to give details of its funds and balance sheet. On January 24, the Supreme Court had asked DMRC and DAMEPL to request the high court to hear the dispute relating to the execution of the arbitral award, saying that any further delay is detrimental to the interest of both the parties.

Last year, DMRC had told the court that since the corporation was facing a “financial crunch”, undertaking a “sudden liability” would impact public interest and authorities were therefore working out a solution. It had said that it would deposit Rs 1,000 crore in favour of DAMEPL in an escrow account and suggested taking over the debt of the Reliance Infrastructure subsidiary to the extent of the award money, saying that it would be a better position to negotiate with the lender banks.

The offer, however, was turned down by DAMEPL and the court had observed that if the decree-holder did not want to accept the proposal, it could not be forced to do so. The high court had earlier pulled up DAMEPL for playing hide and seek with the court and holding out-of-court communications with DMRC to settle the dispute relating to the execution of the over Rs 4,600 crore arbitral award passed against the PSU.

An arbitral tribunal in its May 2017 award had ruled in favour of DAMEPL, which had pulled out from running the Airport Express metro line over safety issues, and accepted its claim that the running of operations on the line was not viable due to structural defects in the viaduct through which the train would run.

The arbitral award pertained to a concession agreement between the two entities, which was signed on August 25, 2008. Under the agreement, DMRC was to carry out the civil works, excluding at the depot, and the balance, including the project system works, were to be executed by DAMEPL, a joint venture of Rinfra and a Spanish construction company -- Construcciones Y Auxiliar De Ferrocarriles -- with a shareholding of 95 and five per cent respectively.

# Allow shops to remain open till 10 pm in CP, says traders' association

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of the improving COVID-19 situation in the national capital, the New Delhi Traders Association (NDTA) has written to Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal, requesting him to allow shops to remain open till 10 PM in Connaught Place.

This is the second letter to Bajjal written by the NDTA, citing huge financial losses as a cause of concern for traders.

“We request you to extend the closing timings of shops in Delhi to 10 PM on the same line as that of restaurants.

In UP and Haryana, night curfew and all restrictions have been removed but in Delhi timings for closing shops is same at 8 pm, which is causing huge financial losses to shop owners,” NDTA wrote to the LG. “Since Covid positivity rate in Delhi has reduced drastically and is continuously reducing every day, we once again request you to extend closing timing of shops from 8 PM to 10 PM on the same line as closing timing fixed for restaurants,” it added.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), in its meeting on February 4, had extended the imposition of night curfew in the national capital but slashed its duration by an hour -- from 11 PM to 5 AM.

Due to the night curfew, shops selling non-essential items are only allowed to operate till 8 PM. The DDMA had also allowed the reopening of schools for classes 9 to 12 from February 7 and for students of nursery to Class 8 from February 14.

Further, it permitted all government and private offices to function at 100 per cent capacity. Gyms were also allowed to reopen with certain restrictions. However, several restrictions like allowing only one weekly market in a municipal zone, no standing passengers in buses and Metro trains and a 50 per cent cap on seating capacity in restaurants, bars and cinemas remain, even though there has been a marked decline in COVID-19 cases in Delhi.

# Four cattle smugglers arrested after gunfight from Manesar, cow rescued

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Four cattle smugglers were nabbed in the Manesar area after a gunfight with cow vigilantes on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday. A cow was rescued which was being taken to Rajasthan, the police said.

The four accused were identified as Nishar and Rafiq, residents of Khod Basai village while Jakir and Irshad of Badwa and Sundh villages, respectively, of Nuh district.

A cow, tied with ropes in their pickup jeep was also rescued. The police have also recovered 1 illegal weapon and 2 empty bullet cells from their possession.

The complaint Mohit, a member of cow vigilante group told the police the accused had fired indiscriminately at their vehicle when they chased



and tried to stop them.”The cow smugglers started firing when we signalled to stop them, a bullet hit our vehicle and eventually a tyre burst of the accused vehicle forced them to stop.

We overpowered and handed them over to the police,” the complaint said.

“We have nabbed all the four and also recovered an

illegal weapon from them which was used in the incident,” Subhash Boken, spokesperson of the Gurugram police said. An FIR has been registered against the accused under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including sections of the Haryana Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gausamvardhan Act, 2015 at IMT Manesar police station.

# Body of 35-yr-old milkman found on Heliport road in Rohini area

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The body of a 35-year-old milkman was found on Heliport road in Rohini area early Monday morning. Police said that the police teams are scanning CCTV cameras in the area to know the crime sequence and identify the accused.

The deceased has been identified as Pradeep, a resident of Rithala in Delhi’s Rohini area. According to Pranav Tayal, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Rohini district, a police control room (PCR) call was received at Begumpur police station at around 5.53 AM, that a dead body is lying on the Heliport road, just after traffic signal following which Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was dispatched for the spot.

“When police team rushed to the spot, they found Pradeep who works as a milk man lying on the road along with his motorcycle. The injured was taken to Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, where he was declared dead,” said the DCP.

# 2nd list for admission to nursery, KG and class-1 released in Capital by private schools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The second list for admission to entry-level classes — nursery, KG and class-1 was released by the private schools in the national Capital on Monday. The schools had put out their first list on February 4 using the point-based criteria announced by them earlier.

The process for nursery admissions in over 1,800 schools in the national capital began on December 15 last year, bringing respite for anxious parents who have been waiting for the notification for over two months.

According to a senior official of Directorate of Education (DoE), the students who have been shortlisted in second list have to take admission between February 22 to 28.

“All private unaided recognised schools were directed that they shall develop and adopt criteria for admission which shall be fair, reasonable, well-defined, equitable, non-discriminatory, unambiguous and transparent,” he said. “The subsequent list for admission,

if any, will be released on March 15. The entire admission process will conclude on March 31,” he added.

The DoE has also directed that the number of seats at the entry-level shall not be less than the highest number of seats in entry-level classes during the last three academic years -- 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.

According to norms, all private unaided recognised schools admitting children in pre-school, pre-primary and class-1 level shall reserve 25 per cent seats for EWS or DG category students and children with disability.

A monitoring committee has been constituted in each district under the chairmanship of Deputy Director (District) concerned regarding admission process.

The deputy director has been asked to ensure that each private school uploads criteria and its points on online module and further ensure that school shall not adopt those criteria which were abolished by department and upheld by the Delhi High Court.

# Rape & murder: Partially decomposed body of 14-year-old girl found in a shop in Narela

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The partially decomposed body of a 14 year-old girl, who was allegedly gangraped, was found in a shop in Outer Delhi’s Narela area. Police said that girl was abducted nine days ago and allegedly gangraped before she was strangled to death and later stuffed inside gunny bag, which accused kept in the shop.

Police said that they have arrested one man in early hours of the Monday in connection with the incident while police teams are trying to trace and nab another accused who is on run. Police said that a labourer, who worked in a shop, was arrested from Sannoth village in area while he was trying to flee from Delhi to Mumbai. The second

person believed to be involved in crime will be arrested soon, police added. According to Brijendra Kumar Yadav, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), outer north district, the teen was kidnapped on February 12 and a kidnapping case against unknown persons registered three days later following a statement from her parents that their daughter was missing. The horror unravelled on Saturday, a week after she went missing, when police received a call from a shopkeeper about a foul smell in his shop in Sannoth village. The shopkeeper said a labourer, from Uttar Pradesh’s Hardoi district, he employed had been absent.”When police searched the shop, they found a partially decomposed body that turned out be of the missing teen.

# Man dies after inhaling gas from geyser at Gurugram hotel

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A 27-year-old man was found dead inside a hotel room in Gurugram, after reportedly inhaling gas from a geyser in the bathroom, the police said on Monday.

Pankaj, a resident of Rajasthan’s Jhunjhunu and serving in the Army Medical Corps, said in his police complaint that he and his friends left Dehradun on February 14 and that they arrived in Gurugram on February 19 and booked two rooms at a hotel. “While staying in a hotel room Satdev a resident of Ambala got into the bathroom, but when he did not come out even after 20 minutes and did not respond, we

called the hotel manager, the hotel staff broke the door and we found Satdev unconscious in the smoke-filled bathroom,” the complaint told the police.

Satdev was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead.Pankaj alleged that his friend died after inhaling the gas, due to the negligence of the hotel manager and owner.

The police handed over the body to the family members of the deceased after an autopsy.

An FIR has been filed against the hotel owner and manager under relevant sections of the IPC at the City police station. Police said further proceedings against the accused will be initiated as per the law.



Workers push a tricycle cart past a wall mural, in New Delhi on Monday

PTI



# Budget will be great help for NEP: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With a focus on creating a "digital skill ecosystem", skill development as per industry demand and "better industry linkages and internationalization"—being emphasized with arrival of "world class foreign universities"—Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the Union Budget for 2022-23 would be of great help in implementing the National Education Policy on the ground.

Modi said the decision to set up a National Digital University can solve the problem of shortage of seats in educational institutions in the country that we experience in our country.

Addressing a webinar on the positive impact of the Union Budget 2022-23, Modi said the budget focuses on five aspects related to the education sector — universalisation of quality education, skill development, urban planning and design, internationalisation and AVGC (Animation Visual Effects Gaming Comic).

He outlined that digital

connectivity is what kept the education system running in this time of global pandemic. "We are seeing how the digital divide is rapidly shrinking in India. Innovation is ensuring inclusion for us," he said.

Educational infrastructure such as e-Vidya, One Class One Channel, Digital Labs and Digital University are going to help the youths a lot, he said.

The Prime Minister explained five aspects highlighted in the Budget 2022. Firstly, key decisions have been taken for universalization of quality education i.e expansion of education with improved quality along with enhanced capabilities of the education sector.

Secondly, attention has been given to skill development. Focus is on creating a digital skill ecosystem, skill development as per industry demand and better industry linkages.

Thirdly, he said, inclusion of India's ancient experience and knowledge of urban planning and designing into education is important.

Fourthly, Modi said

Internationalization has been emphasized involving the arrival of "world class foreign universities" and encouragement of institutions of GIFT City getting Fintech related institutes. Fifth, focus on Animation Visual Effects Gaming Comics, where there is huge potential of employment and there is a big global market.

On the International Mother Language Day, the Prime Minister underlined the link between education in the medium of mother language and the mental development of children.

He informed that in many states medical and technical education is also being imparted in the local languages. The Prime Minister called for momentum in creating best content in digital format in local Indian languages.

He emphasized that such content needs to be available via Internet, Mobile phones, TV and radio. He reiterated the requirement to keep the work with regard to content in sign languages going with due priority.

# India believes in security for all in IOR: Prez

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/VISAKHAPATNAM

India believes in security and growth for all in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the Navy's constant vigil, prompt response to incidents and untiring efforts have been highly successful in maintaining the safety of the seas. These efforts are focused on cooperative measures for sustainable use of oceans, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Monday.

Enunciating this point, he said "a large part of global trade flows through the Indian Ocean Region. A significant portion of our trade and energy needs are met through the oceans. Safety of the seas and of the maritime commons, therefore, remains a critical requirement."

Addressing the Naval fleet during the President's Fleet Review-2022 off the Visakhapatnam coast in Bay of Bengal, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces said the excellent parade of ships, aircraft and submarines showcased the professional competence and determination of the maritime services of the nation.

More than 60 ships and 55 aircraft participated in the event held once during the

President's tenure. The latest event was the 12th Fleet Review.

"As the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, this is a moment of immense satisfaction for me. The nation is proud of our brave navy personnel," the President said.

"I am pleased to review the readiness of the Indian Naval ships, submarines, aircraft and other elements of our maritime power today. Indian Navy is becoming increasingly self-reliant and has been at the forefront of the 'Make in India' initiative," he added.

The President noted that about 70 per cent of the contents of several warships and submarines under construction in various public and private shipyards across the country were indigenous.

"It is a matter of great pride that India has built nuclear submarines and soon we will have our indigenously built aircraft carrier, 'Vikrant', joining the service. Development of indigenous naval shipbuilding capabilities is an impressive contribution to the making of an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'," Kovind observed.

Commenting the Navy's role during the Covid-19 pandemic, he said it provided aid



to friendly nations in the form of medicines supply. The Navy also evacuated stranded Indian citizens and foreign nationals in different parts of the world under 'Mission SAGAR' and 'Samudra Setu.'

"The prompt and effective deployment of the Indian Navy in the times of crisis has underscored India's vision of being the 'Preferred

Security Partner' and 'First Responder' in the Indian Ocean Region," the President said. He noted the city of Visakhapatnam "made a glorious contribution" during the 1971 war. "I recall the heroic action of the Eastern Naval Command in the naval blockade of the then East Pakistan and the sinking of Pakistan's

submarine 'Ghazi'. That was a decisive blow to Pakistan. The 1971 war remains one of the most emphatic victories in our history," the President observed.

He said the Indian Navy regularly engaged with a large number of other navies of the world through bilateral and multilateral exercises, Kovind said. The aim was to enhance interoperability, gain from best practices, develop common understanding and build mutual confidence to address maritime issues, he said.

He conveyed his best wishes to Indian Navy for the multinational naval exercise MILAN 2022, scheduled to begin in Visakhapatnam on February 26.

# ED files chargesheet against red sanders' smuggler Malik

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a Prosecution Complaint (chargesheet) against a kingpin of red sanders smuggling syndicate, Badshah Majid Malik and three others under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) before the Special PMLA court in Mumbai. The Court has since taken cognizance of the matter.

The ED had initiated money laundering investigation against Malik and others on the basis of prosecution complaint filed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in a case relating to seizure of red sanders amounting to Rs 3.16 crores by DRI in the year 2015, the ED said.

Subsequent investigations by DRI had established that Malik was the kingpin of the syndicate involved in the smuggling of red sanders.

During the investigation, the ED had conducted searches at eight locations in Mumbai and Thane on December 20, 2021 resulting in the seizure of incriminating documents and subsequently arrested Malik on December 21, 2021.

# DCGI's final nod to Covid jab Corbevax for 12-18 age group

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) on Monday granted final approval to Biological E's Covid-19 vaccine Corbevax, which is India's first indigenously developed RBD protein sub-unit vaccine against the virus, for children between 12-18 years of age.

"Biological E Limited's Corbevax vaccine, India's first indigenously developed Receptor Binding Domain (RBD) Protein sub-unit vaccine against COVID-19, has received emergency use authorisation (EUA) from India's drug regulator for the 12 to 18-year age group," the company said in a statement.

On December 28, the Drug Controller had already approved Corbevax for restricted use in emergency situations in adults in the country.

Earlier, in an application sent to the DCGI on February 9, Srinivas Kosaraju, the head

of Quality and Regulatory Affairs of Biological E Limited said the firm had received approval for conducting phase 2/3 clinical study of Corbevax among children and adolescents aged 5-18 years in September.

The Corbevax vaccine is administered through an intramuscular route with two doses scheduled 28 days apart and is stored at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius and presented as 0.5 ml (single dose) and 5 ml (10 doses) vial pack.

According to the Union Health Ministry, the company has conducted phase 1/2, 2/3 clinical trials of its COVID-19 vaccine in the country. Further, it has conducted a phase 3 active comparator clinical trial to evaluate superiority against Covishield vaccine, it said.

Meanwhile, over 70 per cent of India's adolescents in the 15-18 age group have received the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine so far. Vaccination of children aged between 15 and 18 began from January 3 across the country.

# Monsoon to be normal in 2022, says Skymet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Skymet, a private weather forecasting agency, on Monday, predicted that monsoon is expected to be normal in 2022, adding that a complete assessment would arrive in April. It is expected to be in the normal range of 96-104 percent of long period average (LPA). The weather agency is in the process of gathering data sets pertinent for a comprehensive monsoon forecast in April.

"The last two Monsoon seasons have been driven by back-to-back La Nina events, which have started shrinking now. It also means that Monsoon 2022 is going to be a devolving La Nina to start with and turn neutral later", Skymet said.

"Negative sea surface temperature anomalies in the equatorial Pacific Ocean are weakening. This warming inclination of the Pacific Ocean, albeit within neutral limits, may not lead to an above normal or excess rainfall but chances of a 'corrupt' monsoon are also

ruled out. This could be one of the 'normal' monsoon years making a robust start and finishing around the midway mark of the normal range, the range of normal rainfall is 96-104% of LPA (880.6mm)," it said.

La Nina, a pattern characterised by unusually low temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean and linked to floods and drought, has fuelled the last two monsoon seasons. La Nina does not have a warming influence on global temperatures and is associated with strong monsoon and above average rains, and cool winter in India. But its effect on this monsoon will decline which may not lead to better than average or abundant rainfall, it added.

The rainy season in the country is categorised into four – pre-monsoon (March-May), monsoon (June-September), post-monsoon (October-



December) and winter (January-February). Of these, the monsoon and post-monsoon periods are important as we have the South-West monsoon during June-September and the North-East monsoon during October-December.

The South-West monsoon holds the key for good agricultural production as it accounts for nearly 75 per cent of the country's average total rainfall of about 1,200 mm.

The south-west monsoon irrigates over half of India's crop land. Its arrival marks the beginning of the cultivation of rain-fed kharif crops which are heavily dependent on the monsoon—the quantity of rainfall determines agricultural production.

# CBI grills ABG Shipyard's promoter Agarwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday questioned Rishi Agarwal, promoter of ABG Shipyard embroiled in over Rs 22,848 crore banking fraud scam, the biggest such case registered by the central agency.

Earlier, the agency had questioned him last week. His statement will be further recorded in the coming days on various aspects of alleged irregularities including diversion of funds as pointed out in the forensic audit conducted by banks.

The CBI had registered an FIR in the matter on February 7, 2022 on a complaint filed by SBI 17 months ago on August 25, 2020.

The agency has also named the then executive director Santhanam Muthaswamy,



directors Ashwini Kumar, Sushil Kumar Agarwal and Ravi Vimal Nevatia and another company, ABG International Pvt Ltd, for alleged offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust and abuse of official position under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The CBI had conducted searches at 13 locations on February 12.

After "scrutinising" for over one-and-a-half-years, the CBI acted on the complaint, filing an FIR on February 7, 2022.

They said the company had allegedly diverted funds to a lot of companies which also needed detailed scrutiny.

The company was sanctioned credit facilities from 28 banks and financial institutions led by ICICI Bank, with SBI having exposure of Rs 2,468.51 crore. A forensic audit by Ernst & Young has shown that between 2012 and 2017, the accused entities and the individuals colluded together and committed illegal activities, including diversion of funds, misappropriation and criminal breach of trust, they said.

The sanctioned funds were used for purposes other than for which they were released by the banks, they added.

# Vigyan Sarvatara Pujyate festival starts today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to attract students towards scientific knowledge of articles of daily use and propagating scientific theories, a week-long nation-wide mega science festival 'Vigyan Sarvatara Pujyate' (science is revered all over) is being launched from Tuesday at 25 locations across the country from Leh and Srinagar to Port Blair.

The event will be inaugurated by Union Minister of Culture G Kishan Reddy and Union Minister of Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh. The National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), an

autonomous society under the Union Ministry of Culture is an important partner with Vigyan Prasara, Department of Science and Technology, said a statement from the Union Culture Ministry here NCSM forms the largest network of science centres and museums in the world under a single administrative umbrella.

The programme will be held in various Indian languages, including Kashmiri, Dogri, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Bengali, Assamese, Nepali, Maithili, and Manipuri and will include screening of 75 films on scientific developments/achievements in India, it said.

# Hijab not an essential religious practice, reiterates Karnataka Govt in HC

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Government on Monday reiterated that Hijab is not an essential religious practice and said religious instructions should be kept outside the educational institutions.

"This is our stand that Hijab is not an essential religious practice. There was a statement by Dr B R Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly where he said 'let us keep the religious instructions outside educational institutions'," Karnataka Advocate General Prabhuling Navadgi told the full bench of the High Court, which is

hearing the Hijab case.

The full bench comprises Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, Justice J M Khazi and Justice Krishna M Dixit. According to the AG, only the essential religious practice gets protection under the Article 25, which guarantees the citizens to practice the faith of their choice. He also referred to "reforms in the religion" as part of the Article 25.

As soon as the proceedings began, CJ Awasthi said certain clarifications were required related to Hijab.

"You have argued that government order is innocuous and the state government

has not banned Hijab and not put any restrictions on it. The GO says that the students should wear the prescribed uniform. What is your stand — whether Hijab can be permitted or not in the educational institutions?" the Chief Justice asked.

In reply, Navadgi said if the institutions allow it, then the government would possibly take a decision as and when the issue arises.

On January one, six girl students of a college in Udipi attended a press conference held by Campus Front of India (CFI) in the coastal town protesting against the college authorities denying

# Marital rape: HC refuses to give Centre more time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to grant further time to the Centre to make its stand clear on the issue of criminalising marital rape and reserved judgement on various pleas in the matter. The Centre submitted that it has sent communication to all states and Union territories asking their comments on the issue and urged the court that the proceedings be adjourned till such time the inputs are received.

A bench of Justices Rajiv Shakdher and C Hari Shankar said it was not possible to adjourn an ongoing matter as there is no terminal date by when the Centre's consultations will be over on the issue. "We are closing it then," the

bench said, adding, "judgement reserved. List for directions on March 2. In the meantime, counsel for parties may file their written submissions and compliations."

The court was dealing with a batch of petitions seeking to strike down the exception granted to husbands under the Indian rape law. On February 7, the high court had granted two weeks time to the Centre to state its stand on the petitions seeking criminalization of marital rape. The Centre had filed an affidavit urging the court to defer hearing on the petitions, stating that criminalising marital rape has very far reaching socio-legal implications in the country and a meaningful consultative process with various stakeholders including the state governments is needed.

them entry into the classroom by wearing Hijab.

This was four days after they requested the principal permission to wear Hijabs in classes which was not allowed. Till then, students used to wear Hijab to the campus and entered the classroom after removing the scarves, the college principal Rudre Gowda had said.

"The institution did not have any rule on Hijab-wearing as such and since no one used to wear it to the classroom in the last 35 years. The students who came with the demand had the backing of outside forces," Rudre Gowda had said.












FIRST COLUMN

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF SOCIOPATHY

Sociopaths are born, not made




GWYNNE DYER

I generally leave the psychohistory to Hari Seldon, but just this once I feel sufficiently motivated to venture into the field. The immediate spur for this departure is the spectacle - half-fascination, half-disgust - of Boris Johnson, Britain's part-time prime minister, gradually foundering in a sea of his own lies. But there are other examples, too.

There was Donald Trump just a year and a bit ago, trying to drag an entire country down with him and having some success in the enterprise.

There's Jair Bolsonaro, flailing around as he awaits almost inevitable defeat by 'Lula' in next October's Brazilian election.

There's Viktor Orban, astounded to face a united six-party opposition in Hungary's April elections.



And what they have in common is that they are all liars. Not shy, sly liars. Bold, in-your-face, shameless liars. They don't care if you really know the truth from personal experience. It doesn't bother them that you know they are lying. They will just say the lie again - and you might even believe them, because they say it with such conviction.

They are convincing because after a split-second when they privately decide that some lie will serve their purpose, they actually believe it themselves. They have other markers, too: they are usually male, they are always intelligent, they are almost always charming, and they generally get through several spouses and many children in a lifetime. They are, in a word, sociopaths.

Which takes me back to an interview I did with a sociologist in an American university many years ago. We had finished up, and I casually asked if he knew of any evolutionary circumstances that were changing human behaviour now. He paused for a moment, then said that he thought the sociopaths were multiplying. So, I unpacked my gear and resumed the interview. He began with the obvious statement that sociopathy is usually if not always a genetic property. Most sociopaths are born, not made. And he speculated on how they could have escaped being weeded out by natural selection back in the hunter-gatherer days, because those were small groups of people - thirty or forty adults - where everybody knew everybody else.

His answer was that small groups are not very vulnerable to a sociopath. Everybody has his number before he reaches reproductive age, so he can't be a super-spawner. Everybody checks his lies with everybody else, so he doesn't get away with much. And there are certain rare circumstances where it could be handy to have a sociopath around.

All went well until human beings started living in societies thousands or millions strong where the sociopaths become invisible. Nobody has their number, and there's an endless supply of strangers to deceive and exploit (and breed with). A mass society is a sociopath's garden of delights. Of course, their numbers are going up: my sociologist friend reckoned three per cent of males and rising. And of course, they are appearing in leadership positions because they can lie directly and convincingly to far more people. But here's the really interesting question: why are all these men now on their way out of power or already gone? That may be part of their sociopathy too, because they all leave trails of human wreckage behind them: cheated partners, abandoned lovers, betrayed followers. They can't help it; it's who they are.

So the good news may be that genuine sociopaths get found out in the end. The bad news, however, is that there's lots more of them out there, and they're breeding like flies.

*(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Rationalising the nation's direct taxes

The Government should rationalise direct taxes to address anomalies between PIT and corporate tax at one level and capital gains tax at another

Ever since, the commencement of its second term, Modi Government has showered benevolence on the corporate sector by giving relief in income tax but when it comes to personal income tax (PIT), it has not matched the expectations.

On September 20, 2019, Finance Minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman had announced steep reduction in the rate of corporate tax for "new entities" incorporated from October 1, 2019 in the manufacturing sector and start production by March 31, 2023 from the existing 25 percent to 15 percent. Such companies won't have to pay minimum alternate tax (MAT).

Furthermore, the tax rate on existing companies was reduced from 30 per cent to 22 percent sans exemptions and deductions. These firms are also exempt from MAT. The small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with annual turnover of less than ₹400 crore were already enjoying a preferential tax rate of 25 percent against 30 percent payable by large firms. Following the cut to 22 percent (albeit for all 'existing' firms), the preferential treatment for SMEs is gone.

Meanwhile, the companies were given a choice to either continue with the old regime viz. tax at 30 percent with tax breaks or go for the new one. For those deciding to continue, MAT was reduced from extant 18.5 to 15 per cent.

In the Budget for 2020-21, Sitharaman extended the benefit of 15 percent rate to "new" power companies also. Besides, "cooperatives" were made eligible for the 22 percent rate sans exemptions and deductions. The FM also abolished dividend distribution tax or DDT. From April 1, 2020, dividend is taxed in the hands of shareholders.

In the 2022-23 budget, the government has extended the eligibility of 15 percent corporate tax to new (albeit manufacturing) entities which get incorporated before March 31, 2024 - against the existing threshold of March 31, 2023. It has reduced the surcharge on profits of cooperatives from existing 12 percent to 7 percent besides reducing MAT from existing 18.5 percent to 15 percent.

Coming to PIT, prior to 2020-21, a person having an income of ₹2,50,001-₹5,00,000 per annum was required to pay tax of five percent, those earning more than ₹5,00,000 but less than ₹10,00,000 paid 20 percent tax whereas, someone having an income higher than ₹10,00,000 paid 30 percent. With these tax rates, individuals enjoyed a plethora of exemptions and deductions.

The 2020-21 budget, even while retaining 5 percent tax for annual income in the ₹2,50,001-₹5,00,000 range, on income higher than ₹5,00,000, it levied: 10 percent for ₹5,00,001-₹7,50,000; 15 percent for ₹7,50,001-₹10,00,000; 20 percent for ₹10,00,001-₹12,50,000; 25 percent for ₹12,50,001-₹15,00,000. For



MODI ALSO NEEDS TO LOOK INTO THE EXTANT REGIME FOR CAPITAL GAINS TAX. THE TAX RATE VARIES DEPENDING ON THE CATEGORY OF THE UNDERLYING ASSET AND THE HOLDING PERIOD. FOR INSTANCE, EQUITY AND EQUITY MUTUAL FUNDS ATTRACT SHORT-TERM CAPITAL GAINS TAX OF 15 PER CENT AND LONG-TERM CAPITAL GAINS TAX OF 10 PER CENT

*(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)*



income above ₹15,00,000, the 30 percent tax continues.

As in case of corporate tax, individuals were given the choice to go either for the new regime sans exemptions/deductions or continue with the old regime with exemptions/deductions. The following two budgets viz. 2021-22 and 2022-23 have left the PIT unchanged.

On the face of it, with tax rates under different slabs being lower, it would appear the new PIT regime is better. But, considering that it comes without exemptions/deductions, the gain is illusory. For instance, under the old regime, a person having an annual income of ₹15,00,000 and availing tax breaks of ₹3,75,000 (Section 80C: 1,50,000; Section 80D: 25,000; Section 24: 2,00,000), pays ₹1,56,000 as tax.

Against this, under the new regime, he will have to pay ₹1,95,000 as the benefit of lower rates is more than offset by withdrawal of exemptions and deductions. So, the 2020-21 budgetary changes have not made individuals any better. At the same time, after the steep cut in corporate tax rate in September, 2019, the extant PIT rates do not enthruse them.

For annual income greater than ₹15,00,00, the PIT at 30 percent is double than the corporate tax rate at 15 percent for a new manufacturing enterprise (when compared to the tax paid by an existing firm or 22 percent also, the former is much higher). Even in respect of individuals with annual income in the ₹10,00,000—₹15,00,000 range, the applicable

tax rates, i.e., 20-25 percent are higher than the corporate tax.

The individuals could gain from abolition of DDT. This is because on their dividend income, against 20 percent paid prior to 2020-21, levy of tax on such income in their hands will entail payment at a lower rate for instance, 10 percent for those earning in ₹500,001-₹750,000 range. However, this is of little use as these earners hardly have any surplus to invest in shares.

Clearly, Modi - government has done much less for PIT payers. While, less tax on profits of firms is important for inducing them to increase investment, reducing PIT is no less crucial. In fact, in the contemporary context, when growth is hamstrung more by the demand constraint, the latter can be much more rewarding.

The FM should consider putting more money in the pockets of individuals by giving extra relief in PIT. This may be done by changing the tax structure to: 7.5 percent tax on income in ₹5,00,001-₹10,00,000; 10 percent in the ₹10,00,000 - ₹15,00,000, 15 percent in ₹15,00,000-₹20,00,000 and 20 percent on above ₹20,00,000 (there will not be any tax breaks).

Under this package, a person earning ₹15,00,000 will pay ₹1,04,000 as tax which is significantly lower than the payout of ₹1,56,000 under the old regime. Apart from giving a massive boost to the demand, this will also propel assesses shift en masse to the new dispensation.

On the corporate front, the legacy of exemptions/deductions

needs to be completely erased. According to the revenue secretary, Tarun Bajaj, already, 65 percent of the existing companies have switched over to the new regime of 22 percent sans exemptions/deductions. Hopefully, rest of the firms will also shift within an accelerated time frame.

Modi also needs to look into the extant regime for capital gains tax. The tax rate varies depending on the category of the underlying asset and the holding period. For instance, equity and equity mutual funds attract short-term capital gains tax (STCG) of 15 percent and long-term capital gains tax (LTCG) of 10 percent. STCG on most bond investments is at the tax slab the investor comes under. LTCG is either 10 or 20 percent, depending on whether it is a listed or unlisted bond or a debt mutual fund. For real state, LTCG is at 20 percent.

Such a highly differentiated tax structure is prone to misuse, evasion and protracted litigation. Irrespective of the asset an individual deals in and the holding period, the capital gains arising therefrom are added to his income in the relevant year. Logically therefore, tax should be levied at the rate applicable to the slab his total income (all sources put together) falls in.

To conclude, the government should rationalize the direct taxes to address anomalies between PIT and corporate tax at one level and capital gains tax at another. Moreover, the tax rates should be low but free from exemptions/deductions.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THIS ELECTION IS NOT FOR THE NEXT ELECTION, BUT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION. —PUNJAB CONGRESS CHIEF NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU




THE SAD-BSP ALLIANCE WILL MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP, WINNING 80-PLUS SEATS. —SAD PRESIDENT SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL

# Clear front-of-pack labels to safeguard health

Simple warnings on high levels of fat, salt and sugar in packaged foods can be a lifesaving solution

Even as India copes with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that has already strained our health system, with hospitals diverting resources and capacities to treat the infection, the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are becoming an emergency we cannot afford to ignore. Results of the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) should come as an eye-opener for policymakers as well as consumers.

The Global Nutrition Report, 2021 says that around 12 million people died prematurely in 2018 due to risks linked to an imbalanced and unhealthy diet. These included NCDs like CVD (heart attack, stroke etc), cancer and diabetes. Diabetes remains one of the biggest and fastest-growing killers today. In India, the num-



NAVAL K VIKRAM

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ber of people with diabetes caused by obesity is expected to rise from 77 million in 2019 to 101 million in 2030.

Not just children, obesity among women and men has also increased. The percentage of overweight women went up from 20.6 percent to 24 percent, while in men the number increased from 18.9 percent to 22.9 percent, according to the NFHS-5.

Obesity and NCDs are on the rise not only in metros or urban settings but also in rural areas where the food industry has made inroads through their well-oiled marketing strategy offering high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) laden packaged food. This has left consumers and nation to suffer—both on the health and economy fronts. According to the World Health

Organisation (WHO), around 58 Lakh Indians die every year due to preventive NCDs.

Covid-induced restrictions like 'work from home', lockdowns, social distancing, and travel restrictions to arrest the spread of infection in many countries including India have just added to the health woes. Demand for ready-to-make, easily available packaged food has increased, while physical activity has comparatively

slowed down for many.

However, what is a matter of concern is that these unhealthy options are put before the consumer when there are so many healthy choices like fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutritious food are available.

With the virus likely to stay here - since it is more than two years in existence since 2019 - it gives a second chance to the Government as a policymaker, community as well as a responsible individual to introspect what food is being offered on the platter to cut down the NCDs.

Three important and increasingly common policy strategies recommended by the WHO are: front-of-package labels (FOPL) on unhealthy foods and beverages, restrictions on marketing these foods to

children, and restricting the sales of these products in schools.

Clearly, consumers need to be provided with clear information about the nutrition profile of the packaged food products and drinks while nudging the industry to reformulate their products for the better health of the people.

This could be possible by making mandatory 'easy to understand' warning labels on packaged food and beverages that would help consumers in making healthier choices and help curtail deaths from NCDs as has been in the case with the cigarettes which have clear warning symbols.

In fact, as per the global health body, the FOPL works best when it is made mandatory and applies to all packaged products, the label is interpretative, simplistic and readily visible, guided by a strong nutrition profile model. The WHO says consumption has come down after warning labels were made compulsory.

Case in point is Chile. It has mandated "High-in" warning labels - considered the golden standard FOPL, restricted sale marketing to children, and banned in-school sales of packaged foods and beverages having HFSS-black octagon(s) with the words high-in sugar, sodium, saturated fat, and/or calories, whichever applies.

By making FOPL mandatory, Chile has already started reaping benefits with more of its citizens saying no to HFSS products.

Another area where we as a responsible society and govern-

ment as a concerned policymaker should intervene is to scan what is being dished out to our children on the TV screen. According to various reports, the fast food industry is increasingly eyeing children as their potential future consumers - with kids seeing ads when they're as young as two years old. Children now see about 33% more fast food TV ads than they did just six to seven years ago, while preschoolers see 21 per cent more, which is alarming.

Measures such as mandatory FOPL and marketing restrictions are a few solutions that can address diet-related disease epidemics. World over countries are prioritising such actions. India is also in the process of taking a step in this direction to build a nutrition secure and healthier future.



# Biden, Putin agree to talk but fears of Ukraine war continue

AP ■ MOSCOW

The US and Russian presidents tentatively agreed to meet in a last-ditch effort to stave off a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine, even as sustained shelling continued on Monday in a conflict in eastern Ukraine that Western powers fear could provide the spark for a broader war.

If Russia invades, the US warns Moscow has already decided to do, the meeting will be off. Still the prospect of a face-to-face summit resuscitated hopes that diplomacy could prevent a devastating conflict, which would result in massive casualties and huge economic damage in Europe, which is heavily dependent on Russian energy.

Russia has massed an estimated 150,000 troops on three sides of Ukraine - the biggest such buildup since Cold War. And Western officials have warned that Russian President Vladimir Putin is now merely looking for a pretext to invade the country, a western-looking democracy that has defied Moscow's attempts to pull it back into its orbit.

Moscow denies it has any plans to attack, but wants Western guarantees that NATO won't allow Ukraine and other former Soviet countries to join as members. It has also

demanding the alliance halt weapons deployments to Ukraine and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe - demands flatly rejected by the West.

With the prospect of war looming, French President Emmanuel Macron scrambled to broker a meeting between US President Joe Biden and Putin. Macron's office said both leaders had "accepted the principle of such a summit," to be followed by a broader meeting that would include other "relevant stakeholders to discuss security and strategic stability in Europe." The language from Moscow and Washington was more cautious, but neither side denied a meeting is under discussion. US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the administration has always been ready to talk to avert a war - but was also prepared to respond to any attack.

"So when President Biden asked President Biden yesterday if he was prepared in principle to meet with President Putin, if Russia did not invade, of course President Biden said yes," he told NBC's "Today" show on Monday.

"But every indication we see on ground right now in terms of disposition of Russian forces is that they are, in fact, getting prepared for a major attack on Ukraine," Kremlin spokesman

Dmitry Peskov told reporters Monday that Putin and Biden could meet if they consider it "feasible," but emphasized that "it's premature to talk about specific plans for a summit." Macron's office said that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov are set to lay groundwork for the potential summit when they meet Thursday.

## Pak, German Foreign Mins discuss Af, Ukraine

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Monday discussed with his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine. Qureshi received a telephone call from Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany Baerbock and leaders exchanged views on bilateral relations, the Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) said. Qureshi congratulated Baerbock on recently assuming her office. He invited the German Foreign Minister to visit Pakistan at the earliest convenience, the FO said.

## Ukraine crisis tests China-Russia partnership

AP ■ BEIJING

Russia's military buildup along its border with Ukraine is testing possibility of a Moscow-Beijing axis lining up against US and its allies. Russian leader Vladimir Putin's meeting with Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing this month fed speculation that a new alliance could form between two great powers as they face off with US over a range of issues.

Russia and China have backed each other's positions on opposing a NATO expansion in former Soviet republics and buttressing China's claim to self-governing island of Taiwan. But relationship remains lopsided.

China's confident rise as an economic and political force contrasts with Russia's growing isolation and reversion to Cold War tactics of intimidation and bullying. China also remains opposed to actions that could damage its territorial ambitions, from South China Sea and Taiwan to Indian border. Here are some of the main factors driving, and blocking Russo-Chinese relations:

### Where does China stand on the Ukraine crisis?

China has not criticised Russia over its moves against Ukraine, and has joined in verbal attacks on Washington and its allies. Addressing Munich Security Conference over weekend, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi lashed out against the US, accusing "a certain power" of "stirring-up antagonism." However, in response to a question from conference Chairman Wolfgang Ischinger, Wang said the "sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of any country should be respected and safeguarded, because this is a basic norm of international relations."

"Ukraine is no exception," Wang added. He also stated that major powers should act in defense of global peace and no country should "repeat past mistake of forging rival alliances." That chimes with China's longstanding opposition to military alliances and often invoked-but often breached in practice - policy of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs.

## US claims Russia has ordered final preparations for invasion

AP ■ KYIV

Russia on Sunday rescinded earlier pledges to pull tens of thousands of its troops back from Ukraine's northern border, a move that US leaders said put Russia another step closer to launching what they said was the planned invasion of Ukraine.

Residents of Ukraine's capital filled a gold-domed cathedral to pray for peace. Russia's action extends what it said were military exercises, originally set to end Sunday, that brought an estimated 30,000 Russian forces to Belarus, Ukraine's neighbour to the north.

They are among at least 150,000 Russian troops now deployed outside Ukraine's borders, along with tanks, warplanes, artillery and other war materiel.

The continued deployment of the Russian forces in Belarus raised concern that they could be used to sweep down on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, a city of about 3 million people less than a three-hour drive away. In Kyiv, life

outwardly continued as usual for some on a mild winter Sunday, with brunches and church services, ahead of what US President Joe Biden said late last week was an already decided-upon Russian attack.

Katerina Spanchak, who fled a region of eastern Ukraine when it was taken over by Russian-allied separatists, was among worshippers crowded into the capital's St. Michael's monastery, smoky with the candles burned by the faithful, to pray that Ukraine be spared.

"We all love life, and we are all united by our love of life," Spanchak said, pausing to compose herself. "We should appreciate it every day."

That's why I think everything will be fine." "Our joint prayers will help to elude this tragedy, which is advancing," said another worshipper, who identified himself only by his first name, Oleh.

A US official said Sunday that Biden's assertion that Putin has made the decision to roll Russian forces into Ukraine was based on intelligence that Russian front-line commanders have been given

orders to begin final preparations for an attack. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the sensitive intelligence. Russia held nuclear drills Saturday as well as the conventional exercises in Belarus, and has ongoing naval drills off the coast in the Black Sea.

The announcement that Russia was reversing its pledge to withdraw its forces from Belarus came after two days of sustained shelling along a contact line between Ukraine's soldiers and Russian-allied separatists in eastern Ukraine, an area that Ukraine and the West worry could be the flash-point in igniting conflict. The United States and many European countries have charged for weeks that Russia is trying to create pretexts to invade.

They have threatened massive sanctions if it does. Biden convened the National Security Council at the White House on Russia's military buildup around Ukraine. White House officials released no immediate details of their roughly two hours of discussion.

## UN court to open hearings in Rohingya genocide case

AP ■ THE HAGUE

Myanmar's shadow civilian administration called on United Nations' top court on Monday not to allow country's military rulers to represent Southeast Asian nation at hearings into a case accusing the country of genocide against the Rohingya ethnic minority.

Four days of hearings into Myanmar military's deadly 2017 crackdown on Rohingya are scheduled to open Monday afternoon at International Court of Justice amid a dispute over who should represent country in court.

Representatives of Myanmar are scheduled to address judges to outline why they believe case that was filed by African nation of Gambia, representing a group of Muslim nations, should be dropped. But members of Myanmar's National Unity Government, urged court not to accept representatives of military

rulers. "We do not believe that International Court of Justice will want to allow military to appear before them as if they speak for Republic of the Union of Myanmar," said the unity government's foreign minister, Zin Mar Aung.

"It would be a most profound injustice to Rohingya if military were to be both their abusers and have any voice in the court." The shadow administration said it has contacted the court to withdraw Myanmar's preliminary objections to the case, but it remains to be

seen whether the court will recognize the unity administration. The shadow administration is made up of a diverse group of representatives including elected lawmakers who were prevented from taking their seats by military takeover. It says it is the country's only legitimate government but no foreign government has recognised unity group.

## Officers' trial in Floyd killing enters possible final week

AP ■ ST PAUL (US)

The trial of three former Minneapolis police officers charged with violating George Floyd's civil rights heads into what may be its final week Monday, with third officer yet to take his turn on stand. Thomas Lane is expected to testify as his attorney presents his case, the last to do so in the nearly month-long proceeding before federal trial moves to closing arguments and then to the jury. Lane, Tou Thao and J. Alexander Kueng are charged in federal court with violating Floyd's constitutional rights when Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for 9 1/2 minutes as the 46-year-old Black man was handcuffed, facedown on the street and pleading for air before going silent. Kueng knelt on Floyd's back, Lane held his legs and Thao kept bystanders back.

## Israeli PM: Iran nuke deal will create more violent Middle East

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's prime minister on Sunday criticized an emerging deal over Iran's nuclear program, saying it would be weaker than a previous agreement and would create a "more violent, more volatile Middle East." World powers have been negotiating in Vienna in a bid to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, which was left in tatters after the Trump administration, goaded by Israel, withdrew.

The original deal granted Iran relief from crippling economic sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. Israel vehemently opposed that accord and has urged negotiators to take a hard line against Iran in the current round of talks. In a speech to Jewish American leaders Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett warned that Iran has used interim period to march ahead with its enrichment of uranium to levels approaching weapons grade.

He also noted the 10-year limits on its enrichment and other key aspects of Iran's nuclear program in the original deal are set to be lifted in 2025 - just two and a half years from now. That "leaves Iran with a fast track to military-grade enrichment," Bennett told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

In the meantime, he said that lifting sanctions right away will deliver billions of dollars to Iran to spend on hostile proxy groups along Israel's borders.

"For Israel and all the stability-seeking forces in the Middle East - emerging deal as it seems is highly likely to create a more violent, more volatile Middle East," he said. He repeated his pledge that Israel will not allow Iran to become a threshold state and said Israel would not be bound by a new deal. "We have a clear and un-negotiable red line: Israel will always maintain its freedom of action to defend itself," he said.

## F-5 fighter plane crash kills 3 in Iran's northwest

AP ■ TEHRAN

A fighter jet crashed onto a football pitch in a city in northwest Iran, the country's state-run news agency reported Monday. The crash killed two pilots and a civilian. IRNA said F-5 fighter crashed onto field in a residential area of Tabriz, a city of 1.6 million residents. Authorities are investigating the incident, the report said. Gen. Reza Yousefi, commander of air base in Tabriz, said crashed jet had been used for training and suffered a technical problem on its final flight. "Pilots could not reach runway," he said, according to report. In an effort to avoid crashing into residential area, pilots guided jet to football pitch, he said. The report quoted Yousefi as saying: "The pilots sacrificed themselves, they could (have) used ejection system, but they refused to do it." The pilots headed for pitch "to keep people safe," Yousefi said in report.

## Covid daily cases, hospitalisations in US continue steady decline

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Average daily COVID-19 cases and hospitalisations are continuing to fall in US, an indicator that omicron variant's hold is weakening across country. Total confirmed cases reported Saturday barely exceeded 100,000, a sharp downturn from around 800,850 five weeks ago on January 16, according to Johns Hopkins University data. In New York, the number of cases went down by more than 50 per cent over last two weeks. "I think what's influencing decline, of course, is that omicron is starting to run out of people to infect," said Dr. Thomas Russo, professor and infectious disease chief at the University of Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. COVID-19 hospitalisations are down from a national seven-day average of 146,534 on Jan. 20 to 80,185 week ending in Feb 13.

## Bangladeshi national jailed in Singapore for financing Syrian militant groups

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

A Bangladeshi construction worker in Singapore was on Monday sentenced to two years and eight months in jail for funding militant groups in Syria, making multiple social media accounts to publish pro-jihadist posts and buying knives to be "ready for jihad". Ahmed Faysal, 27, pleaded guilty to five charges under the Terrorism (Suppression of Financing) Act, with another 10 charges taken into consideration. This is the largest number of charges an offender has ever faced under the Act, the Channel News Asia reported, citing the prosecutor. Faysal said he did not intend to use the weapons in Singapore, as he wanted to stay out of trouble and continue supporting his family in Bangladesh by working in the city-state.

## California tribe confronts crisis of missing, murdered women

AP ■ SACRAMENTO (US)

The young mother had behaved erratically for months, hitchhiking and wandering naked through two Native American reservations and a small town clustered along Northern California's rugged Lost Coast. But things escalated when Emmilee Rising was charged with arson for igniting a fire in a cemetery. Her family hoped the case would force her into mental health and addiction services. Instead, she was released over

the pleas of loved ones and a tribal police chief. The 33-year-old college graduate - an accomplished traditional dancer with ancestry from three area tribes - was last seen soon after, walking across a bridge near a place marked End of Road, a far corner of the Yurok Reservation where the rutted pavement dissolves into thick woods. Her disappearance is one of five instances in the past 18 months where Indigenous women have gone missing or been killed in this isolated expanse of Pacific

coastline between San Francisco and Oregon, a region where the Yurok, Hupa, Karuk, Tolowa and Wiyot people have coexisted for millennia. Two other women died from what authorities say were overdoses despite relatives' questions about severe bruises. The crisis has spurred the Yurok Tribe to issue an emergency declaration and brought increased urgency to efforts to build California's first database of such cases and regain sovereignty over key services.

## Former Pakistan spy chief named in Credit Suisse leak

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's former spy chief and architect of the mujahideen network against the former USSR's invasion of Afghanistan, has been named one among thousands other high-profile figures from around the world in a massive leak of secret banking data from a leading Swiss bank. General Akhtar Abdur Rehman Khan was the closest aide of former dictator General Zia-ul-Haq.

## China sanctions Raytheon, Lockheed over Taiwan deal

AP ■ TAIPEI

China said Monday it will impose new sanctions on US defense contractors Raytheon Technologies and Lockheed Martin due to their arms sales to Taiwan, stepping up a feud with Washington over security and Beijing's strategic ambitions. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin announced the move at a daily press briefing, citing a newly passed Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law that took effect in 2021. It was in response to a \$100 million deal approved

by the US for maintenance of Taiwan's missile defense systems by the two companies. "China once again urges the US government and relevant parties to . . . Stop arms sales to Taiwan and sever military ties with Taiwan," Wang said. "China will continue to take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard its sovereignty and security interests in accordance with the development of the situation," he said without giving any details. Taiwan is a democratically self-governed island that communist-ruled China claims as its own territory.

## EU mulls ways to stop possible breakup of Bosnia

AP ■ BRUSSELS

European Union foreign ministers on Monday discussed ways to ease tensions in Bosnia and prevent the possible breakup of the ethnically divided Balkan country as the peace agreement brokered over 25 years ago continues to unravel. "The nationalist and separatist rhetoric is increasing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and jeopardising the stability and even the integrity of the country," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in

Brussels, where he chaired a meeting of the 27-country bloc's foreign ministers. He said the "ministers will have to take a decision on how to stop these dynamics in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to avoid that the country can fall apart in pieces. This is a critical situation." The United States last month announced new sanctions against Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik, who has for years been advocating that Serb-run part of Bosnia should leave rest of country and unite with neighbouring Serbia.

कार्यालय मुख्य चिकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी  
जिला कोरबा छ0ग0

क्रमंक / डी.एम.एफ. / 2022 / 1986 कोरबा दिनांक:- 17.02.2022

—उपकरणों/सामग्रियों की आपूर्ति हेतु मुहर बंद निविदा सूचना:—

एतद् द्वारा सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि कोरबा जिला जिला अस्पताल, सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र, प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र, शहरी प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र, के उन्नयन हेतु विभिन्न चिकित्सकीय उपकरणों की आपूर्ति एवं अन्य कार्य हेतु खुली निविदा आमंत्रित किया जाता है।

उक्त निविदा का फार्म, नियम व शर्तें कार्यालय मुख्य चिकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी जिला कोरबा में निम्नलिखित तिथि एवं समयानुसार प्राप्त किया जा सकता है:—

तिथि विवरण:—

1. निविदा प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि:— 27.02.2022  
सायं 5:00 बजे तक।

2. निविदा प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि:— 17.03.2022  
सायं 3:00 बजे तक।

3. निविदा खोलने की तिथि:— 17.03.2021 सायं 5:00 बजे।

हस्ता / —

R.O. No.:- 68045/3 मुख्य चिकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी

R.O. Date:- 21/02/2022 जिला कोरबा छ.ग.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Indra Chand Mali who is purchasing of Third Floor (with roof rights) (Left Side), area measuring 50 Sq. Yds., built on Property No.4082, Gali No.236, with old No.2967/236, area measuring 100 Sq. Yds., out of Khassra No.1169, situated in the area of Village Chowki Murarkabas Delhi, abadi known as Ram Nagar, Tri Nagar, Delhi, from Mr. Pooran Chand who is attorney holder of Mr. Anand Saroop vice Regd. GPA, Regd. SPA, notarized Agreement to sell & Regd. WILL dated 05.09.1997, who was joint owner of the property along with Mrs. Saroop Devi by virtue of Sale Deed dated 07.02.1963 (vide Document No.1410). The borrower(s) intend mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 7 days at below address:

Office No. G-03, at Ground Floor, on Plot No. D-61, Sector-2, Noida, UP-201301 Contact # 0120-4130438

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Sukhbir Singh who is purchasing of Property of land area measuring 150 Sq.Yds., out of Khassra No.1734, situated at Ghonda Gujran Banger, in the abadi of Subhash Monvile, Ilaca Shindara, New Delhi from Mr. Pramod Kumar Gupta S/o Mr. Hari Kishan Gupta who is attorney holder of Mr. Pramod Kumar Gupta S/o Mr. Hukam Chand Gupta vide Regd. GPA, notarized AT&S & WILL dated 12.05.1995. The borrower(s) intend mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. That the Sale Deed dated 08.01.1971 (vide Doc. No.121), GPA, AT&S & WILL, executed by Mr. Mahesh Chand Gupta in favour of Mr. Subhash Chand and also WILL executed by Mr. Subhash Chand in favour of Ms. Meenaxi Manchanda, WILL executed by Ms. Meenaxi Manchanda in favour of Mr. Pramod Kumar Gupta & WILL executed by Mr. Pramod Kumar Gupta in favour of Mr. Pramod Kumar Gupta are/are Lost/Misplaced. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned.

Office No. G-03, at Ground Floor, on Plot No. D-61, Sector-2, Noida, UP-201301 Contact # 0120-4130438

## Scientists cautious as England set to end Covid curbs

AP ■ LONDON

Scientists warned the British government on Monday not to weaken the country's ability to monitor and track the coronavirus after Prime Minister Boris Johnson ends the requirement for people in England to self-isolate if they contract COVID-19. Johnson will announce details in Parliament on Monday of the government's plan for "living with COVID" by treating it like other transmissible illnesses such as flu.

The legal requirement to self-isolate for at least five days after a positive coronavirus test is expected to be replaced by guidance, and mass testing for the virus will be scaled back. The new plan foresees vaccines and treatments keeping the virus in check as it becomes endemic in the country. Johnson urged people not to "throw caution to the winds."

## Israel successfully tests naval air defense system

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel on Monday said it successfully tested a new naval air defense system, intercepting a series of threats in what officials called a key layer of protection against Iran and its proxies in the region. The "C-Dome" system is a naval version of the Iron Dome, which has been used to shoot down rockets fired from the Gaza Strip for the past decade.

The C-Dome is being installed on Israel's latest-generation corvette warships, which protect Israel's coastline and offshore natural gas assets in the Mediterranean. Monday's test simulated a number of incoming threats, including rockets, cruise missiles and drones, the Defence Ministry said.

"The systems that we are developing as part of Israel's multi-tier missile defense array enable us to operate against Iranian proxies in region.

## China denies its warship fired laser at Australian surveillance aircraft

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Monday questioned Australia's claim that a Chinese warship had fired laser at the surveillance aircraft while in flight over Australia's northern approaches, saying allegation does not square up with facts.

Australia called it "a serious safety incident" and said "acts like this have potential to endanger lives". Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Monday that he'd called on Chinese government to explain "dangerous" and "reckless" act allegedly carried out by a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) warship last week. "This was dangerous, it was unprofessional and it was reckless for a professional navy, and we want some answers as to why they did this," Morrison said as he called for "full investigation". "At worst, it was intimidating and bullying," he was quoted as saying by CNN.

## As Kuwait cracks down, a battle erupts over women's rights

AP ■ KUWAIT CITY

It all started over yoga. When an instructor in Kuwait this month advertised a desert wellness yoga retreat, conservatives declared it an assault on Islam.

Lawmakers and clerics thundered about "danger" and depravity of women doing lotus position and downward dog in public, ultimately persuading authorities to ban trip.

The yoga ruckus represented just latest flashpoint in a long-running culture war over women's behaviour in sheikhdom, where tribes and Islamists wield growing power over a divided society.

Increasingly, conservative politicians push back against a burgeoning feminist movement and what they see as an unraveling of Kuwait's traditional values amid deep governmental dysfunction on major issues.

## US, Egypt launch group to prepare for COP27 climate summit

AP ■ CAIRO

The United States and Egypt on Monday launched a joint working group to prepare for next climate change summit in November, the American envoy for climate issues said. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry said group is focused on United Nations' COP27 conference in Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

He said country has already begun its preparations for meeting. Kerry said other world tensions, including ongoing Ukraine crisis, "will not change reality of what is happening every day with respect to our climate," and called issue an "international threat for all of us."

"There are no politics in this. There is no ideology in this. This is not anything to do with some of issues" of concern for U.S. Administration, Kerry said at a news briefing in Cairo with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shukry.



# Sensex, Nifty suffer 4th straight loss as Ukraine crisis simmers

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic equity gauges Sensex and Nifty logged their fourth straight session of fall on Monday as participants remained cautious over lingering geopolitical tensions in eastern Europe.

Persistent foreign fund outflows added to the gloom, traders said.

Tracking deep losses in other Asian bourses, the BSE Sensex dived around 700 points in the opening session but staged a recovery to briefly trade in the positive zone as market jitters were calmed by hopes of talks between the US and Russia over the Ukraine crisis.

However, it wilted under selling pressure in the afternoon session to settle at 57,683.59, down 149.38 points or 0.26 per cent. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 69.65 points or 0.40 per cent to close at 17,206.65.

Of the 30 Sensex constituents, 21 shares ended in the red, with Sun Pharma, TCS, ITC, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement and Tint dropping up to 2.39 per cent.



In contrast, Wipro, Infosys, PowerGrid, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Maruti were among the major gainers, spurring as much as 1.45 per cent. "Domestic indices started weak, taking cues from negative global peers but in between recouped most of its losses on reports of likely meeting between Biden and Putin over the Ukraine issue. However, the market could not stretch the direction and turned negative as uncertainty in the global markets continued."

"Investors stood on the sidelines, impacting volumes. The market is expected to be volatile due to the upcoming Fed meeting and state election results," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said markets are in wait and watch mode in line with global peers and closely monitoring the Russia-Ukraine crisis for cues. "Meanwhile, the volatile swings in the index combined with the selling in broader markets are making traders' life difficult. We thus recommend limiting positions and keeping the existing hedged until the markets stabilise," he noted.

Sectorally, BSE oil and gas, metal, basic materials, realty and healthcare lost as much as 2.18 per cent. Of the 19 sectoral indices, barring banking, all closed with losses.

The BSE smallcap index tumbled 2.20 per cent, midcap fell 0.80 per cent and largecap

slipped 0.59 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses ended lower but pared deep losses suffered in their opening session on reports of a likely meeting between US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Biden has agreed "in principle" to a meeting with Putin as long as that country holds off on what US officials believe is an imminent assault on Ukraine.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the administration has been clear that "we are committed to pursuing diplomacy until the moment an invasion begins."

Bourses in Europe were trading in the negative territory in the afternoon session. Crude oil benchmark Brent was trading lower at USD 91.43 per barrel.

On the forex market front, the rupee closed 11 paise higher at 74.55 against the US dollar on Monday.

Continuing their selling spree, foreign institutional investors offloaded shares worth Rs 2,529.96 crore in the Indian capital markets on Friday, exchange data showed.

# Rupee rises for 5th day, advances 11 paise as dollar, crude oil weaken

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the fifth straight day, the rupee extended gains by 11 paise to close at a one-month high of 74.55 against the US dollar on Monday on the back of a weak dollar and softer crude oil prices amid hopes of a diplomatic solution to the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

The local unit opened strong at 74.51 to a dollar and later spurred to the day's high of 74.35 as crude oil traded below USD 95 per barrel.

The rupee later gave up some of the gains due to losses in the domestic equity markets and forex outflows, before finally finishing at 74.55, showing a gain of 11 paise over the previous close.

The local currency had closed at 74.66 against the greenback on Friday.

"Rupee traded strong near 74.55 as dollar index weakness keep strength in rupee. Crude prices took a halt and trading below USD 95 has cheered the rupee market," said Jateen Trivedi, Senior Research Analyst at LKP Securities.

Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said the rupee rose to a one-month high as dollar index along with crude oil prices retreated on profit booking.

"It's second day in a row where rupee outperformed among Asian currencies all thanks to positive carry trades and speculators may have started front run of LIC IPOs inflows," Parmar said.

Dollar recovered from the day's low on reports of Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Joe Biden having "no concrete plans" for a summit.

"Spot USD-INR is now having support at 74.30, the 200 days simple moving average... Resistance in the range of 74.80 to 74.85 in near term," Parmar added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index eased by 0.26 per cent to 95.79 after reports of a likely summit between the US president and the Russian president to discuss the Ukrainian border crisis.

Brent crude also traded down at USD 93.51 per barrel on hopes of a diplomatic solution to the Russia-Ukraine stalemate.

# Asian shares mostly lower as investors eye Ukraine crisis

AP ■ BANGKOK

Asian shares were mostly lower Monday after a retreat on Wall Street, as investors watched for developments in Ukraine after Russia rescinded earlier pledges to pull tens of thousands of its troops away from Ukraine's northern border.

Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong and Shanghai declined while Sydney advanced.

The White House said President Joe Biden had agreed "in principle" to meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin if he refrains from launching an assault that U.S. Officials say appears increasingly likely.

Russia's decision extended military exercises that brought an estimated 30,000 Russian forces to Belarus, Ukraine's northern neighbour. They had been due to end Sunday. The troops are among some 150,000 deployed along Ukraine's borders, along with tanks, warplanes, artillery and other

war materiel.

The concern that Russian troops could descend on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, a city of about 3 million people less than a three-hour drive away, has added to uncertainties for investors already jittery over central bank strategies to combat inflation.

Russia is a major energy producer and a military conflict also could disrupt energy supplies and make for extremely volatile energy prices.

Markets are on "tenterhooks," Mizuho Bank said in a commentary. But it added, "relief rallies appear to be emerging; drawing comfort from Presidents Biden and Putin having accepted the principle of a summit; conditional upon Russia not invading Ukraine."

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index lost 0.7% to 26,926.01, while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong shed 0.6% to 24,194.64. In Seoul, the Kospi gave up 0.4% to 2,733.36 and the Shanghai Composite index fell 0.3% to 3,479.07.

# Entrepreneurs to take country to higher growth, prosperity: Marico chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Entrepreneurs will lead the country to higher growth and prosperity, Marico Chairman Harsh Mariwala on Monday opined and suggested businesses to adopt a transformative 'digital approach' for sustainable growth.

Highlighting the role of digitisation, Mariwala said the industry should prioritise their digital initiatives and avail this business growth opportunity with a right approach.

Mariwala, who on Monday was awarded AIMA Life Time Achievement Award, said entrepreneurs have a huge role to play in the development and they should be helped and promoted by the industry.

"Entrepreneurs create a lot of wealth for stakeholders, whether it is for themselves or associates or customers also. Entrepreneurs are only going to lead India into a different economic growth and we cannot be dependent on the government for increasing our growth."

It is only the entrepreneurs, who will make India prosperous," said the Marico chairman in his virtual interaction at AIMA foundation day.

Mariwala, through his ASCENT Foundation, is working with 800 entrepreneurs all over India.

Besides, he is also working on mental health initiatives, with a focus on making mental health treatment accessible to marginalised and disabled persons and communities in rural areas.

When asked about digital companies performing better than the traditional companies,



Mariwala said now the companies "would have to look digital from an 'opportunistic lens' with the right approach".

"It is going to hit you. It is one of the prime topics at board level...", he added.

"You would have to identify your digital road map in the business you are in... You have to prioritise that and then decide whether you want to invest into the digital market... Then have people who are experts in digital," Mariwala said.

He suggested that business leaders should recruit people who are digital savvy and are very young.

"You have to learn from them and do not give them any other responsibilities and let them whole time spend on organisation going digital," he said.

Mariwala also said the constitution of the board is very important and should have been based on the competence of people. "For example in FMCG business, the com-

petence is required in marketing, sales and distribution. We have a digital expert on board because this is also important. Now all organisations are more aggressive on the digital front," he said.

Most of the issues discussed in the board are strategic and several committees such as audit play a different role, the Marico chairman said.

While remembering his old days, Mariwala, founder of FMCG maker Marico, said he had started his business in 1970s when there was license raj in the country and had to "grease some palms and use networks" to start.

"I also did not like the b2b business, where you have to meet buyers and take them for dinner. I was very comfortable talking to general trade, like distributors, retailers and others. It suited me and liked to interact with final consumers," he said adding that he has learned a lot in his journey.

Over a period of time, he started expanding and building his two FMCG brands - Safolla and Parachute - and witnessed positive results of advertising.

"If I look back at my own journey, where did we get those breaks in terms of increased market share? It occurred whenever we did something very different. In a highly competitive environment, it is very important for any entrepreneur to identify to right to win. It is very difficult to win in a crowded marketplace if you are not differentiated," he said.

This differentiation can only come from innovation or through a pioneering initiative, he added.

# LIC wants to remain IDBI Bank shareholder for bancassurance gain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IPO-bound Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) on Monday said it would like to retain some stake in IDBI Bank so that the insurer continues to reap the benefits of the bancassurance channel.

IDBI Bank became a subsidiary of LIC with effect from January 21, 2019, following the acquisition of an additional 8,27,590,885 equity shares.

On December 19, 2020, IDBI Bank was reclassified as an associate company due to the reduction of LIC shareholding to 49.24 per cent following the issuance of additional equity shares by the bank under a Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP).

The government, which is the minority shareholder in IDBI Bank with a 45.48 per cent stake, has already expressed its intent to exit by selling the stake.

"Going forward, we would like to have some stake in IDBI Bank. The whole idea of us picking up stake in the bank was strategic in nature and that has not gone away at all," LIC Chairman M R Kumar said during a media interaction.

In fact, IDBI Bank has been the strongest contributor for the bancassurance channel, he said, adding that this was something that would help LIC to grow that particular



channel in the post-IPO scenario.

Bancassurance is an arrangement between a bank and an insurance company allowing the latter to sell its products to the bank's customers and others through the branch network.

"I, as LIC Chairperson, would like to see that the relationship continuing in the future as well," he said.

On how much LIC would like to retain out of 49.24 per cent stake in IDBI Bank at present, Kumar said as of now there was no sense of the number as it was up to the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) to kick off that exercise.

"Since it was a strategic partner-

ship to begin with, we might stick on to some stake in order that we continue our relationship on bancassurance and other areas which are a win-win-win for both LIC and IDBI Bank," he said.

Elaborating on bancassurance channel, Kumar said LIC has distribution tie up with 58,000 branches of different banks. There is still a lot of scope and headroom for growth on that front, he added.

About new products, he said LIC was working on several participating (par) and non-participating (non-par) policies that would be launched going forward.

LIC filed the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) for the Initial Public Offering (IPO) this month. The government expects to mobilise about Rs 63,000 crore from the proposed Offer for Sale (OFS) to meet the lower disinvestment target of Rs 78,000 crore for the current financial year.

The insurer had infused Rs 4,743 crore in IDBI Bank on October 23, 2019 using policyholders' funds while the bank further raised Rs 1,435.1 crore on December 19, 2020 by way of a QIP.

IDBI Bank has come out of the prompt corrective action framework in March 2021, subject to compliance with certain conditions and continuous monitoring.

# Tata Steel's Kalinganagar plant onboards 12 transgender people as trainee crane operators

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Twelve trainee crane operators from LGBTQ+ community were onboarded by steel major Tata Steel at its Kalinganagar plant in Odisha last week, a company press release said.

With this, Tata steel further expanded its transgender employee base following the initiative by the company's West Bokaro division, where 14 transgender people were hired as heavy earth moving machinery (HEMM) operators at its mines in December 2021.

This step of including the LGBTQ+ community not only aims to break the glass ceiling, but also targets to mainstream transgender people in society, the press release said.

Tata Steel's Diversity and Inclusion initiative aims at curating a workplace where everyone is respected, every voice is heard, and people can bring their authentic selves to work, it said.

The onboarding event at Tata Steel Kalinganagar (TSK) was organised on February 17, 2022.

Speaking on the occasion, Atrayee Sanyal, Vice President, Human Resource Management, Tata Steel, said "I am pleased to welcome all the members into the Tata Steel family. We will continue with our efforts to drive LGBTQ+ inclusion and build a benchmark workplace. This journey of HR excellence has



been extremely rewarding and motivates us to explore new horizons on diversity and inclusion." The trainees will undergo training for a year before they begin working in the plant as Crane Operators.

"The journey of a thousand miles starts with one step and this step in our endeavour to make a more diverse and inclusive workplace here sets an important milestone. As an equal opportunity employer, Tata Steel respects uniqueness of individuals and is putting its best foot forward to shape the workspace of tomorrow," said Rajiv Kumar, Vice-President (Operations), TSK.

The Company has taken several path-breaking initiatives, including menstrual health, equal benefits for LGBTQ+ partners, and gender neutral parental leaves. Tata Steel is committed to creating a diverse, inclusive, safe and fair workplace and has taken a target of having 25 per cent diverse workforce by 2025, the release said.

# Jio's IAX undersea cable system to land in Maldives

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's largest mobile operator Reliance Jio Infocomm will land the multi-terabit India-Asia-Xpress (IAX) undersea cable system in Hulhumale, Maldives, according to a statement on Monday.

The high capacity and high-speed IAX system will connect Hulhumale directly with world's major internet hubs in India and Singapore.

Jio's IAX project will land in the Maldives in collaboration with Ocean Connect Maldives, the statement said.

The IAX system originates in Mumbai in the west and connects directly to Singapore, with branches including additional landings in India, Malaysia, and Thailand.

The India-Europe-Xpress (IEIX) system connects Mumbai to Milan, landing in Savona, Italy, and includes additional landings in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Mediterranean.

IAX is expected to be ready for service end-2023, while IEIX will be ready for service in mid-2024.

"These high capacity and high-speed systems will provide more than 200Tb/s of capacity at speeds of 100Gb/s, over 16,000 kilometers," the statement informed.

Speaking about the launch of the Maldives' first international cable, its Minister of Economic Development, Uz Fayyaz Ismail, said, "This is the

first stride towards enhancing our connectivity infrastructure and opening vast opportunities for our people through providing secure, affordable and high-quality services".

Ismail further observed: "We also aim to diversify our economy and establish ourselves as a key communications hub in South Asia".

**BSES**  
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

**CORRIGENDUM**  
EXTENSION OF LAST DATE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF OFFER  
Due to unavoidable circumstances, the last date of submission of tender against NIT No. Head (PMG)/BRPL/E Tender/2021-22/1198 dated 14.2.2022 for Purchase of Power by BRPL has been extended till 02.03.2022 and the revised schedule is as follows:-  
**A. Last date of submission of RFP Bids including EMD 2nd March, 2022 at 15:00 HRS**  
**B. Opening of non financial Technical Bids 3rd March, 2022 at 11:00 HRS**  
**HOD (PMG)**  
**BSES Rajdhani Power Limited,**  
For further details please log on to <http://www.bsesdelhi.com> & [www.msccemcom.com](http://www.msccemcom.com)  
Regd. Off: - BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Netaji Place, New Delhi-110016  
Corporate Identification No.: U49190DL2001PLC111527  
Telephone No. : +91 11 4920 7235 Fax No. : +91 11 39999890  
Website : [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)

**KEY CORP LIMITED**  
CIN No.: L65921UP1985PLC007547  
Regd. Office: 16/16-A, Civil Lines, Kanpur - 208001, Mob. 8604627809  
email: [keycorpind@gmail.com](mailto:keycorpind@gmail.com)  
The Board of Directors of the Company appointed Shri Mukul Agarwal (DIN : 00234962) as an Non-Independent Non-Executive Director of the Company w.e.f. 10.06.2021 in terms of Section 161 of the Companies Act 2013.  
By Order of the Board (G.D. MAHESHWARI)  
Place: Kanpur  
Date: 22.02.2022  
Director  
DIN 00235209

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all that I, NEETA GUPTA W/O SHRI SANDEEP KUMAR R/O 73-C, MIG Masjid Moh, New Delhi, Owner/GPA/purchaser of DDA MIG Flat No. 73-C, Second Floor, Masjid Moh, New Delhi, vide file no. M062 (28) 80/HBML, have applied for conversion of the aforesaid flat from lease hold to free hold vide application No./Request Id 245395 in DDA. The all original documents i.e. Possession Letter and Possession Slip of the above said flat have been lost. An F.I.R./NCR No.430/2014, LR No. 051686/2021 dated 22/10/2021 to this effect has been lodged in Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9971914010 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director Housing or Director (H), Vikas Sadan, New Delhi

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Public at large is Being informed that a Civil Suit Bearing No. 1179/2021 titled as Kartar Singh Vs. Fazlu Rehman Pending in the Court of Ms. Chitranshi Arora CJ-02, SE/Saket Court Delhi and Stay Order Has Been Granted By the Hon'ble Court in favour of my client Sh. Kartar Singh. Vide Order Dated 20.11.2021".  
**Dinesh Kumar (Advocate)**  
Regd. No. D-1625/2001  
Ph. : 9871647659

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is hereby informed that this person Name: Bijender, S/o: LT. Satnarayan, R/o: H.No 77 Pocket 5, Sec. 21 Rohini, Age: 42 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 6 feet, Face: Long, Built: Healthy, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Red Colour T-shirt And Blue Lower Hawai chappal, was found Native village Chiliyana District Rohtak Haryana, on 28.01.2022  
In this regard a DD No.83A, dated 28.06.2022 has been lodged at P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi.  
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.  
Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.  
**SHO**  
**P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi**  
**DP/1281/RD/2022 Ph.: 011-27581812, 8750870321**

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE SRINAGAR KASHMIR**  
Tel-0194-2474234 Fax - 2482032 - email :- [kashflori@rediffmail.com](mailto:kashflori@rediffmail.com)  
**GIST OF e- Tender Notice No. 61 of 2022 Dated: - 18/02/2022**  
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K UT, e-tender is invited from interested parties/persons for Outsourcing of Entry Ticketing System of Eidgah Park, Srinagar of Floriculture Department Kashmir as per details given below: -  
The participants have to quote their bid amount in the concerned BOQ: -

S. No.	Period of contract	Reserve Bid (Rs. in Lakhs)	Value of security deposit	Cost of Tender Document
1.	01 year from the date of award of contract	3,68,000/-	36,800/-	200/- in the shape of e-challan

The bidding document (s) consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, terms and conditions and other details can be seen/downloaded through the Departmental website [www.dirflorikmr.in](http://www.dirflorikmr.in) / [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Period of downloading of bidding document	18.02.2022 from 02:00 PM to 11.03.2022 up to 02:00 PM
2.	Bid submission Start Date	19.02.2022 from 11:00 AM
3.	Bid submission End Date	11.03.2022 up to 02:00 PM
4.	Date and time of Opening of Tenders (Online)	14.03.2022 at 02:00 PM

The security deposit money exceeding 2% shall be adjustable towards approved bid amount in favour of the successful bidder. The CDR's of the bidders who offer below the reserve bid shall be forfeited.  
In case of any eventuality, the date of opening will be considered on any other convenient working day.  
**Sd/- Accounts Officer (Member secretary)**  
**No. DIPK-18329/21 Dated:- 18-02-2022**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Whereas, M/s. Supertech Ltd is in the process of developing an Residential Plotted Colony in Sector-2, Sohna over an area measuring 100.36875 acres in the revenue estate of Sohna and Mohammadpur Gujjar in accordance with the provision of license no. 124 of 2014, granted by Director General, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh.

And whereas, several individuals have made bookings/ entered into purchase agreement for allotment of plot/ property in the said colony (hereinafter referred as allottees).

And whereas, the layout plan earlier approved at the time of grant of license for the said colony is now proposed to be revised due to migration of 5.14785 acres of licensed land into an Affordable Residential Plotted Colony

And whereas, the office of Director General, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has required seeking of objection against the revision of layout plan as a pre-condition for allowing such revision in the layout plan.

Accordingly, vide this public notice, objections are hereby invited from any of the allottees in the said colony on the proposed revision of the layout plan of the said colony. A copy of the earlier approved layout plan bearing Drg No. DGTCPC-4789, dated 11/8/2014 & the layout plan now proposed to be revised bearing drawing no. 8160, dated 15/2/2022 is available for perusal on or website ([www.supertechlimited.com](http://www.supertechlimited.com)). The said layout plan can also be perused at the office of undersigned ( Supertech Hues Sales Office, Badshahpur-Tikli Road, Sector-68, Gurugram) as well as in the office of Senior Town Planner at 3rd floor, HSPV Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram.

Any allottee having any objection on revised layout plan, may file his objection in the office of Senior Town Planner, Gurugram within 30 days of the publication of this notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed revision in the layout plan.

Place : Gurugram Date : 22 February, 2022



DOCYARD

DR TUSHAR GROVER

Medical Director

VISION EYE CENTRE, NEW DELHI



# How much screen time is too much?



Undoubtedly, there has been an unprecedented jump in the screen time that we have all engaged in ever since the pandemic has broken out. In an era of lockdowns and home-stays, however intermittent and episodic, not only have we remained confined indoors for longer durations, the way we function as a society has undergone a sea change. Whether it is for educational purposes, or for entertainment and leisure or for work, a full-fledged digital lifestyle has increasingly come to define us. Indeed, as part of this lifestyle change, work-from-home has become a more permanent feature of our everyday routine.

**Work-from-home has an eye health cost**  
But do we realize that the increased adoption of work-from-home routine has a cost element involved in terms of our eye health. As we spend more and more time on digital screens including laptops, mobile phones, tablets, e-readers and even television, our eyes have an disproportionately increased exposure time to these screens fraught with considerable adverse consequences.

**Characterised by a range of symptoms**  
The increased screen time and the resultant eye problems can be gauged through a range of symptoms. These could be in the form of eye strain, or headaches, or blurred vision or double vision, or dry eyes or even neck and shoulder pain. Sometimes, it can even lead to disturbance in sleep patterns and difficulties in concentration apart from mental health conditions.

**Computer Vision Syndrome, the big eye problem**  
Because of excessive screen time, we can face a number of problems in our eyes with Computer Vision Syndrome or Digital Eye Strain being one prominent example. We need to realize that the nature of demand on our eyes changes as compared to when we regularly read a printed page or write in the physical mode. Apart from the movement of our eyes, the focusing and refocusing on a computer or other digital screens requires additional efforts on the part of the eye muscles and the vision system. If we consider the glare, the contrast and the flicker of the screen, it becomes even more strenuous and uncomfortable for our eyes attempting to work on the screens. Also, while we are engrossed with our screens, we tend to blink less which leads to dry eyes with related consequences. People touching forty particularly have to exert more since their natural lenses become less flexible.

**Those wearing eyewear also have problems**  
While people with unaddressed or under-addressed vision issues will have more problems for obvious reasons, those wearing some eyewear such as eyeglasses and lenses also need to be equally careful. Screen use, particularly at home, is often associated with improper posture and improper home lighting. The viewer is often forced to bend his head, not just aggravating discomfort to eyes but also causing back and neck pain.


**Prevention**  
Of course, reducing or right-sizing the screen time is the first step that one has to consider. Second, placing the computer or other screen in sufficiently lit space must become a priority. Third, adequate distance preferably at an arm's length and at appropriate viewing angle between the individual and the screen must be maintained. Fourth, glasses and lenses filtering blue rays and with UV protection should be taken recourse to. And fifth and very importantly, one must observe the 20-20-20 rule meaning that every 20 minutes, a person using a screen should look about 20 feet away for at least twenty seconds. This would give the eyes much-needed rest on a regular basis.

Therefore, while work-from-home and the consequent increased screen time has many advantages, there are downsides too with respect to our eye health. A study reports that nearly 23 per cent of the Indian population had suffered some level of weakening eyesight during the pandemic-driven increased homestays. As such, while we can't do away with our screens completely, we must exercise caution. Moderation is the keyword here.

WARMFOOD

**POMEGRANATE:** The antioxidant content in pomegranate juice is higher than most of the other fruit juices. Pomegranate juice's antioxidants can aid in the removal of free radicals, the protection of cells, and the reduction of inflammation. To receive the maximum Vitamin C nutrient, choose homemade or fresh pomegranate juice. The

Pomegranate juice can help with digestion and reduce inflammation in the intestines. People with Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and other inflammatory bowel illnesses may benefit from it. The juice has been found to increase blood flow and prevent arteries from becoming tight and thick. It may also help to reduce plaque formation and cholesterol buildup in the arteries.





# Are you binge eating?

Yoga practice in conjunction with naturopathy treatment and psychiatric therapy may be beneficial, says DR H P BHARATHI

Do you or someone you care about have an eating disorder? There's more to these problems than simply food and weight. From school or job performance to physical health issues, an eating disorder may create severe disruptions in a person's life. Yoga is a mind-body activity that is recognised for its inherent healing effects and awareness. Yoga and naturopathy may be a valuable aid in the rehabilitation process, and consistent yoga practice in conjunction with naturopathy treatment and psychiatric therapy may be beneficial.

Obviously, smart food choices can benefit the body in different ways but when someone becomes too much obsessed with restrictions, problems arise. When the behaviour of a person gets too disruptive owing to such restrictions, it can interfere with personal and work relationships which ultimately leads to psychological disorders.

Also, it has been observed that people with orthorexia often tend to avoid social invitations and interactions, fearing that they would have to compromise on their healthy eating habits. Even if they do indulge in social interactions, they would refuse to touch food, despite hunger pangs.

Some people may also spend hours on shopping for specific groceries or keep their habits secret from their friends and family.

**What makes yoga and naturopathy a suitable solution for those suffering from eating disorders?**

Millions of people suffer from

a variety of eating disorders, which is disturbed and unhealthy eating habits that might include restrictive dieting, obsessive eating, or meal skipping. According to a study published by the National Eating Disorder Association, four out of 10 adults have either directly experienced an eating disorder or know someone who has through the fostering of non-judgment, confidence, and self-acceptance, yoga has been demonstrated to help ease anxiety, anger and depression as well as improve self-esteem and a healthy body image. Regular yoga practice may aid in the restoration of mental, emotional and physical strength that is damaged due to binge eating disorders.

On the physical level, yoga may be customised to assist digestion, ease constipation, and lessen reactivity to the unpleasant process of binge eating. On an emotional level, yoga encourages emotional connection to the person's internal world, allowing emotions, wants, and longings to be grounded.

Stressful mental patterns that sustain eating disorders may frequently dissipate slowly with a design that first opens the body via stretching and then completes with relaxation. During or after a yoga practice, we may be able to release feelings that have been burdening us for years.

Yoga, meditation and breathwork both lessen the body's physiological stress response by lowering sympathetic nervous system activation and boosting activity in the part of the brain responsible for confidence, emotion management,



**Dr H P Bharathi**  
Deputy Chief Medical Officer,  
Jindal Naturecure Institute

and mental flexibility, according to studies on mindfulness. Surprisingly, research on yoga's therapeutic benefits has shown that the ability to bear modest amounts of stress, such as learning to remain in an unpleasant pose, is linked to overall happiness and quality of life. Once a person learns to remain in an unpleasant pose, they are more capable of being with uncomfortable feelings when they arise instead of binge eating.

**Naturopathy helps in healing eating disorders**

Naturopathic physicians treat patients focusing on their physical, lifestyle, environmental, mental, and emotional wellness. Naturopathy doctors who follow these concepts always concentrate

on addressing the underlying cause of a patient's ailment. Depression, anxiety, trauma, or another factor may play a role in eating disorders.

This may also need collaboration with a psychologist due to the serious nature of binge eating disorder. The naturopathy method entails examining the body's long-term changes: What nutrients have been deficient for a long time? What impact does the eating disorder have on mental performance? What impact does it have on a patient's behaviour? What organs or blood components, such as the stomach, heart, kidneys, and so on, have been impaired as a result of the binge eating disorder? It also entails assessing what deep-seated issues and hurdles the patient may need assistance in overcoming the eating disorder in order to be cured.

Along with focusing on healthy food habits, naturopathy also involves alternative healing therapies like acupuncture, relaxation therapy, botanical medicine and others. Acupuncture may aid in the treatment of eating disorders by addressing linked health issues, lowering stress, and speeding the healing of afflicted bodily systems. The botanical medicine approach tries to replenish the patient's organ systems, which are often damaged as a result of the binge eating problem. And relaxation therapy involves massage therapy, which seeks to lower stress hormones, raise positive chemical levels (norepinephrine and dopamine), and reduce body dissatisfaction.

# Impact of COVID-19 on drinking habits

An increased focus on awareness campaigns is required, and we carried out numerous camps to educate people, says AMAR SINHA

India is one of the world's fastest-growing alcobev and spirits markets. Various factors have contributed to the growth, including a large middle-class population with increasing spending power, growing urbanisation, changing preferences towards quality products, and the subsequent waning cultural taboos. However, the COVID-19 lockdown, which began in late March 2020, had a significant toll in all areas, and the alcobev and spirit industry was no exception. Some states tried to adjust to the shifting dynamics of the distribution system, and the approach turned out to be relatively fruitful. A few states began home delivery to reduce crowds and facilitate social distance during the lockdown. However, consumption started picking up pace after lockdowns were eased, and people thronged outlets to embrace the packs of tinge of joy.

Due to shutdowns, bars and eateries got negatively impacted, leading to the most significant and visible behavioural change, with people resorting to drinking in closed groups in the comforts of their homes. After unlocks and opening of bars/restaurants, the sales started



**Amar Sinha**  
Chief Operating Officer, Radico Khaitan Limited

**ALCOBEV INDUSTRY IS CATCHING UP FAST TO REACH PRE-COVID SALES AND IS ALSO AWARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE SAME TIME**

picking up pace; however, the behavioural change of the drinkers persisted. In fact, some studies have hinted at an increase in intake.

An element of many people's social lives, the industry noticed an intriguing shift in consumer behaviour, as they were eager to experiment with their tipples while at home. It's fascinating to watch how they experiment with beverages they may not have had previously, such as artisan whiskey, craft rum, and craft gin. The change in preference towards premium is also an alteration from the health aspect, as consumers became conscious about quality and did not bat an eyelid before shelling out extra to savor the premium tastes.

Impact of social media and OTT also cannot be negated as it is bringing in the exposure to international trends, which kicks in the mentality of aping behaviour of mature markets. The recent research reports point toward the psychological behaviour of the internet generation as they want to portray themselves on social media platforms as the acceptors of experimental consumption.

Another pattern that emerged after the pandemic is the increased inclination to go premium. The shift

occurred because people saved money by not going to bars/restaurants; people could afford to go a notch up in liquor selection with the same amount. Consumers are looking to create an experience out of their drinking time and are hunting for quality. In the future, there will be more private gatherings and more opportunities to experiment with DIYs, which usually leads to fascinating consumer behaviour adjustments.

Looking at the increased consumption, we took the opportunity to step in as a responsible corporate body to promote a judicious drinking habit that should not affect personal lives. An increased focus on awareness campaigns is required, and we carried out numerous camps to educate people.

The pandemic has necessitated the focus on health aspects, and that is where the people's increased inclination towards quality has to be weighed in. The alcobev industry is catching up fast to reach pre-COVID sales and is also aware of the responsibilities at the same time. We need to take these forward to create a society that can always raise a toast to happiness.

# Dearth of quality healthcare



Tech-driven healthcare solutions reduce the chance of inequalities in health through low-cost dissemination, remote deliveries and removal of hindrances, says GAURAV DUBEY

**\*Current healthcare scenario in the country**  
India's healthcare infrastructure is experiencing dynamic growth. Though significant advancement has been achieved in health, a lot is yet to be accomplished. A considerable part of society, especially the commoners, are still striving hard to reach quality healthcare. The current doctor to patient ratio is 1:2148 in India. A low emphasis on education within the healthcare system and low priority for health in the population are the key factors resulting in limited awareness of covering health expenses. However, technology-driven healthcare solutions reduce the chance of inequalities in health through low-cost dissemination, remote deliveries, and removal of hindrances.

**\*Trends revolutionising the healthcare industry in 2022**  
India is embracing the private sector in the healthcare industry with the vision to achieve universal health coverage. Private sector intervention can open new opportunities in making online doctor consultation and pharmacy accessible as per requirement.

Even insurance is gaining traction as a necessary step and must undoubtedly expand to help in facilitating equitable health care to shift to different sections. The pandemic has unpredictably changed consumer behaviour from shopping and entertainment to healthcare needs. A surge in consumers preferring to have their healthcare needs met remotely or from the comfort and safety of their homes is on record. The intermediation of the private sector in the healthcare and insurance industry aims to reduce the expense burden of the consumers.

**\*Asymmetric information between healthcare/insurance providers and patients**

Experts envision emerging information parity where healthcare/insurance providers and patients solve consumer problems. Pricing transparency and a reformed structure of health services lead to better medical decision-making. To rectify the ill-designed regulatory systems of publicly funded healthcare leading to asymmetric information, a sensible and effective regulation is the need of the hour. We believe effective implementation of the NDHM framework will go a long way in bridging this gap going forward.

**\*Integrating preventive healthcare with sickness insurance**

Insurance Industry conventionally has been built on the philosophy of providing sickness insurance. Currently preventive healthcare is quite fragmented with limited to no standardisation of products & pricing. Conventional approaches towards insurance product designing and insurance pricing will always find it difficult to be implemented in the current regulatory framework. We believe industry participants like Government, IRDA, Insurers & Healthcare players need to come together to enable designing of such products.

The writer is CEO, LivLong

# INBRIEF

HSSC collaborates with C-DAC to establish CoE in healthcare technologies

Aligned with the intent to work towards development of Smart Healthcare Workforce (SHW) in India, Healthcare Sector Skill Council and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) signed an agreement today to establish Center of Excellence (CoE) for developing specialised training programme for the healthcare workforce in emerging technologies and thereby creating a SHW for smart technology. The Center of Excellence would also facilitate the research and support establishment of skill hubs in collaboration with the healthcare industry.

The MoU was signed by Ashish Jain, CEO, HSSC while Dr P K Khosla, Executive Director, C-DAC Mohali signed it on behalf of C-DAC Mohali.

Jain briefed that the CoE will develop skilling/ upskilling programmes and train healthcare professionals for using healthcare products/solutions in the areas of digital health, artificial intelligence, health tech, 3D printing, cyber-security and other technologies related to healthcare sector. This landmark initiative is envisaged to provide impetus to research and development in artificial intelligence and healthcare technology through active participation of researchers and healthcare professionals.



All Satyajit Ray lovers can come and gaze at his book covers at the India International Centre Gallery and partake of the celebration of *Ray@100 years* which has gathered steam in many places in the country. This set of book covers — at the exhibition *Ray Between the Covers* — unravels his enchantment for design and his love for the alphabet as well as the human figure in all its moods.

For Ray, a book's cover was more than that. It was a living metaphor of its contents. His design influences range from Western art to Santiniketan, to the grace of calligraphy as well as the Japanese wash technique. Historians state that his work changed the face of the 1940s Bengali publishing industry.

**VINTAGE LIST OF 1940S AND 50S**

Of course, for those of us who remember his best covers, it's best to recall and reminisce because these covers are rare vignettes of his captivating contours and compositional brilliance. Unforgettable is that vintage list, beginning from Premendra Mitra's collection of poems, *Ferari Fouj* (The Lost Army, 1948), Leela Majumdar's short story collection, *Din Dupure* (Midday, 1948), Achintya Kumar Sengupta's novel, *Indrani* (1949), Bishnu Dey's collection of poems, *Naam Rekhechi Komal Gandhar* (I have Named her Komal Gandhar, 1953), *Parampurush Sri Sri Ramkrishna* (Sri Sri Ramakrishna, the Supreme Being, 1951),

Jibanananda Das's *Bonolata Sen* (1952) Achintya Kumar Sengupta's *Aamabasya* (The New Moon, 1953), Leela Majumdar's *Jonaki* (Fireflies, 1955) and Nareh Guha's *Duronto Dupur* (The Unruly Noon, 1952).

Since these covers don't feature in this suite of covers, one must hunt for the delectable figure and contrasting calligraphic charisma.

**CONTENTS AND CURIOSITY**

Professor Shanku has a Western tinge to the contouring. Indeed, for Ray, the cover of a book was like a hieroglyph just waiting to be deciphered; in his cover of *Badshahi Sangiti*, we see the cityscape with street and the human face as a teaser, revealing just enough to stoke interest in the contents and fire our curiosity.

Ray had started in 1943 as a junior visualiser at an advertising firm, D J Keymer and Co, where Dilip Kumar Gupta (popularly known as DK) was an assistant manager. DK went on to start a publishing venture, called Signet Press, the same year, which revolutionised the



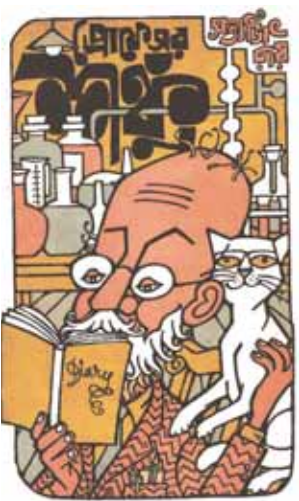
# CAPTIVATING COVERS

SATYAJIT RAY's enchantment for design and his love for the alphabet as well as the human figure — in all its moods —are revealed at an ongoing exhibition, says UMA NAIR

look of the Bengali book. Ray joined him as a principal artist, a job that allowed free rein to his creativity.

*Gangtoke Gondogol* is a masterpiece. It is a reflection of Ray's love for visual dynamics; we can sense the love Ray had for the aesthetic as well as an adaptive appreciation of form to content.

Scholars have noted that stylistically Ray was like a chameleon who adapted his design according to the needs of a particular book. This approach was a marked departure from the repetitive, and often superficial, decorative style prevalent in the Bengali publishing industry at that time. His liberal use of references from Western and Eastern art to provide a subtext to his creations is seen in the manner in which he creates spatial divisions between alphabets and textual inferences. While Western influences had seeped into his sensibility even as an



adolescent, Ray's exposure to Indian art came much later, only when he went to Santiniketan as a student at Kala Bhavan in 1940: Nandalal Bose and Benode Behari Mukherjee, his teachers, opened up a new world before him.

**LOVE FOR SCRIPT**

His understanding of using the outline printed in reverse, within a black block, and combining it with the author's name written by hand, with the title at the top creates masterpieces

in the anatomy of design. When he uses the lexicon of grammarian script you can sense his understanding of subtle spacing as well as alignment of horizontal and vertical design frames. While this collection could have included some of his utterly feminine fabular tales this does well to bring in the spirit of celebration and the eternal chord that existed between the earthiness of both humans and nature in all of his escapades with the art of creating book covers as well as telling stories.

We can walk away remembering his words: "Somehow I feel that an ordinary person — the man in the street if you like — is a more challenging subject for exploration than people in the heroic mould. It is the half shades, the hardly audible notes that I want to capture and explore."

(Ray Between the Covers is on till March 1 at IIC Art Gallery.)

# Boundlessness of built environment

The evolution of design, as a whole, is the result of cultural boundaries to guard political power, professional responsibilities and privileges, says NIKITA BAJAJ PATHAK

The term built environment touches all aspects encompassing the buildings we live in, generally described as man-made or modified structures that provide people with living, working, and recreational spaces. As architects, we aim to achieve an integrated, environmentally conscious approach to building designs. The fraternity in the industry has been consistently discussing how to meet the climate targets, reduce heat island effects and limit the impact of the built environment over the past few years. The built environment dictates how societies develop while expressing their cultural infrastructure while also negotiating the abstract world of policies, council guidelines, building codes, and laws. All this coming together creates visible structures that allow for comfortable living, business activities, and transport networks.

As architects, we appreciate that the inhabited urban built environment is made of boundaries, demanding how we look at spatial data representing the architectural and material characteristics. Architectural boundaries are a determinant for the spatial subdivisions of the built environment. The sequence of boundaries is designed to better appreciate how abstract spatial data refers to the empirical social reality of the material presence of the built environment to its inhabiting society. The types of boundary lines create a built scheme with analytic units that are at once ideational and empirical.

The evolution of design, as a whole, is the result of cultural boundaries to guard political power, professional responsibilities, and privileges. But one must also understand the performance attributes associated with the design of buildings and design professionals. There is a need for better communication and negotiation among the stakeholders and financial institutions through policies and regulatory agents to user groups. This is done by simply finding different positions and priorities while still respecting the view-



point of all parties involved. Encouraging the architecture fraternity to integrate sustainability thinking within their projects will require assurances that assessment methods be transparent in use while being complementary to other tools and processes. With this approach, architectural and design boundaries can be conveniently created with the help of non-sustainable materials for the betterment of the built environment.

The success with the current generation of the built environment method lies in the perceived simplicity in declaring an industry's expectation of what constitutes a built environment and its construction. While architecture is governed by various boundaries of rules and regulations, it also comes with its own set of ambiguous and limitless opportunities to explore the realm of design. The solution to complex design involves a wide range of influence and time frames requiring the ability to appreciate the inter-relationships between a broad range of conflicting requirements.

The principal task of architecture does not only concern the production of objects, but it also helps in creating suitable spatial dimen-

sions at various locations. It offers an interplay between spatial features of constructive elements involved with the perception of user experience. The boundless architecture further comprehends architectural situations from the perspective of experience and not of design. The key consideration of design is the way in which people experience the buildings created for them, be it governed by boundaries or the freedom of boundlessness.

While the terms 'roof', 'base', and 'wall' do appear to be quantitative and physically accountable along with being bordered, the individual concepts do not primarily refer to constructive contexts while representing an aesthetic doctrine of building shapes. Design is not just limited to locating terms within the history of architecture, nor are concepts generalised within a broad socio-cultural context. Concrete architecture and built environment, at the end of the day, concentrate on the situative contents of the respective term in connection with concrete structural-spatial form.

(The author is an architect and the founder of Design21, an architecture and interiors company.)

Over the last decade Nappa Dori, a Delhi-based design house has long established itself as a brand that is anchored in India's rich heritage and artisanal craftsmanship. It has evolved as one of India's foremost contemporary design brands, with founder and creative director Gautam Sinha at the helm. The brand features an expansive range of luggage and bags to minimally designed stationery and accessories.

In 2019, Nappa Dori opened its flagship store in Covent Garden, London and come February 2022, there will be a store in Dubai, UAE and Bandra, Mumbai. The offering caters to the India proud customer, who is well-travelled, adventurous, and feels a sense of pride carrying an Indian brand that conforms to international standards. Gautam Sinha, creative director and founder talks about the brand.

Read Excerpts:

**Q Nappa Dori stands for a lifestyle... Do you agree?**

Sinha: Of course, Nappa Dori is a lifestyle brand more than a leather goods company. It's in our design ethos to have an emotional connection with clients rather than just be a possession they purchase.

# Of heritage and craftsmanship

GAUTAM SINHA, creative director and founder, Nappa Dori, talks about the brand completing 11 years in the industry and the path ahead

**Q Luggage, bags, stationery and accessories, do you believe these are underrated in the Indian context and only a niche clientele appreciate craftsmanship and design in this segment?**

I believe everyone appreciates good design and craftsmanship. It's not about having unrelated product segments in one space, but how you present them is important as well. The market segment is big, not niche, but the awareness about how approachable design is to the common person is limited in India. That's where a less intimidating approach to design is needed, which is what we try to create in our retail spaces.

**Q You are one of a handful of Indian brands that have a flagship store in London, how does that feel and has it been tough to sustain it through the pandemic?**

It's a true testament to our design philosophy and approach that we have a prod-



uct that appeals to a global palette and is for everyone. The fact that we do not need to alter our product line says a lot. We have an international design sensibility while retaining our Indian roots. And yes, it feels great to be able to showcase India on a truly international platform.

**Q While the whole world is turning to e-commerce, come February 2022, you are opening stores in Dubai, UAE and Bandra, Mumbai... is this part of a larger expansion plan and brand building exercise?**

Sinha: The pandemic has been really hard, especially with the fact that we opened our London location just 6 months before the world came to a standstill. But we have a resilient team and have had a great response from the market, which gives us immense hope that when things get normal, we will be able to expand things a lot quicker.

**Q You've always been ahead of the curve, especially when it comes to being Vocal for Local and creating a Make-in-India brand... are you happy that the concept has gained popularity, especially amongst GEN Z and millennials?**

Yes, definitely. I think the younger

Indian audience is a lot more mature and accepting of brands like ours. Nappa Dori would not have been where it is today and expanded if it did not have the support of the Gen z or millennial audience.

**Q How do you see the future of Indian handcrafted luxury?**

I feel the next decade will be amazing for brands emerging from India and will have a real impact on the global market. It still amazes me that we do not have a truly global fashion or retail brand. I feel you will see many more Indian brands sprouting all across the world and making the country proud.

**Q You have diversified into cafes'... is this part of a larger Nappa Dori ecosystem you are trying to create?**

Cafe Dori is a part of what you would call our venture into all aspects of lifestyle. It's not only about purchasing something and stepping out. With our cafes in our stores, we want you to be a part of our world and have a complete sensory experience. And who doesn't like the smell of freshly brewed coffee surrounded by design and a creative environment?

—IANS

**WAYAM NAWAM ART EXHIBITION**

Shailja's studio (by Shailja Jain) and Aapsa Art (an initiative by Dharmendra Rathore) have joined hands and brought this exhibition — *Wayam Nawam*. This collaborative work showcases national and international artists. It will be inaugurated by poet and art critic, Prayag Shukla. This show will open to new perspectives and ideas to dwell and engage further on. The exhibition will portray artworks and authentic compositions of each artist and their imagination.



**Where:** Shailja's Studio, EMAAR Digital Greens,  
**When:** Till March 12 from 11 am to 7pm

**WITHERING WINGS ART EXHIBITION**

Sambit Panda and Gopal Samatray's choice of colour, imagination and strokes of brush can be seen in this exhibition. Samatray's paintings are real-life paintings that he transports to others with a different lens. Panda's modern art forms tell a story that connects with the viewers and his creations. The exhibition is curated by Ranbir Rath.



**Where:** Nero Art Hub, Amrit Nagar, South Extension Part 1, New Delhi – 110049  
**When:** Till 20 March from 11 am to 6:30 pm

**THE GENIUS OF MARIE CURIE: THE WOMAN WHO LIT UP THE WORLD**

Director Gideon Bradshaw's film focusses on Marie Curie's life packed with incident. Born in Poland, she showed an early aptitude for science, but was prevented from pursuing her studies by an archaically minded educational establishment. Moving to Paris where she changed her name and achieved an almost immediate reputation as an innovator and radical thinker. However Curie lost hereafter a scandal involving her private life. In a closed society women were not supposed to have feelings of their own; hence to be unfaithful to her spouse was considered tantamount to a heinous crime. However, Curie was nothing if not tenacious. Having married Pierre Curie she not only restored her reputation but increased it by discovering radium. From then on till her death in her mid-sixties she became an international figure, regularly lecturing in Europe and the United States.

**Where:** <https://watchdocumentaries.com/the-genius-of-marie-curie-the-woman-who-lit-up-the-world/>



**BOOK LAUNCH OF A RIVER SINGS**

The book launch and discussion will talk about the much-revered and celebrated Ganga that shapes the land and impacts on the culture and traditions of the people that live along her banks. The book explores the interconnection between the river and the people — primarily the women — who live in the Ganga river valley from Gangotri to Haridwar. Although the river symbolises life and for many is their livelihood, the way she is perceived is far removed from the utilitarian, functional paradigm dominating the world today. Traversing ecological perspectives as well as aspects of journey, mythology and worship, this book emphasises the lived experience of the women. It is a valuable record of the voices of communities deeply rooted in the cultural landscape of the upper Ganga valley — particularly since their ecological heritage and way of life are threatened by the onward march of culturally insensitive development practices.

**Where:** Conference Room II, IIC, Max Mueller Marg  
**When:** February 25 at 4:30 pm







# INDIA TOPS T20 RANKINGS

PTI ■ DUBAI

India claimed the top spot in the ICC men's T20 International Team Rankings on Monday, riding on their 3-0 series sweep over the West Indies at home.

Rohit Sharma's men eased to a 17-run victory over the West Indies in the third and final T20 of the series on Sunday in Kolkata

and in the process, clinched an emphatic 3-0 clean sweep. The triumph helped India catapult England at the top of the T20 team rankings, with the side now matching the top rating of 269. India last attained the number one spot back in 2016, a reign that lasted a little over two months. While England and India both have the same

rating across 39 international matches in the current rankings period (269), India has a total of 10,484 points, 10 more than England's 10,474. According to a statement issued by the ICC, Pakistan (rating of 266), New Zealand (255) and South Africa (253) complete the top five list, while current world champions Australia (249) remain in

sixth after their 4-1 series victory over Sri Lanka. West Indies (235) are placed seventh, followed by Afghanistan (232), Sri Lanka (231) and Bangladesh (231). Prior to the recently-concluded contests against the West Indies, India had whitewashed New Zealand 3-0 at home in November last year. The men's T20 Players

Rankings are yet to be updated. According to the last updated list, only two Indians -- KL Rahul and Virat Kohli -- feature in the top 10. While Rahul is placed fourth in the T20 batting chart, Kohli is at the 10th spot. However, no Indian features in the top 10 bowlers and all-rounders list.

# We're clear about WT20 team combo: Dravid

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Finding the perfect combination can be tricky and there is no set formula, but India head coach Rahul Dravid says he and skipper Rohit Sharma are pretty clear about the team for the T20 World Cup in Australia in less than eight months' time. The former captain, who took over from Ravi Shastri after India's group stage exit in last year's T20 World Cup in UAE, will have his first big challenge in Australia. Dravid said he and Rohit understand what should be the team combination for the mega-event. "I think we have got a fair idea between Rohit and myself and the selectors and the management," Dravid said after their 17-run win over the West Indies in the third T20I that ensured a 3-0 clean sweep here on Sunday. "I don't think there's a set formula to it. But we're pretty clear about the balance and the combination (for the T20 World Cup)..We are just structuring a little bit of the team around it and also balancing individual workloads as well. "We have got a pretty fair idea of the kind of skills we're looking for in Australia, with the kind of guys who are in running. Not everything is set in stone but we want to give every-



one a fair chance to stake their claim for those spots," he added. The T20I series against West Indies was India's first in a packed calendar in the build-up to the World Cup and they next take on Sri Lanka in an identical three-match rubber in four days' time. In the absence of some Team India regulars like opener KL Rahul, and pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, India gave opportunities to youngsters such as Ishan Kishan, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Avesh Khan to stake their claim in the World Cup-bound squad. With Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant being given a 10-day bio-bubble rest, India also tried out Shreyas Iyer, while Kishan doubled up as the wicketkeeper in the third and final

T20I. Dravid said the whole process was about having the backups ready. "In the times that we live in, it's never easy... I don't think there's a time-frame when you can actually say that okay, now this is the team you want to freeze on. "You don't want to cast your net too wide. We don't also want to restrict ourselves to just 15 players. We want to give players opportunities, ensure that by the time we get to the World Cup, some of our guys have played at least 10-15-20 games," Dravid explained. "It gives Rohit a chance to play them, bowl them in positions that he wants to, but he also has to be balanced with the fact that we need to have a few back-ups of people in case of an injury," he added.

# Dravid not hurt by Saha's comments

PTI ■ KOLKATA

India's head coach Rahul Dravid is not "hurt" by Wriddhiman Saha revealing the "difficult" conversation that the two had about his future as he firmly believes that the veteran keeper-batter "deserved the honesty and clarity" which was provided to him. Saha, whose India career has come to a halt, recently told the media that Dravid asked him to consider retirement during a private conversation after the South Africa series last month. Dravid said his intention behind talking to Saha was to ensure he has a clear picture of where he stands and he does not regret it. "I'm actually not hurt at all. I have deep respect for Wriddhi and his achievements and his contribution to Indian cricket. My conversation came from that place. I think he deserved honesty and clarity," Dravid replied at the end of the T20



series against the West Indies which India won 3-0 on Sunday. The 37-year-old, who has played 40 Tests for India, was dropped from the squad ahead of the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka. He subsequently pulled out of the ongoing Ranji Trophy as well.

Dravid said he will continue having such conversations with players whether they like the discussion or not. "It's about conversations I constantly have with players. I don't expect players to always agree with everything I say about them.

# WI should not feel disgraced: Pollard

PTI ■ KOLKATA

They might have been handed a 0-3 clean sweep in the T20I series but West Indies skipper Kieron Pollard said his team shouldn't feel disgraced as the scoreline is not an indication of the fight put up by them during the three-match rubber against India. Suryakumar Yadav came up with an explosive 65 and was backed up by a spirited bowling effort by the seamers as West Indies fell short by 17 runs in their chase of 185 in the final T20I here on Sunday. "Yes we lost 3-0 but the guys put their hands up and gave a good account of themselves. I don't think we should be disgraced by what has taken place," Pollard said in the post-match virtual media interaction here. "We are not happy losing, let me put that on record. It's not like that at all. We are trying to win cricket games." West Indies had their best chance to level the series in the sec-



ond T20I with Rovman Powell and Nicholas Pooran slamming explosive fifties in a 100-run partnership. But India fought back with

Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowling a tight penultimate over as West Indies fell short by just eight runs. "It just goes to show the fine line

in International cricket between winning and losing, and the margins for error -- when you are bowling or batting," Pollard said. "Executing in the backend is something we need to work on. From a bowling perspective, for the first 15 overs of this game, we had India right where we wanted them to be. "Right through the series, it was just a matter of finishing off the games in the back-end. From a batting perspective, 157, 180 (178) and 170 (167) we did fairly decently." WI, a work in progress The biggest positive for the West Indies have been the return to form of wicketkeeper-batter Nicholas Pooran who slammed three halfcenturies on the trot to be the top-run getter of the series with 184 runs at an average of 61.33. "I thought it was a good series. The guys put their hands up and gave a good account of themselves. We are a work in progress and will get some time to think about things," Pollard said.

# Desperate India aim to end losing streak in NZ tour

PTI ■ QUEENSTOWN

The series already out of its grasp, a desperate Indian women's cricket team will look to snap the losing streak and salvage some pride by sorting its bowling and fielding woes in the fourth ODI against New Zealand here on Tuesday. India suffered a second successive three-wicket loss to hosts New Zealand in the third game to concede the five-ODI series. It was yet another limited-overs series loss for the Indian team, following the defeats to South Africa at home and in England and Australia in the last 12 months. In the ongoing rubber, if batting let the team down in the one-off T20I and the first ODI, it was the bowlers and fielders who failed to keep things under control in the last two matches as the New Zealand side successfully chased down big totals. With the World Cup looming, Mithali Raj's team will have to iron out the flaws in the next two ODIs and the return of star opener Smriti Mandhana and pacer Meghna Singh will bolster the team as it looks to get some momentum ahead of the big-ticket event. In the bowling department, veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami was the only bright spot in the 3rd ODI as she rocked the top-order with three wickets but she lacked support as New Zealand recovered from 171 for 6 to chase down 280 with five balls to spare. With Meghna back, India will look to field a strong and settled pace attack in the remaining two ODIs after experimenting with Pooja Vastrakar, Simran Bahadur and Renuka Singh. Among spinners, Deepti Sharma has shone bright with seven scalps, including a four-wicket haul in the second ODI, but the likes of Poonam Yadav and Rajeshwari Gayakwad will have to put up more consistent shows. India's batting has looked good with Sabbhineni Meghana grabbing the opportunity with both hands, hitting 49 and 61 in the last two ODIs in Mandhana's absence. Shafali Verma also returned to form with a 57-ball 51 in the third game. With Mandhana back, it will be interesting to see the combination that skipper Mithali fields in the next two



ODIs, especially with Harmanpreet Kaur struggling to get runs in the middle. New Zealand, on the other hand, have been working like a well-oiled machine. The hosts are high on confidence after chasing two big scores but one area they would like to improve is bowling in the final two games. Amelia Kerr (219) and Suzie Bates (127) have been their best batters with each hitting a hundred in the first two games. If the two have provided solidity at the top order, Amy Satterthwaite has been impressive in the middle with 122 runs in the series so far. In the third ODI, it was Lauren Down and Katey Martin who showed their prowess down the order, stitching a match-winning 76-run stand for the seventh wicket. In bowling, Jess Kerr and regular skipper Sophie Devine have been their most successful bowlers with five and four wickets respectively but the hosts allowed the Indians to score big totals and they will have to pull their socks up in the next two games. Squads: India: Sabbhineni Meghana, Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia, Mithali Raj (captain), Harmanpreet Kaur, Richa Ghosh (wk), Deepti Sharma, Pooja Vastrakar, Simran Bahadur, Poonam Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Sneha Rana, Meghna Singh, Taniya Bhatia, Renuka Singh, Smriti Mandhana, Jhulan Goswami.

# Djoker starts his season in Dubai

AP ■ DUBAI

Novak Djokovic's season, derailed in January when he was deported from Australia, finally starts on Monday in Dubai with the world number one insisting players in the locker room "have been positive and welcoming" on his return. Djokovic missed the chance to win a 10th Australian Open, and 21st Grand Slam, due to the cancellation of his visa in Melbourne and eventual deportation as a result of not being vaccinated. He returns to the tour this week in the Emirates, where he will be competing for the first time since the Davis Cup Finals in Madrid last December. Dubai organisers have dubbed the first day of the ATP event 'Magnificent Monday' and a couple of other marquee entrants, Marin Cilic and Andy Murray, will also be in action.



But all eyes will be on Djokovic who last played in Serbia's Davis Cup semi-final defeat by Croatia. Djokovic, who saw Rafael Nadal win in Australia to claim a 21st major, is able to play in Dubai as a coronavirus vaccine is not a requirement to enter the United Arab Emirates. The Serbian is a five-time

winner in Dubai and he finally starts his season with a point to prove and his number one ranking under threat. Even if he wins in Dubai, Djokovic could lose the top spot, which he has held since February 2020, to Daniil Medvedev, who is in action this week almost 15,000km away in Acapulco.

# R Pragganandhaa stuns World No 1 Magnus Carlsen

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Young Indian Grandmaster R Pragganandhaa stunned world No 1 Magnus Carlsen in the eighth round of the Airthings Masters, an online rapid chess tournament. Pragganandhaa won with black pieces in 39 moves in a Tarrasch variation game early on Monday to halt Carlsen's run of three straight wins. The Indian GM lies in joint 12th spot after eight rounds with eight points. His spectacular win over Carlsen comes after a moderate run in the earlier rounds, which included a solitary victory over Lev Aronian, two draws and four defeats. He drew against Anish Giri and Quang Liem Le and lost to Eric Hansen, Ding Liren, Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov. Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi, who lost the world championship match a few months ago to the Norwegian world No 1 Carlsen, is on top of the standings with 19 points followed by Ding Liren and Hansen



(both on 15 points). In the Airthings Masters, a 16-player online rapid tournament, a player gets three points for a win and one for a draw in the preliminary rounds. Seven more rounds remain in the preliminary phase.

# Lille boss wants team to be 'party poopers' against Chelsea

AP ■ LILLE

Lille side sitting in mid-table in Ligue 1 head to London to face Chelsea this week hoping to play the role of 'party poopers' against the reigning European champions, their coach Jocelyn Gourvennec said. Recent Club World Cup winners Chelsea are heavy favourites to beat Lille in their Champions League last-16 tie as Thomas Tuchel's side look to retain the title they won by beating Manchester City in last season's final. Lille already exceeded expectations just by reaching the last 16 of Europe's elite club competition for the first time since 2006/07 and, as they make the short trip to the other side of the English Channel for the first leg, their aim is to keep the tie alive for the return. "We are competitors so we will not be going there just to be Chelsea's sparring partners, that's for sure," Gourvennec said. "They are a great team but

there are always surprises in cup matches and we want to be the party poopers, as we have been since the beginning of this Champions League campaign." The side from France's far north caused a major upset by winning the French title last season ahead of star-studded Paris Saint-Germain and they then topped their Champions League section above Austrian champions Salzburg, Sevilla and Wolfsburg. However, they find themselves in 11th place in the French top flight two-thirds of the way through this season, nine points adrift of the podium with only the top three qualifying for the Champions League. Juve' struggles continue despite new blood Juventus made a splash in the January transfer window when they snatched hot prospect Dusan Vlahovic and Switzerland midfielder Denis Zakaria, but their arrival has yet to provide the hoped-for boost ahead of



Tuesday's Champions League visit to Villarreal. Massimiliano Allegri's side travel to Spain as the only Italian side with a realistic hope of mak-

ing the last eight after Inter Milan were beaten 2-0 at the San Siro by Liverpool on Wednesday. However they go into the first leg of their last 16 tie in unsure

form, with results and above all performances that have left fans unsatisfied with Allegri's first season back in black and white. Vlahovic arrived at Juve to great fanfare after joining from Fiorentina for an initial fee of 70 million euros (\$80.2 million), with Zakaria arriving three days later on deadline day. Thrown straight in at the head of the Juve attack, with Alvaro Morata accommodating by shifting to a wide position, Serbia striker Vlahovic got off to a blistering start to life in Turin with a goal just 12 minutes into his debut against Verona. But in the three matches since has shown some growing pains. He struggled to make a mark at Atalanta last weekend, when Danilo saved Juve from what would have been a damaging defeat with a stoppage time header, and was kept almost anonymously by the impressive Bremer in his new team's 1-1 derby draw with Torino on Friday.