

**OPINION 6**  
INVEST IN DEFENCE  
MODERNISATION

**WORLD 9**  
WILL SAFEGUARD INTERESTS OVER  
BALLOON SHOOTDOWN: CHINA

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX, NIFTY DECLINE ON FMCG,  
STEEL STOCKS SELLING

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SPORTS SAVED ME  
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INSURGENT: DEVI  
11 SPORT

## Rahul cries Adani link; BJP retorts 'deal' Cong culture

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Leading the Opposition Lattack over the Adani-Hindenburg issue in Parliament, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi made a barrage of allegations, including that Prime Minister Narendra Modi helped Adani bag overseas contracts in various sectors propelling him to attain the second spot from 609th on global rich list within a span of nine years.

Later the BJP accused Rahul of making baseless, shameless and reckless allegations against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and charged that the Congress and the Gandhi family were involved in "big scams" which "tarnished" the image of the country. "Deal and commission" have been part of the Congress' working culture and the party has been in distress as the Modi Government eliminated these corrupt practices, BJP leader and former Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters.

After three days of Budget session washout over the Adani row, the Congress and most of the Opposition parties resolved to participate in the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address. The Opposition has been demanding a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe or a Supreme Court-monitored investigation into the Hindenburg Research report against Adani's companies that



View of the Lok Sabha during Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

triggered an unprecedented stock crash. The Adani Group has denied the charges.

Being the first Opposition Speaker in the Lok Sabha, Rahul linked Gautam Adani's meteoric rise to Modi's coming to power and said "magic" happened after 2014 drawing sharp response from the treasury benches, with Law Minister Kiren Rijiju and several BJP leaders asking him not to level "wild allegations" and furnish proof of his claims.

The BJP hit back at Rahul, with Ravi Shankar Prasad told the media, "The Congress and its leaders were involved in all big scams which tarnished the image of India. Rahul, his mother Sonia Gandhi and her son-in-law Robert Vadra are on bail. It's time to revive the memory of Rahul Gandhi on

corruption. Corruption and giving protection to the corrupt have been the history of Rahul Gandhi and his family."

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla disapproved of Rahul displaying two pictures of Modi: One in which he can be seen with Adani inside a plane and the other in which he is getting down from a plane which has an Adani logo on it. Reacting to Rahul displaying pictures of Modi with Adani during his speech, Prasad said the photographs of the Congress leader's presence in the events of Nirav Modi and with Mehul Choksi, both fugitives, are also doing the rounds.

The Rajya Sabha after two brief adjournments in morning hours took up the proceedings post lunch. Congress MP Digvijay Singh said 'Amrit Kaal'

has benefitted only a bunch of people and 21 people hold assets equal to 70 crore people to which Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar intervened and said he may be called to authenticate some documents. The Congress member agreed.

"How many times did Adani ji join you later on a visit? How many times has Adani ji travelled to a country immediately after you visited the country? How many times did Adaniji bag a contract in a foreign country after your visit there?" Rahul said in an attacking mode earning ire of the ruling BJP.

He asked how much money Adani has given to the BJP in the last 20 years, including through electoral bonds.

Continued on Page 2

## Voices crying out from quake rubble fall silent

Turkey-Syria quake: Toll 6,200, over 8K pulled out from debris, 13m affected

AP ■ NURDAGI (TURKEY)

Search teams and international aid poured into Turkey and Syria on Tuesday as rescuers working in freezing temperatures and sometimes using their bare hands dug through the remains of buildings flattened by a powerful earthquake. The death toll soared above 6,200 even as 8,000 have been pulled out from rubble in Turkey alone. About 13 million people have been affected, said officials.

With the damage spread over a wide area, the massive relief operation often struggled to reach devastated towns as voices that had been crying out from the rubble fell silent.

"We could hear their voices, they were calling for help," said Ali Silo, whose two relatives could not be saved in the Turkish town of Nurdagi.

In the end, it was left to Silo, a Syrian who arrived a decade ago, and other residents to recover the bodies and those of two other victims.

Monday's magnitude 7.8 quake and a cascade of strong aftershocks cut a swath of destruction that stretched hundreds of kilometres (miles) across southeastern Turkey and Syria. The quakes heaped more misery on a region shaped by Syria's 12-year civil war and refugee crisis.

Continued on Page 2



A woman sits on the rubble as emergency rescue teams search for people under the remains of destroyed buildings in Nurdagi town on the outskirts of Osmaniye city southern Turkey on Tuesday

AP | PTI

## Turkey thanks 'dost' India

A friend in need is a friend indeed, says Turkish envoy to India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Turkiye on Tuesday thanked "dost" India for immediately dispatching rescue teams and relief material within 24 hours of the earthquake there. Syria, which also suffered the

tragedy, also thanked India for help.

Appreciating New Delhi's gesture in this hour of crisis, Turkish Ambassador to India Firat Sunel also said "a friend in need is a friend indeed."

"Dost" is a common word in Turkish and Hindi... We have a Turkish proverb, "Dost kara gunde belli olur" (a friend in need is a friend indeed). Thank you very much India," he said in a tweet message.

"We really appreciate the help extended by India to Turkey within hours of the

earthquake. We too use the word 'dost' for a friend. I would say a friend in need is a friend indeed. Friends help each other," he said.

"India is among the countries that sent teams for search and rescue operations. After the first earthquake India's NDRF held a coordination meeting on the instruction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Sunel said. Earlier, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan visited Turkish and Syrian Embassies and expressed condolences. He also conveyed Modi's sympathy and humanitarian support.

Offering condolences to the Turkish and Syrian leadership for loss of lives, Modi on Monday offered all possible assistance. An emergency meeting was also held on Monday chaired by PK Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.

"Anguished by the loss of lives and damage of property due to the earthquake in Turkey. Condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover soon," Modi said in a tweet.

"India stands in solidarity with the people of Turkey and is ready to offer all possible assistance to cope with this tragedy," the Prime Minister said tagging a tweet by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the quake. Meanwhile, the Turkish envoy said here, "Yesterday, India sent carriers to Turkey carrying rescue and search teams along with equipment. It arrived in the morning in Adana."

## CAPSULE

### ₹8L OBC NON-CREAMY INCOME CAP INTACT: GOVT

**New Delhi:** The existing annual income ceiling of ₹8 lakh is "sufficient" to determine the OBC non-creamy layer status of community members, the Centre told the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, clarifying that there is no proposal to increase the cap.

### AGUSTA MIDDLEMAN MICHEL DENIED BAIL

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday denied bail to Christian Michel James, accused middleman in AgustaWestland chopper scam cases, who was deported from Dubai and being probed by both the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate.

### PHOTO JOURNALIST BEATEN TO DEATH

**Kanpur:** A cameraperson for a national Hindi news channel died after an alleged brawl with a catering staff at a wedding, police said on Tuesday.

### TENSION IN NORTH-DELHI OVER COW SLAUGHTERING

**New Delhi:** Tension gripped North Delhi's Gulabi Bagh area after disembodied parts of a cow were found in north Delhi's Gulabi Bagh area on Tuesday, police said.

## SC to hear MCD mayoral poll plea today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court agreed to hear on Wednesday a plea filed by Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) mayoral candidate Shelly Oberoi and others seeking early holding of the mayoral election for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala took note of the submissions of a lawyer, appearing for the AAP, seeking urgent hearing of the plea. "We will list it tomorrow," the CJ said. The MCD House failed to elect a Mayor for the third time on Monday.

Continued on Page 2

Banks' exposure to Adani not very big to hit credit quality: Rating agencies

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Global rating agencies Fitch and Moody's on Tuesday said banks' exposure to Adani Group is not large enough to affect their credit quality, and bank ratings are driven by expectations that they would receive 'extraordinary' sovereign support, if needed.

"Fitch Ratings believes that Indian banks' exposure to the Adani group is insufficient in itself to present a substantial risk to the banks' standalone credit profiles," the rating agency said in a note.

"Risks for banks can increase if Adani becomes more reliant on bank loans," Moody's said.

See P10

## Gowri sworn in as Madras HC judge; SC junks plea challenging appointment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to entertain pleas seeking to restrain lawyer Lekshmana Chandra Victoria Gowri from taking oath as an additional judge of the Madras High Court, saying a "consultative process" had taken place before her name was recommended by the Collegium for the appointment.

Gowri took oath as additional judge of the Madras High Court on Tuesday, minutes before the Supreme Court rejected a petition challenging her appointment. Gowri, in her address, after being sworn in as additional judge by Acting Chief Justice T Raja asserted that she would dispense justice in realising the dreams of the makers of the Constitution.

She was administered the oath of office around 10.45 am while the top court was hearing arguments on why Gowri



should not be elevated.

While the Supreme Court refused to entertain the plea seeking to restrain Gowri from taking oath as Additional Judge, sources close to the petitioners said the apex court's ruling signalled the end of the matter and there appeared to be no scope to take the legal fight forward.

The sources said the petitioners are not activists and taking up the matter to SC to oppose Gowri's appointment was an act of duty to safeguard, preserve and protect the independence of judiciary and the values of the Constitution.

Continued on Page 2

## India rushes relief for quake victims

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday rushed two plane-loads of relief materials, two teams of the National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF), comprising 101 personnel with specially trained dog squads and necessary equipment for aiding search and rescue efforts besides mobilising a 99-member medical team of the Army to set up field hospitals in earthquake-hit Turkey and Syria.

The NDRF teams, including five women personnel and canine squad, reached quake-hit Turkey early on Tuesday to help in the rescue operations after a 7.8 magnitude quake killed thousands of people in the country. The teams have been accompanied by two search dogs, four-wheeled vehicles, chipping hammers, cutting tools, first aid medicines and communication setup, officials said. The rescuers are drawn from teams based in Ghaziabad and Kolkata.

Continued on Page 2



IAF's first C-17 Globemaster III heavy lift aircraft carrying NDRF rescue teams and relief material arrives in Adana to support rescue and search efforts in earthquake-hit Turkey

PTI

## India hits out at Pak for raking up Kashmir at UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

India has slammed Pakistan for raking up the Kashmir issue in the United Nations, saying Islamabad harbours a deep sense of insecurity and orchestrated hatred for its neighbouring country and its secular credentials.

Responding to Pakistan's raising of the Kashmir issue during a UN General Assembly (UNGA) meeting, Counsellor in India's Permanent Mission to the UN, Rajesh Parihar, said on Monday that Islamabad repeatedly utters falsehoods about India.

"I'm constrained to take the floor to respond to the frivolous



remarks made by the representative of Pakistan against my country. While such a statement deserves our sympathy for a mindset, which repeatedly utters falsehood, it is important for me to set the record straight," he said in the UNGA. Parihar said irrespective of what the representative of Pakistan believes or covets, the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were,

are and will always be an "integral and inalienable" part of India.

"We expect nothing new from this delegation that harbours a deep sense of insecurity and orchestrated hatred for India and our secular credentials and values that my country stands for," he said.

Tensions between India and Pakistan spiked after New Delhi abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019. India's decision evoked strong reactions from Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian envoy.

Continued on Page 2

Virginity test unconstitutional, sexist: Delhi HC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court ruled on Tuesday that conducting a "virginity test" on a female accused is unconstitutional, sexist and in violation of her right to dignity, calling it a form of inhuman treatment.

The court also observed that there is no legal procedure that provides for a "virginity test".

The order was passed by Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma on a plea moved by Sister Sephy, who sought to declare the conduct of a "virginity test" on her in connection with a criminal case over Sister Abhaya's death in Kerala in 1992 as unconstitutional.

Continued on Page 2

## 20, all males, score 100 in JEE-Main

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Twenty candidates have scored perfect 100 in engineering entrance exam JEE-Main's January edition, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Tuesday.

All the candidates with 100 NTA score in the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Main are males. The 20 toppers include 14 from the general category, four from the OBC category and one each from gen-EWS and SC category.

While Md Sahil Akhtar is the PwD topper with 99.9848042 NTA score, the SC topper is Deshank Pratap Singh with 100 NTA score and ST topper is Dheeravath Thanuj with 99.99041. The candidates who scored 100 NTA scores are

Abhineet Majety, Amogh Jalan, Apurva Samota, Ashik Stenny, Bikkina Abhinav Chowdary, Deshank Pratap Singh, Dhruv Sanjay Jain, Dnyanesh Hemendra Shinde, Duggineni Venkata Yugesh, Gulshan Kumar, Guthikonda Abhiram, Kaushal Vijayvergiya, Krish Gupta, Mayank Son, N K Vishwaajith, Nipun Goel, Rishi Kalra, Soham Das, Suthar Harshul Sanjaybhai and Vavilala Chidvilas Reddy.

"The NTA scores of 50 candidates have been withheld as they are under scrutiny with cases being placed before a committee separately. Their NTA scores will be declared once the committee finalises its report," a senior NTA official said.

Continued on Page 2



BEAUTIFICATION BEFORE G20 SUMMIT

# Anti-encroachment drive by MCD to give city facelift

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has started an anti-encroachment drive to improve the city's look and feel ahead of G20 events in the national capital.

The MCD on Tuesday conducted encroachment removal activity in all 12 zones as part of a 15-day special drive, it said. "The MCD is taking all necessary measures to give the best facelift to Delhi in view of the upcoming G20 Summit.

Directions have been issued to all the concerned officers to put the best foot forward towards making Delhi a shining chapter in the success story of G20 Summit," it said in a statement. Under the special drive, the MCD's central zone

conducted anti-encroachment drives in Govindpuri, Okhla, Sarita Vihar, Ansari Road, Daya Nand Road, Mahavir Vatika, Parda Bagh and Daryaganj.

Its general branch team cleared encroachments in a two-kilometre stretch and seized 22 items. The Rohini zone organised the drive in its three wards. It conducted operations near Peeragarhi Metro station and Nangloi Metro station and seized six items.

"South zone also has taken action against encroachment and seized 59 items. The south zone conducted drives in Siddarth market, Dubral Marg, Madangir, Dakshinpuri, Fatehpur Beri and Bhati mines area. "During the action, the south zone demolished 33 pucca/temporary structures,"

the MCD said. The Karol Bagh zone removed encroachments from the Kirti Nagar Lakkad Market area.

"During the drive, 53 items were seized. Shahdara South zone conducted a drive in its area and seized 102 articles and 17 vehicles. Shahdara North zone also conducted drives in Yamuna Vihar and Bhajanpura area," the statement read.

The City SP zone removed encroachments from Pul Qutub Road, Main Sadar Bazar, Bara Toototi Chowk, Azad market and cleared a two-kilometre stretch.

Eight items were seized, the civic body said, adding that the Najafgarh zone also removed encroachments from Madhu Vihar and its surrounding areas.

# Body found stuck in car on Yamuna Expressway

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The body of a man was found stuck at the other end of a car moving towards Noida on the Yamuna Expressway, police said on Tuesday. As per reports, the car was heading towards Noida from Agra when security personnel at a toll booth in Mathura's Mant spotted the body.

The car was being driven by Virendra Singh (of Delhi), who is currently being interrogated by the police. "There was a thick fog cover on the expressway on Monday night and the visibility was low due to which the man might have been met the accident and his body got stuck in the car," Virendra Singh was quoted as saying by Superintendent of Police (Dehat) Trigun Bisen.

People in the nearby villages were being summoned to

help in ascertaining the identity of the deceased person while further probe is underway. Meanwhile, a speeding car going from Fatehpur in Prayagraj towards Kanpur hit a youth standing on the highway. The youth, dragged for about three kilometres, died later.

Reports said that the man in his late 20s was standing on the side of the highway in Rewari village of Kalyanpur police station in Fatehpur district late Monday evening. At the same time, a car going from Prayagraj towards Kanpur hit him. He got stuck in the vehicle which dragged him for about three kilometres.

All this while, people kept trying to stop car but the driver did not stop due to which man died. The errant driver fled from the spot. The police made efforts to ascertain identity of deceased, but to no avail.

# NEET-PG aspirants protest at Jantar Mantar for exams' postponement

**New Delhi:** A group of doctors, including NEET-PG aspirants, held a protest at the Jantar Mantar Road on Tuesday, demanding the postponement of exams scheduled for early March.

The protest was carried out under the banner of a body of doctors - Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA). Their placards read 'Postpone NEET-PG'.

There was no immediate reaction from the Health Ministry or the central government.

FAIMA founder Dr Manish Jangra said the association members, which included NEET-PG aspirants and office-bearers of the association today held a protest with a demand to postpone the NEET-PG entrance examination to May-June.

# Gowri sworn in as...

From Page 1

The petitioner-lawyers are Anna Mathew, Sudha Ramalingam and D Nagasaila who in their plea referred to the alleged hate speeches made by Gowri against Muslims and Christians.

Gowri, in her speech, cited a quote of Swami Vivekananda and said she is conscious that she is handed over the 'greatest responsibility of being a judge' to work for the cause of the 'unheard and the oppressed voices of the poorest of the poor', to liberate the marginalised, 'scuttle' inequalities of society and nurture fraternity in the diverse country.

"With all humility, I undertake to dispense justice in realising the dreams of the makers of our Constitution. Thank You. Jai Hind." She expressed gratitude and thanked former Chief Justice of Madras High Court, Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandrai, former Acting Chief Justice, Justice M Duraiswami (Retired) and Acting Chief Justice, T Raja for reposing faith in her and for recommending her name for the post of judge.

She thanked the Supreme Court judges including the Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud. Gowri said she hailed from a very remote village (West Neyiur) in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu and is a first generation lawyer from a 'very ordinary family'.

She thanked all her senior advocates, including Maniraj and Jacob Fletcher. She is an alumnus of Madurai Law College. "I bow to the noble feet of all the elder brother and sister judges who are on the dais and who are watching from my beloved Madurai Bench," she said.

She also thanked members of the Bar and sought their blessings. Born on May 21, 1973 in Kanyakumari district, Gowri has served as the Assistant Solicitor General at the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court from 2022.

In 1995, she enrolled as a lawyer and has a rich experience in the practice of civil,

criminal, taxation and labour matters. On the row over her elevation, BJP sources declined to comment since it involved 'legalities'.

However, requesting anonymity, a leader said 'past political activity', is no bar to become a judge. Her elevation comes against the background of staunch opposition from a section of legal fraternity and political parties. Congress leader Peter Alphonse, MDMK general secretary Vaiko, the Left leaders, VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan were among those who opposed Gowri's elevation.

They wrote to President Droupadi Murmu and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court D Y Chandrachud against appointing her as judge.

Lawyers led by senior counsel N G R Prasad on February 6 made a representation to Madras High Court Acting CJ T Raja to not administer oath of office to Gowri until the top court heard the matter.

A section of lawyers had staged a protest close to the High Court campus against the elevation of Gowri. Days ago, in separate letters addressed to President Murmu and the SC collegium, a group of advocates objected to the collegium's recommendation saying her appointment would undermine the independence of the judiciary.

Gowri, by her own admission, was the general secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party Mahila Morch, the memorandum signed by 22 lawyers including senior advocates N G R Prasad, R Vaigai, Anna Mathew, D Nagasaila and Sudha Ramalingam, said.

"We write with a sense of foreboding, in these troubled times, when the judiciary is facing unprecedented and unwarranted criticism from the executive, as we are apprehensive that appointments such as these may pave the way for undermining the independence of the judiciary," the memorandum said.

# Girl suffers seizures after application of henna

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bizarre incident, a 9-year-old girl suffered epileptic seizures after the application of Mehndi (Henna) on her hands. Doctors at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on Tuesday said they have reported an "unusual" case of a nine-year-old girl who suffered epileptic seizures triggered by the smell of "mehndi" applied on her hand.

The case study has been published in the January 2023 edition of the Clinical Neurophysiology, the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said in a statement. According to the doctors, the child suffered her first con-

vulsion after the Mehndi application. She had an abrupt loss of consciousness leading to fall and convulsions for 20 seconds. The child suffered two similar seizures after application of Mehndi a year later. After the repeated incidents, the girl was brought to the hospital for further checkup.

The department of neurology at the hospital recently reported "an unusual case" of a nine-year-old girl who was suffering epileptic seizures after application of "mehndi", it said.

When she had suffered her first convulsion after application of "mehndi", she had "abrupt loss of consciousness,

leading to fall and convulsions for 20 seconds", doctors at the hospital said. Recently, she was brought to the hospital for further check-up, they said. "Mehndi" is the art of making designs on someone's hands with "henna", a reddish-brown herbal dye.

According to Dr (Col) P K K Sethi, senior consultant, department of neurology at the hospital, "This was an unusual case of reflex epilepsy, where epileptic seizures are consistently induced by identifiable and objective-specific triggers as against other epileptic seizures which are usually unprovoked."

# India...

And they boarded two Indian Air Force (IAF) C-17 aircraft from the Hindon air base in Ghaziabad early morning around 3 am, NDRF officials said. The Indian contingent reached the Adana airport in south Turkey where they will meet a link officer from the Indian Embassy and Turkish Government authorities for further deployment in the affected areas, they said.

The other team comprising 50 personnel also left for Turkey to aid in the Urban Search & Rescue effort there, they added. "This is part of the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) measures announced by the Indian Government on Monday for the earthquake-hit Turkey and neighbouring areas," the NDRF officials said. The NDRF team

will help rescue people trapped under the collapsed structures and render all assistance as required by local authorities and rescuers from other nations. Meanwhile, the Indian Army has also sent a team of 99-member medical teams, mobilised from the Agra based "Field Hospital" medical support to the affected people in the region.

This team will have critical care specialists, including orthopedic surgical team, general surgical specialist team apart from the medical specialist teams. They are equipped with X-ray machines, ventilators, oxygen generation plant, cardiac monitors and associated equipment to establish a 30-bedded medical facility. Two additional IAF's C-17 aircraft with medical supplies are also being dispatched later on Tuesday, officials said.

The NDRF has been part of two similar international operations — the 2011 Japan triple disaster (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown) and the 2015 Nepal earthquake.

The Government on Monday decided to rush NDRF teams along with medical aid and relief material to Turkiye following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's instructions to offer all possible assistance to the disaster-hit country.

The massive earthquake that struck on Monday has killed about 5,000 people and flattened thousands of buildings in Turkiye and neighbouring Syria. The epicenter of the quake was centred in Turkiye's southeastern province of Kahramanmara and was felt as far away as Cairo.

Further, India has also despatched various equipment, tools and vehicles to search for survivors of the two powerful quakes that badly hit various parts of Turkiye and Syria.

# Turkey thanks 'dost India' India hits...

from page1

Also, a second plane went to Turkey and will land before evening," "What we need most in the initial hours after the earthquake is search and rescue teams with specially trained dog squads. We really appreciate the sincere and kind help of India. "The first 48-72 hours are very important and Indian rescue teams are in the field," he said. On the possibility of Indian affected by the temblor, the envoy said "So far, we have not received any requests from

Indians for rescue after the earthquake in Turkey. The Indian mission in Ankara may have received some requests." On the magnitude of the disaster, he said earthquake of magnitude of 7.7 hit Turkey, after couple of hours another earthquake of magnitude 7.6 hit Turkey. More than 14 million people affected in south-eastern Turkey, it is a big disaster. 21,103 injured, almost 6,000 buildings collapsed, three airports damaged, the envoy said.

from page 1

India has categorically told the international community that the scrapping of Article 370 was its internal matter. It also advised Pakistan to accept the reality and stop all anti-India propaganda. India has told Pakistan that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Islamabad in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence. At the outset, Parihar, in his remarks, conveyed India's condolences to the families in Syria and Turkiye, who have suffered loss of lives and destruction due to the devastating earthquakes.

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake and multiple aftershocks struck eastern Turkiye and neighbouring Syria on Monday, Killing more than 5,000 people. "India stands in solidarity with the people of Syria and Turkiye, and is ready to offer all possible assistance to cope with this tragedy," Parihar said.

# Rahul cries Adani link...

from page1

Rahul also hit out at Modi for slamming the Opposition over its criticism of the Rafale deal by allegedly overlooking the capabilities of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

"The (Adani-Modi) relationship began many years ago when Narendra Modi was Gujarat CM.

When most of India was asking questions of the prime minister, and was against the PM (then CM Narendra Modi), one man stood shoulder to shoulder with PM Modi, he was loyal to the prime minister and helped Mr Modi construct the idea of a resurgent Gujarat," Rahul said.

Pointing out that Adani works in strategic sectors, he said the government must find out about these shell companies as to who controls them as this is a national security issue.

# Virginity test...

from page1

"It is declared that the virginity test conducted on a female detainee, accused under investigation or in custody, whether judicial or police, is unconstitutional and in violation of Article 21 of the Constitution, which includes the right to dignity," Justice

Sharma said. "This court, therefore, holds that this test is sexist and in violation of the human right to dignity even of a female accused if she is subjected to such a test while being in custody," the judge said. The petitioner had alleged before the high court that she was forcibly subjected to a "virginity test" in 2008 by the Central Bureau of Investigation

(CBI) under the pretext of the agency's investigation to substantiate its case and the results were leaked.

The court asserted that conducting the "two-finger test" or "virginity test" on female sexual assault victims has already been held by the Supreme Court to be violative of their right to dignity, integrity and privacy, and there "can-

not be two sets of views" on the issue. The court emphasised that the concept of "custodial dignity" of a female includes her right to live with dignity even while in police custody and conducting a virginity test on her not only amounts to an investigating agency's interference with her bodily integrity, but also with her psychological integrity.



**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
CORRIGENDUM  
Ref.: Tender Notice No. 73/2022-2023 dated 28.12.2022  
1) Tender No. 07225002A due on 20.02.2023. In reference to above tender, the due date has been extended from 09.02.2023 to 20.02.2023. Eligibility Criteria, Inspection clause, Other conditions, Commercial compliance, Description has also been modified. Latest MCF Specification has been uploaded. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. More details are available on website. The corrigendum has been published on website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).  
No.: 07225002/P-07/2022 Date: 07.02.2023



SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 400/2023

**कायालय,नगर निगम, भिलाई**  
E-Procurement Tender Notice  
Main Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>  
Project cell./N.P.N/620/440  
Bhilai/Dated: 06/02/2023


Online tender are invited on behalf of the Municipal Corporation, Bhilai for the following work in Form "A" for Contract from the contractors e-Procurement System portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>)

Sr.	Tender no	Name of work	Probable amount of contract (in lacs)	निविदा जारी दिनांक	निविदा ख़ातनलीक़ की अंतिम तिथि
1	123514	जोन 03 के मुख्य मार्गों का सफ़ाया कार्य	196.08 Lacs	04.02.2023	25.02.2023
2	123528	नगर पारिजल निगम, भिलाई के ज़ोन 01, 02 व 04 में 158 बिजुल आगोय अल्ट्रा हायड्रोकण मार्गों का पैव रिपेयर कार्य।	137.52 Lacs	04.02.2023	25.02.2023

Note:  
1. For other details visit Goc e-Procurement System portal website <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>  
2. Corrigendum Amendment if any, will be displayed on above website <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>only and it shall be part of tender document.  
3. For more details please download NIT details.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Deepak Kumar who are purchasing the Plot No.163, area measuring 50 sq. yds out of total area measuring 100 sq. yds, carved out of Khasra No.64, situated in the area of Village Nawada, Delhi State Delhi, colony known as Vijn Garden Extn, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi; from Mr. Ashok Kumar who is owner/POA holder of the aforesaid property vide Notarized General Power of Attorney, Agreement to sell & WILL, dated 06.01.2020 and same to be finance & mortgage by Vesta Housing Finance Corporation Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim /right /title / interest / creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.  
Lucem Legal LLP  
Plot no.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049; Contact# 011-40046316



**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**  
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.  
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Brajesh Chandra Jha Santosh / Sonal Kapoor / LBDEL00002106093	Flat No- 5122, 12th Floor, Tower-5th, Type-A Atis Triumph, Sector- 104, Haryana, Gurgaon./ 04 February, 2023	October 14, 2022 Rs. 2,21,52,603/-	Delhi

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.  
Date : February 08, 2023  
Place : Delhi/ NCR  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited



# Aftab dated women as body parts dumped in fridge: Chargesheet

He shifted Shraddha's body parts from fridge to kitchen cabinet when he brought a girl home, says chargesheet

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In shocking revelations, Delhi police in its charge sheet has said that Aftab Poonawala was dating several women through an app and even brought one to his residence while the body parts of his live-in partner Shraddha Walkar were still lying there. He used to keep shifting them between the refrigerator and kitchen cabinets during her visits. A city court on Tuesday took cognisance of the charge sheet filed by Delhi Police.

Quoting Aftab's purported disclosure to police, the charge sheet reads: "I disposed of one third part in the jungles of Chattarpur Pahari... over the

next 4 to 5 days, I cut the dead body into 17 pieces, three pieces of each hand, three pieces of each leg, head, torso, two pieces of pelvic and thumb."

According to excerpts from the 6,629-page-long charge sheet, soon after the murder of Shraddha, the accused again came in contact with several girls through 'Bumble', a dating app through which he came to know Shraddha. "He came in contact with one such girl... who is a psychologist and called (her)... to his flat. However, when she used to visit his flat, Aaftab used to clean the fridge and put the body parts of Shraddha on the upper shelf and at times on the lower shelf of the



kitchen," the charge sheet said.

Police alleged that Shraddha was "already living in constant fear of getting killed" even before the accused decided to get rid of her.

According to Aftab's disclosure statement, he made physical relations with

Shraddha for the first time on May 17, 2019. Shraddha's family, however, found a pregnancy test kit and raised objections to their relationship, following which Aftab took Shraddha to a rented accommodation in Mumbai in October 2019, the charge sheet

said.

The couple's relationship soured when Shraddha found out that Aftab was talking to other women on Bumble, the charge sheet said. Aftab's motive was to get rid of Walkar as she fought with him and abused him, the charge sheet said.

During the interrogation, Aftab confessed that on the evening of May 18, he had strangled Shraddha and subsequently bought a saw and cut her body into pieces to destroy the evidence, it said.

It said, "On May 19, he bought a new fridge, stored the body pieces in the freezer and fridge and disposed of these body parts in the jungle area of Chhattarpur, Mehrauli,

Delhi one by one as per his convenience."

"After killing Shraddha, I closed the main door of the house at about 7.45 PM and went to a nearby hardware shop... and purchased a saw, three blades, a hammer and a plastic clip.

"Thereafter, I came back to the flat and shifted the body of Shraddha in the bathroom and cut her hands...from the wrist... and kept them in a white polythene," the charge sheet quoted Aftab's disclosure statement.

He added that "over the next four to five days, I cut the dead body in 17 pieces (three pieces of each hand (six pieces), three pieces of each leg

(six pieces), head, torso, two pieces of pelvic, and thumb."

The conduct of the accused in buying a saw, hammer, knives, chopper, trash bags, suitcase, refrigerator, eyebrow razor, articles for cleaning the washroom and others from the 'Blinkit App', abnormal purchase of water bottles for the first three days and (purchase of ) dry ice is evident enough that the accused committed the murder on May 18 or thereafter and then purchased all those articles either to dispose of the dead body or to preserve the body parts from decomposing, the charge sheet said.

Aftab had earlier tried to mislead police by giving a false statement that after mur-

dering Shraddha, he had burnt her body pieces and after grinding the bones with a stone grinder, blown or thrown away the powder, the charge sheet said.

"Shraddha was living with Aftab under constant fear of getting killed by Aftab or being beaten badly on petty issues and Poonawala used to beat her mercilessly and at times used to strangle her almost to death. This is also clear that he tortured and tormented Shraddha and she decided to break up with the accused several times but she could not because she had no support system and she was largely banking on the accused or rather she was at no return point," the charge sheet said.

## Not stopping principals' appointments on flimsy grounds: LG's office

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) VK Saxena's office has rejected the Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's allegations that the LG was withholding appointments of 244 posts of principals on 'flimsy grounds'. It said that Sisodia, who is holding charge of the education department, had proposed to scrap 244 posts of school principals and these were "deemed abolished" as they could not be filled for five years.

Terming Sisodia's allegations as "patently false, bereft of facts, wrong, deliberately misleading and in utter disregard of constitutional provisions and orders of the High Court of Delhi", the L-G's office said that in fact, the Sisodia had submitted a proposal for the revival of 126 posts and abolition of 244 posts of principal, for approval of the L-G.

The LG, instead, advised the education department to

submit a suitable proposal for abolition/creation of posts of principal/deputy education officer after getting the comprehensive study conducted from the Administrative Reforms Department, the Lt Governor office said in a statement.

Responding to Lt Governor's office claims, Sisodia on Tuesday said that Lt Governor is just misleading the people of Delhi by falsely appropriating the credit for revival of 126 posts while putting the remaining 244 posts on the back burner. "LG is just misleading the people of Delhi by falsely appropriating the credit for revival of 126 posts while putting the remaining 244 posts on the back burner. Schools exist in reality and are functioning every day; why should a study decide whether a school needs a principal or not?" he said.

Earlier, Sisodia had told a press conference on Sunday that they had ensured the file

for the appointment of 370 principals was sent to the LG office, but only 126 were approved and the LG was withholding appointments of 244 posts on 'flimsy grounds'. He had also accuse the LG of taking over the services department unconstitutionally. The LG office rejected these claims saying that according to a ministry of finance memo dated April 12, 2017, these posts were "deemed abolished" as the education department could not fill them for over five years.

It said the finance ministry memo provides that a post falling in the category of "deemed abolished" cannot be filled without permission of the competent authority.

The finance ministry memo also provides that posts remaining vacant for five years may be abolished immediately, it said.

Out of the total 370 vacant posts of Principal, 126 posts were vacant for more than



two years and 244 posts were vacant for more than five years bringing them within the purview of "deemed abolition" as per the finance ministry memo, it said.

Contrary to the claims made by the deputy chief minister, the LG did not agree with the proposal of the education department for abolition of 244 posts, said the LG office.

The Lt Governor's office further stated that the services department had also advised the Administrative Reforms Department that it may carry out comprehensive study in

one go regarding 244 posts of principal proposed for abolition and keeping in view the requirements of the education department, it added.

On Sisodia's charges about the LG "taking over" the "services department unconstitutionally", Saxena's office said that according to a High Court order on August 4, 2016, the services department is outside the legislative and executive domain of Delhi government. "Therefore, this statement of Deputy Chief Minister is false and misleading and hence denied," it said.

## Lekhi highlights discrepancies in minutes of NDMC meeting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a strong note, Union Minister and member of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Meenakshi Lekhi has refused to approve the minutes of the meeting highlighting some discrepancies.

In a letter to NDMC Chairman Amit Yadav, Lekhi highlighted that the decisions taken by the Council regarding serious irregularities have not been included in the minutes of the meeting. "Instead, they have been kept out of the minutes and added as supplementary points on a separate page," she said.

"It may be noted that these are not mere points raised by me or other members. They are issues on which the Council deliberated for long and took concrete decisions. Therefore, they should be listed as 'Decisions taken by the Council. In the past, whenever



er the Council has discussed and decided on sensitive issues which were not part of the transaction of business (agenda), such decisions were always incorporated in the minutes," Lekhi said in her letter.

The Union Minister also enclosed copies of minutes of the council's meeting no. 07/2017-18 dt 16.10.2017, 15/2016-17 dt 06.03.2017, 02/2020-21 dt 04.08.2020).

"In Sl. No. 1, item attributed to me, there is gross misrepresentation. It had been decided that since the matter of

Bus-Q-Shelters involved a former chairperson, it could not be examined by the CVO and instead should be referred to CVC for an independent enquiry," reads the letter.

"The matter of illegal restaurant near Netaji Nagar Musical Fountain had been brought to the notice of the Council in a previous meeting by member Kuljeet Chahal. In this meeting the Council decided that since there were Health license Violations, besides others, immediate action should be taken as per law," she said.

## Mayor poll row: AAP protests at BJP HQ

'MCD Presiding Officer lied about HC order on allowing LG's Aldermen to vote'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP staged a protest near the BJP headquarters on Tuesday, a day after the Presiding Officer of the Delhi MCD House announced that members nominated by the LG would be allowed to vote in the mayoral election. Carrying placards, several AAP leaders and workers gathered at Rouse Avenue Road and raised slogans against the BJP.

Accusing the MCD Presiding Officer of Contempt of Court, AAP national spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj alleged that the officer "wilfully lied" in the House by claiming to have a High



Court order regarding voting in the elections.

"Manish Sisodia tweeted yesterday morning that the BJP would not let the Mayor's poll to be held again, and the same happened. Everything was predetermined because despite there being a fight for every vote, BJP MPs were not present in the House," Bhardwaj alleged.

He further alleged that the Central Government "illegally occupied" the MCD for the last one year and that the BJP has been trying to run the civic body forcibly. "The Supreme Court will be our final resort in this case, they are now our

only hope. First the Central Government illegally occupied the civic body for one year and now the BJP has been trying to run the MCD forcibly," he alleged.

Security around the BJP headquarters was beefed up with heavy police deployment in the area and multiple barricades erected. AAP leader Durgesh Pathak alleged that the BJP has been trying to avoid the mayoral election as the AAP has higher voting strength in the House.

"We have a higher vote count than BJP, which is why they are trying to avoid the election," he said.

## BJP protests, accuses AAP of disrupting mayoral elections

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP leaders, including Party Councillors, MPs and MLAs, on Tuesday staged a protest near the AAP office here, accusing the party of disrupting the mayoral election in the MCD House meeting.

Leading the protest outside AAP headquarter on Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, Delhi BJP working president Virendra Sachdeva alleged that the Arvind Kejriwal-led party was delaying the mayoral election because of an internal rift.

"The AAP councillors and leaders resorted to hooliganism and subverted constitutional norms inside the house. They snatched presiding officer's mike, created ruckus, climbed on the tables and hurt BJP



female corporators and now they are saying that the mayoral election are not being held," Sachdeva said. The AAP need to give up "hooliganism" which is "ruining" Delhi, he added.

West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma slammed the AAP for opposing voting rights to the aldermen, saying that it was not written anywhere that they can not vote in the mayoral election.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged that AAP councillors created "ruckus" in the MCD House at the behest of AAP convener and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Bidhuri questioned why AAP is running away from the Mayoral elections. Now they have moved to the Supreme Court, let the top court decide.

## Safdarjung to offer alternative medicine systems, counselling

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Patients visiting the Safdarjung Hospital here can now look forward to availing treatment and counselling under an alternative medicine system besides modern medicine after Union Minister of Ayush, Sarbananda Sonowal and Union Health Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday jointly inaugurating an Integrative Medicine Centre in the country's premier health institution.

AIIMS, Delhi, too, is set to get such a Centre providing integrated medicine facilities to the patients for which a pact has already been inked with the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) under the Union Ayush Ministry.

In fact the Government has decided to set up such centres at all Government medical establishments particularly all the AIIMS across the country. "The Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed towards promoting



the integrative approach," said Sonowal. Mandaviya shared that setting up a separate wing for "integrative medicine," is an approach that combines conventional medicine with traditional treatments, in all the medical colleges and hospitals.

The infrastructural space and other requisites to run the centre on a day-to-day basis will be provided by Safdarjung hospital, whereas the technical support including manpower, technical infrastructure, and running of the centre will be managed by AIIA.

As per the agreement, the

focus areas for collaboration include therapeutic, holistic, preventive, and promotive medical services through the Integrative medicine unit; lifestyle counselling, yoga, diet advice and stress management among others.

According to Dr Tanuja Nesari Director, AIIA, the Indian heritage and use of natural treatment formulas combined with modern medicine can become the future of patient care in India.

This step is aligned with the government's mission of 'Health For All'.

## CM asks Shah to approve draft recruitment rules for Group C posts in NDMC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking approval of draft recruitment rules for Group 'C' posts in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) for grant of permanent status to regular muster roll employees.

In his letter dated February 6, Kejriwal mentioned that these are "very poor people" and many of them have been working in the NDMC for the "last 20-25 years".

"Because of them being not regularised, they are facing issues in running households with an ordinary income. So, I appeal that they be regularised on humanitarian grounds," Kejriwal said in the letter in Hindi.

Employees in the NDMC have been regularised earlier too, so there won't be any legal issue, he said. "NDMC is also facing problems of shortage of employees, so their reg-

ularisation will also solve that issue," the chief minister said.

Kejriwal also referred to a letter dated March 22, 2022, that he had written to Shah on the issue.

He added, "There are around 4500 employees in NDMC who are presently working as Regular Muster Roll (RMR) and are waiting to become regular employees of NDMC. The proposal for approval of draft Recruitment Rules of Group 'C' posts in NDMC had been sent to MHA vide letter dated 25.09.2020 after approval of the Council in its meeting on 4th August 2020 and subsequently revised proposal was sent vide letter dated 16.04.2021. These RMRs are waiting for many years for their regularisation against the existing vacancies in NDMC in the erstwhile group 'D' (now upgraded to Group 'C' posts). In this regard, various communications/replies sent to MHA are being enclosed for ready references."

## Groundwater in most parts of city brackish, says CGWB report

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) in its report has said the groundwater in most parts of Delhi is brackish in nature and the nitrate concentration is high in the northeastern parts of the capital.

"Chemical analysis of groundwater samples collected in May 2021 showed that nitrate content in groundwater is within the permissible limit of 45 micrograms per litre in most of the state. However, concentration in the north-eastern parts of Delhi is high," the CGWB's groundwater year book 2021-22 said.

Except a few locations in the northern and western parts of the city, all areas have a fluoride concentration within the permissible limit of 1.5 micrograms per litre, it said. The analysis of groundwater samples collected from the national hydrograph sta-



tions distributed throughout Delhi showed that Jagatpur in north Delhi has the highest concentration of manganese (2.293 milligrams per litre).

Rohini Sector 11, Nangli, Rajapura, Bhalswa Lake and Burari logged high iron concentration (more than 1 milligrams per litre). The concentration of uranium was beyond the permissible limit (30 parts per billion) at Kanjhawala, Jaunti and Nizampur, it said.

The eastern parts of Delhi, especially the areas around the Yamuna floodplains and the Delhi Quartzite Ridge zones, have an electric

cal conductivity (EC) within the permissible range of 0 to 2,250 microsiemens per centimetre, the CGWB report said.

"The rest of the capital, barring some pockets of southwest, northwest and west districts, has EC value of more than 3,000 microsiemens per centimetre. It is also observed that water from deeper aquifers have greater EC value than the water from shallow aquifers. The EC value increases with depth," it said. Salinity, the measure of the amount of dissolved salts in water, is directly proportional to the EC.



# Budget has something for all sections: PM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the recent Union Budget has something for every section of the society and asserted that the interests of the poor have been at the centre of every budget presented by his Government.

Addressing the first BJP parliamentary party meeting after the Budget was presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1, Modi said no one is calling it a "chunavi budget" (budget influenced by polls) even though it was the last full-fledged one before next year's Lok Sabha election. Overall development and the interests of every section of the society

have driven the budget proposals, he added.

Even those who are ideologically opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have welcomed the budget, Union minister Pralhad Joshi told reporters, quoting Modi's speech to the MPs.

Asking the MPs to inform their constituents, including the poor and middle class, about the relevant aspects of the budget, Modi recalled his electoral experiences as the chief minister of Gujarat to say that when work is recognised by people, there is nothing like anti-incumbency, sources said.

Underscoring the wide acceptance of the budget, the prime minister said it is at

times difficult to cater to everyone's taste at a family function of merely 25 guests, but the budget proposals have managed to meet the expectations of different sections of the society in a country of more than 130 crore people.

Modi highlighted his involvement with budgets over the years, noting that he has been associated with about 25 of them, including as the Gujarat chief minister between 2001 and 2014, and 10 of them, including interim budgets, at the Centre.

The prime minister also asked the MPs, especially those from cities, to organise sports meets, noting that there is a view that youngsters in urban centres are not much involved



in sports. Modi has repeatedly asked lawmakers to organise sports meets.

In his address, Modi said India has organised about 20 G20-related meets at different places so far and foreign guests have appreciated their conduct. He also spoke about a

devastating earthquake that hit Türkiye and Syria and noted that India is providing all possible assistance. Modi also recalled a 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, noting the scale of the tragedy and how he can relate to the situation in these countries.

# Prez Address did not dwell upon vital women's quota Bill: Opp

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Some Opposition members in Lok Sabha on Tuesday criticised the President's address to the joint session of Parliament, saying it contained "some half-truths" and did not talk about important issues like the Women's Reservation Bill.

Participating in the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, BJD's Pinaki Misra said it was "something a trustworthy document," and it "suppressed" several truths.

The address talked about women empowerment, but it did not mention the Women's Reservation Bill, which is pending for long, he said. "We are deeply unhappy that Women Reservation Bill does not find mention in the address."

He also said the address talked about the poor, but in the Budget, the government slashed allocation to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGA).

The finance minister needs to reconsider this, he added.



The BJD member also said that "some half-truths crept into the statement" on medical colleges also. Most colleges lack good infrastructure and equipment, he said. However, Misra added that government policies on mines, minerals and air connectivity have worked well.

JD (U) member Kaushalendra Kumar said that the government is talking about amrit kal, but there is nothing like that.

Kumar alleged that the Modi-government has failed to provide jobs to people and also failed to bring back black money.

He also demanded special status for Bihar.

## IN THE SUPREME COURT

# Bilkis assured her plea will be heard after new Bench is set up

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday assured Bilkis Bano, who was gang-raped and seven members of her family killed during the 2002 Gujarat riots, that her plea against the remission of the sentence of 11 convicts will be heard soon after the constitution of a new Bench. A Bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala assured Bano, represented through her lawyer Shobha Gupta, that the new Bench will be formed at the earliest.

Shobha Gupta mentioned the matter for urgent hearing and said that a new bench needs to be constituted by the Chief Justice of India as Justice Bela M Trivedi recused from hearing the plea. CJI Chandrachud said, "I



will do so at the earliest. The matter will be listed soon".

Bano had moved the apex court on November 30, 2022 challenging the "premature" release of 11 lifers by the state government, saying it has "shaken the conscience of society". The top court is already seized of PILs filed by CPI(M) leader Subhashini Ali, Revati Laul, an independent journalist, Roop Rekha Verma, who is a former vice chancellor of the Lucknow University, and TMC MP Mahua Moitra against the release of the convicts.

# SC nixes Ayyub's plea to quash summons by court in PMLA case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed journalist Rana Ayyub's plea challenging summons by the Ghaziabad special court in a money laundering case, leaving it open for her to raise the issues before the trial court. A Bench of Justices V Ramasubramanian and JB Pardiwala allowed Ayyub to raise the issue of jurisdiction before the trial court, saying it is a question of evidence.

Justice V Ramasubramanian, who pronounced the verdict on behalf of the Bench referred to Section 3 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and said Navi Mumbai, where the account is, is said to be the place where the proceeds of crime have reached. In her writ petition, Ayyub has sought quashing of the proceedings initiated by the ED in



the ED and summoned Ayyub. The special court had said Ayyub's alleged crime involves taking money illegally from the general public in the name of charity via Ketto -- an online crowdfunding platform -- in three campaigns, without any approval, raising a huge sum in the bank account of her sister and father, and transferring it into her own bank account which was not used for the intended purpose.

On October 12 last year, the ED had filed a charge sheet against Ayyub, accusing her of cheating the public and using Rs 2.69 crore she got in charity for creating personal assets, and also violating the foreign contribution law. "Ayyub utilised these funds to create a fixed deposit of Rs 50 lakh for herself and also transferred Rs 50 lakh to a new bank account. Investigations found that only about Rs 29 lakh was used for relief work," said the ED.

On November 29 last year, the special PMLA court in Ghaziabad had taken cognisance of the prosecution complaint (charge sheet) filed by

# Agusta chopper middleman Christian Michel denied bail

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday denied bail to Christian Michel James, accused middleman in AgustaWestland chopper scam cases, who was deported from Dubai and being probed by both the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala said that argument of James that he be released on bail on ground that he has completed half of maximum sentence in the cases cannot be accepted. It, however, said that James may pursue his remedy of regular bail before trial court in the case.

The Rs 3,600-crore scam relates to the purchase of 12 VIP helicopters from AgustaWestland. James has



sought bail under section 436A of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) which says that a person can be released on bail if he has completed half of the maximum sentence prescribed for the offence. Advocate Aljo K Joseph submitted that after his extradition from Dubai in 2018, James has spent more than four years in jail, while the maximum sentence prescribed for the offences he was extradited for is seven years.

Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, appearing

for the CBI and the ED, said the investigation in the cases is still under progress and letters rogatory, which are formal requests from a court to a foreign court for judicial assistance, have been sent to the UAE, the United Kingdom and Hong Kong. The bench then questioned Jain as to how long can he be kept in custody keeping in mind the investigation is still going on even as chargesheet and supplementary chargesheet have been filed in the case.

# Def Min's Conclave to be held on sidelines of Aero India show

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Speeding up joint ventures in Defence production and research and development in this sector will figure prominently during the Defence Ministers' Conclave on February 14 on the sidelines of the 14th edition of prestigious Aero India air show in Bengaluru. Defence Minister Rajnath will host the conclave.

The biennial airshow will be held at the Air Force Station in Yelahanka here from February 13-17. The conclave will see participation of Defence Ministers of foreign friendly countries, who would also be attending the Aero India, officials said on Tuesday.

The conclave will address aspects related to deepening cooperation for capacity building (through investments, Research and Development, joint venture, co-development, co-production and provisioning of defence equipment), training, space, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and maritime security to work together with the broad theme 'Shared Prosperity through Enhanced



Engagements in Defence' (SPEED).

The conclave is an opportunity for Defence Ministers of all foreign friendly countries and India to engage with each other to carry forward the Prime Minister's vision of 'Make in India, Make for the World' for a secure and prosperous future for generations to come.

According to officials, Aero India has carved a niche for itself globally as one of the premier aerospace exhibitions with 13 successful editions organised in Bengaluru since 1996. A total 731 exhibitors have registered -- 633 Indian and 98 foreign for Aero India this time.

Noting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched a campaign for 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India), in Defence sector, officials said it aims to increasing indigenous defence manufacturing and production capability to develop a self-sufficient defence ecosystem; involving like-minded nations in developing a reliable supply chain free of exploitation and disruptions by certain players.

While the domestic requirements are large enough to sustain the indigenous industry, India would like to partner with friendly countries to take the Defence production to next level and share the ben-

efits to ensure shared prosperity, they said.

The aerospace industry is also gearing up majorly to cater to the demand of aircraft (fixed and rotary wings), UAVs and communication systems, according to officials, the opportunities in the aerospace for the Indian industries will enhance with favorable defence policies with the other countries by creating an ecosystem in India.

Satellite enabled technologies such as information technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI), chip manufacturing and communication technology are areas where massive scope for jointness exists, they said.

# Workshop on management of biological, nuclear exigencies being held for AFMS staff

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Medical Branch of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff is conducting 11th Workshop on medical management of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) exigencies for medical and nursing officers of the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) and National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF) from February 7 to 10 at the Army Hospital (Research and Referral) here.

Sixty medical and nursing officers from the Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and NDRF are participating in the workshop.

It aims to train young services medical professionals to operate in CBRN environment and render first aid and long term management of the CBRN exposures, officials said here on Tuesday.

Lectures, demonstrations of CBRN exercises and hands-on training on use of CBRN equipment will be imparted by the experts and scientists from Armed Forces Medical



College, Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences, NDRF, Indian Army and Indian Air Force units, they said.

Air Marshal BR Krishna, Chief of the Integrated Defence Staff inaugurated the Workshop. Lt General AK Jindal, Commandant, Army Hospital (R&R); Air Marshal Rajesh Vaidya, Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Medical), senior officers from the Medical Directorates of the three Services and senior professionals from institutes of national reputation like National Center for Disease Control and National Disaster Management Authority were also present during the event.

# Shortage of specialists, doctors, paramedical staff plagues top hospitals

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

While the Government is on a spree to strengthen the country's health infrastructure by setting up new medical and nursing colleges, there is an acute shortage of specialists, doctors and paramedical staff in many hospitals including top ones like AIIMS, Delhi and Safdarjung Hospitals, thus impacting public health care.

On Tuesday, the Government shared the data with the Parliament, which shows that its major hospitals across the country are facing shortage of doctors with at least 3028 posts yet to be filled. Of these, 1,867 vacant posts are from 18 new AIIMS like hospitals itself from across the country. Most of these hospitals are visited by patients from the poor and rural sector. At least 21,464 posts at the non-faculty positions including nurses and support staff are yet to be filled as of January 2023 across the States.

The query regarding specialists and paramedical and non faculty staff shortage



was raised by Member of Parliament Amar Patnaik. In her written reply, the Minister of State for Health Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar said that recruitment is carried out as per functional needs.

An analysis of the data tabled in the Lok Sabha indicates that acute shortage of paramedical staff is also a cause of worry.

In Delhi, the national capital of the country, the situation is not encouraging. In Dr RML Hospital, there is a shortage of 113 doctors and 469 vacant non-faculty positions including nurses and support staff) while Lady Hardinge Medical College is yet to fill 81 posts (162). Similarly, Safdarjung Hospital which sees a large number of patient footfalls everyday is plagued by 220 vacant posts for doctors and 789 vacant posts for supporting staff.

# Unite Raj Cong leaders first: BJP MP's dig at Rahul's Yatra

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

BJP member C P Joshi on Tuesday hit out at Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, saying he should first bring together the warring Congress factions in Rajasthan before thinking of uniting the nation.

Initiating a debate in Lok Sabha on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, Joshi lashed out at the Congress.

"You have embarked on Bharat Jodo (uniting India). But first at least unite the two leaders in Rajasthan. One says the other is a magician who leaks question papers without opening the vault, the other says the party is infected with corona, calls him 'naalayak' (worthless)," Joshi, a Lok Sabha



member from Rajasthan's Chittorgarh, said.

The BJP member was referring to the rivalry between Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his bete noire and chief ministerial aspirant Sachin Pilot.

Joshi also wondered how one can talk of uniting the country by standing alongside

those who raised "anti-national" slogans in the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and talked of separating Kashmir from India. "For the prime minister's chair, you partitioned my country. There were dead bodies from Lahore to Delhi. But those running after power were celebrating in Lahore and Delhi," Joshi said.

# Process to set up national seed co-op begins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following approval from the Cabinet, the Union Cooperation Ministry has initiated the process to set up a national-level multi-State seed cooperative society which will act as an apex organisation for production, procurement, processing, branding, labelling, packaging, storage, marketing and distribution of quality seeds in the country.

A few weeks ago, the Cabinet had given the nod for setting up of such a central entity and also for strategic research and development; and to develop a system for preservation and promotion of indigenous natural seeds; through various cooperative societies in an array of sectors.

A senior official from the Ministry said that the proposed central level multi-State

seed cooperative also aims to help increase the seed replacement rate, varietal replacement rate, ensuring the role of farmers in quality seed cultivation and seed variety trials, production and distribution of certified seeds with a single brand name, by utilizing the network of all levels of cooperatives.

Increasing the productivity per unit of cultivated land in India to increase agriculture production, help farmers in production, procurement, branding, packaging and selling of quality seeds and to increase the capacity of cooperative societies will be its major task.

Besides, it will incorporate all types of cooperative structures to ensure cultivation of quality seeds and increasing the role of farmers in seed variety testing, production and distribution of certified seeds.

Last but not the least; Multi State Cooperative Seed Society will help develop a system for conservation and promotion of indigenous natural seeds as well as help in new research and development, added the official.

The country's three leading cooperatives, including IFFCO, KRIBHCO and NAFED along with NDBB and NCDC have come forward to jointly help set up the central body in the seed sector with an authorized share capital of Rs 500 crore.

The Ministry feels that 29 crore members of 8.54 lakh cooperative societies who are largely from the farming communities, marginalised and lower income groups in the rural areas in all likelihood join the new society to boost their income, thus helping achieve the Government's vision of "Sahakar se Samridhi Tak."

As per reports, the direct contribution of quality seeds to production in India is about



15-20% which can be increased up to 45% with efficient management of other inputs.

It is felt that if farmers get high quality seeds through Multi State Cooperative Seed Society, then agricultural productivity will also improve while processing, buying and selling of quality seeds will help generate additional employment in these sectors, thus boosting rural economy, promoting "Make in India" and leading to Aatmanirbhar Bharat, noted the official.



# Big test is filing chargesheet on time, says DGP on Assam child marriages

PTI ■ AMINGAON

As arrests in child marriage cases in Assam crossed 2,500, the biggest challenge is now to file chargesheets within the time frame, Director-General of Police (DGP) GP Singh said on Tuesday.

Speaking to PTI, he said the police have no aim of harassing anyone, but its objective is to stop child marriage altogether in the state within two-three years.

"We have registered 4,074 cases and over 2,500 people have been arrested till this morning. All the accused in these cases have been identified and they will be arrested and charge sheets filed against them," Singh said on the sidelines of the Y20 Summit here. "The biggest challenge now is



to file the charge sheets within the 60 to 90 days time frame," he added. The Assam Police launched a crackdown on child marriages on Friday, making over 2,000 arrests within the first two days. On the 65 accused procuring bail, the police chief said the focus is on ensuring charge sheets are filed

within the stipulated time-frame. "Bail is okay. To me, it is not important who stays in jail for how long. It is important that they have to be charge-sheeted and they face the music of law," he asserted. Singh said the basic idea behind the operation is to minimise child marriages this

year, and stop it completely in the state within two-three years.

"Addressing the issue on basis of law is one thing. This is also a kind of awakening that this (child marriages) will not be tolerated. "While the arrests are good and we will take lawful action, the basic idea is to stop child marriages. Harassment is not our aim, our aim is that child marriage is stopped," he said. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had earlier asserted that the drive will continue till the 2026 assembly elections and justified the crackdown, pointing out that nearly 17 per cent of over 6.2 lakh pregnant women last year were teenagers in the state. The opposition has criticised the manner in which it is being carried out, equating

the police action with "terrorising people". Family members of those arrested have also been protesting against the operation.

The state cabinet recently approved a proposal to book men who have married girls below 14 years under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO). Cases under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 will be registered against those who have married girls in the age group of 14-18, the cabinet had decided. The offenders will be arrested and the marriages declared illegal. Assam has a high rate of maternal and infant mortality, with child marriage being identified as the primary cause, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS).

## Guj HC suspends 'life' to ex-BJP MP's nephew in RTI activist's murder case

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court has suspended the life sentence of Shiva Solanki, nephew of former BJP MP Dinu Solanki, in the 2010 murder of RTI activist Amit Jethwa, and granted him bail pending hearing on his appeal.

A division bench of Justices S H Vora and Mauna Bhatt on Monday also granted Shiva Solanki bail while terming his conviction as prima facies erroneous.

Shiva Solanki, one of the seven accused sentenced to life imprisonment by a special CBI court, has filed an appeal against the conviction before the high court.

His uncle Dinu Solanki too has been convicted in the case and is out on bail. Jethwa was shot dead outside the High Court premises here on July 20, 2010. While ordering Shiva Solanki's release on bail, the



File photo of Amit Jethwa

HC barred him from leaving Gujarat and asked him to surrender his passport, mark presence at the concerned police station every month and attend the hearing of his appeal in the high court.

Prima facie (on the face of it) his conviction seemed to be "erroneous, because there is breach of all principles settled by the Hon'ble Apex Court with regard to the circumstantial evidence and requirement for conviction", the bench said.

"When circumstances against the applicant are taken cumulatively, we do not find

any chain of evidence having been established leading to the conclusion that in all possibility, the crime was committed by the applicant," the HC added. "False implication" of the applicant in the case cannot be ruled out, the court further said.

The High Court had in September 2021 suspended the sentence of main accused Dinu Solanki pending his appeal against conviction by the CBI court on June 7, 2019.

The Supreme Court later upheld the HC order. Prior to his murder, Jethwa had tried to expose illegal mining activities in which Dinu Solanki was allegedly involved by seeking information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The state police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had earlier filed a charge sheet, but in September 2012 the High Court handed over the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

## Tainted 'Chori Chori, Chupke Chupke' film producer dead

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The controversial film producer Nazim Hassan Rizvi — whose alleged role in the much-discussed Bollywood-underworld nexus case came to light during the making of his "Chori Chori, Chupke Chupke" (2001) — died at a private hospital here on Monday.

Rizvi, who had been admitted to the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital (KDAH) for treatment of undisclosed ailments, Rizvi breathed his last during his treatment at the hospital.

Informed sources in Bollywood said that Rizvi's body was being taken to Uttar Pradesh for final rites.

Apart from Chori Chori, Chupke Chupke" (CCCC) featuring Salman Khan, Rani Mukherjee and Preity Zinta, Rizvi had produced films like "Majboor Ladki" (1991), "Apaatkaal" (1993), "Angarvaadi" (1998), "Undertrial" (2007), "CC,CC" (2001), "Hello, Hum Lallan Bol Rahe Hain" (2010), "Qasam Se, Qasam Se", (2011), and "Laden Aala Re Aala" (2017).

It may be recalled that the leaked transcript of a 45-minute telephonic conversation between Pakistan-based underworld ganglord Chhota Shakeel and four film personalities, including actor Sanjay Dutt, Mahesh Manjrekar and Harish Sugandh, had in 2002 ripped the lid off a well-established nexus between the underworld and the Bollywood. Among other things, Shakeel was heard abusing Salman Khan in the tape, by alluding to Chori

Chori Chupke Chupke (CCCC), in which Salman stars with Preity Zinta. He said: "Woh khali nange pehalwan to charbi chadi thi to maine phone kiya tha, bas."

What was significant is that the telephonic conversation between Shakeel, Sanjay and three others were taped a month before the producer of CCCC Nazem Rizvi and his assistant Abdul Rahim Khan were arrested in the second and third week of December, 2000 respectively.

The film's financier Bharat Shah was arrested under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act on January 8, 2001 and was later released on bail. One of the allegations made during that period was that ganglord Chhota Shakeel's henchman Anjum Fazlani had threatened Salman to reduce his fee for producer Nazim Rizvi's movie 'Chori Chori Chupke Chupke' or face dire consequences.

Rizvi and Shah had faced charges of receiving funds from Chhota Shakeel. Rizvi had been under surveillance for several months before his alleged nexus with the underworld. The Mumbai Police and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had seized the film's negatives and prints, and deposited them with the Special MCOCA Court in Mumbai.

The CCCC was finally released following the Special Court's order. The Court had in its order said that the profits earned by "CCCC" should go to the treasury of the Maharashtra Government.

## Didi promises 'Bengal model' in Tripura

TMC will get less than 'Nota', says Suvendu

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday offered to transport Bengal model of development in Tripura claiming under the BJP Government Agartala had witnessed all-round deterioration.

Launching a scathing attack on the BJP Government at the end of a mega road show in poll-bound Tripura Banerjee said the BJP's double-engine model had failed to fulfil people's aspirations.

However, Bengal Opposition leader Suvendu Adhikari said on Tuesday that, "Her party will get less votes than NOTA ... let her come and organize hundreds of road-shows."

Earlier, Banerjee while wondering whether reforms promised and brought about by the BJP Government had mitigated the odds, said, "Under the BJP's double engine rule India has witnessed 40 per cent rise in unemployment whereas in the corresponding period Bengal has seen 40 per cent rise in employment which is a record."

Claiming that the social welfare schemes like Swasthya Saathi (health insurance) Kanyashri (girls' empowerment) and Duare Sarkar (government at the doorsteps) etc launched by her government had earned worldwide accolades the Bengal Chief Minister said a TMC Government in Tripura would help people get benefits of good governance at their door steps.

"In Bengal we provide Swasthya Sathi cards for health insurance ... but there is no credibility of the Ayushman Bharat card offered by the central government," she said.

Banerjee on Tuesday launched her party's campaign for the Tripura elections. Taking a dig at the saffron outfit that ruled both Delhi and Agartala

Banerjee asked "have they (BJP) fulfilled the promises that they made? Has Rs 15 lakh come into your account? Has the black money come back after demonetisation?"

Launching a circuitous attack on the Centre regarding its stance on the top Gujarat-based businessman Gautam Adani, she asked, "if Life Insurance Corporation of India and State Bank of India sink, will we get our money back? If you people are thinking that with the help of ED and CBI, we will be wiped out, that is not easy."

Chief Minister's nephew Abhishek Banerjee who is also the national general secretary of the BJP and who too joined the road show was equally stringent in his attack on the Centre questioning the double-



engine model. "the double engine referred to by the BJP are Enforcement Directorate and Central Bureau of Investigation," he said adding "when the BJP fails to take on its opposition politically it lets loose the agencies like ED and CBI to harass the leaders ... as is the case in Bengal."

Accusing the saffron party of tormenting her Government and the people of Bengal for not backing the BJP the Chief Minister said, "the Centre has stopped releasing of funds for the 100-days work scheme in Bengal and other many welfare projects as if it is their money ... the truth is that the Centre takes away the taxes from the States and then refuses to give

it back to us."

Earlier, parroting her Goa speech, Banerjee said that Tripura was her second home because the culture of Bengal and the north-eastern state was almost similar.

Attacking the Congress which had tied up with the Left in Tripura Banerjee said, "The Congress in Tripura is the B Team of BJP."

The Left and the Congress have on the other hand slammed the TMC calling it a "Vote Katua" (a party that cuts votes).

"Mamata Banerjee has come on the instructions of the BJP to cut votes of the Left and the Congress ... as she did in Goa ... if she would not come here then she knows what the ED and CBI would do to her," senior

Left leader Sujan Chakrabarty said showing how her Government was crumbling under the pressure of scams from Education to MNREGA to PMRY to Health and other sectors. The BJP on the other hand attacked Banerjee saying TMC was not a factor in Tripura.

## BJP changed face of Tripura, says Rajnath

PTI ■ KAILASHAHAR

Alleging that the CPI(M) exploited the people of Tripura for years, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said the face of the State changed after the BJP came to power.

Addressing an election rally at Kailashahar in Unakoti district, he said Tripura is "literally running" towards economic development.

"The entire Northeast is witnessing rapid development with the help of the internet. Tripura is literally running towards economic development," he said.

"The CPI(M) used to claim itself as the saviour of the poor but they are the ones who exploited the poor people for years. They did nothing for the poor. The face of the state changed after the BJP came to power. It is the people who made the BJP hero from zero," he added.

Singh, who arrived on a two-day visit to the poll-bound state on Monday, said the BJP brought development to the state, which had poor infrastructure during the CPI(M)'s rule. "Now, electricity, water connections and roads are available as the BJP government is taking all possible steps to speed up development.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh speaks during an election campaign meeting ahead of Tripura State Assembly elections at Agartala, on Tuesday PTI

The CPI(M)-led government did not respect women, but during BJP rule, they are getting respect and benefits," he said. Singh also claimed that violence has "stopped" in Tripura as the BJP does not believe in it. "Under Narendra Modi's leadership, the country has become stronger, and the world wants to listen to what India says," he asserted.

He urged the people to vote for the BJP in the upcoming assembly elections to continue the development of the state. Polling for 60-seat assembly will be held on February 16, while votes will be counted on March 2. Former chief minister Biplob Kumar Deb also addressed the rally.

## Aaditya challenges CM to contest against him in Worli, Shinde camp calls it childish

PTI ■ THANE

The Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena (BSS) on Tuesday termed as "childish" former Maharashtra Minister Aaditya Thackeray's comments challenging Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to contest election against him from the Worli Assembly seat in Mumbai.

Aaditya Thackeray, who was a cabinet minister in the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government headed by his father Uddhav Thackeray, is the sitting MLA of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) from Worli.

Addressing a press conference here, Naresh Mhaske, a spokesperson of the Shinde-led Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena, said Aaditya Thackeray is not even a shakha pramukh (local party unit chief) and should stop comparing himself with the CM, who is a mass leader.

Mhaske said several senior Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders like Sunil Shinde and Kishori Pednekar were ignored and ticket was given to the junior Thackeray to contest the 2019 Assembly polls from Worli in central Mumbai. The former Thane mayor said Aaditya Thackeray's challenge to Chief Minister Shinde to contest



election against him from Worli was 'childish'. "I have challenged this unconstitutional chief minister that I would resign as MLA from Worli and you contest election against me. Let me see how you win from Worli," the junior Thackeray said at a party programme in Mumbai last Friday.

The BSS spokesperson said when Uddhav Thackeray resigned as Chief Minister in June last year, he had declared he would also quit his Legislative Council seat, but the former CM continues to be a member of the Upper House.

Mhaske said Aaditya Thackeray did not contest elections from his family's home turf Bandra in suburban Mumbai and instead went to Worli to fight polls. The BSS spokesperson said instead of throwing challenge at Shinde, Aaditya Thackeray should contest upcoming civic polls against him (Mhaske) from Thane city.

## 'Army ready to give befitting response to any Chinese aggression'

**Srinagar:** The Indian Army on Tuesday said it was ready to give a befitting response to any Chinese aggression in Ladakh, maintaining that the integrity of the country was being ensured through physical patrolling and technical means.

Addressing the Northern Command Investiture Ceremony held for the first time since 1947 at Badami Bagh Cantt, Srinagar, General officer Commanding in Chief Lt General Upendra Dwivedi

said that the Northern Command is prepared to meet all challenges posed by multiple threats from volatile adversaries.

"On the LAC, our response to Chinese attempts to unilaterally change the status quo was a swift, undaunted and synergised action by the Indian Armed Forces. Any adverse aggressive designs or attempts will definitely be met with appropriate posturing of forces and a strong intent with com-

plete synergy among the three services," he said. He said measures to resolve the Line of Actual Control (LAC) situation at diplomatic and operational levels are also simultaneously underway.

"I assure you that the LAC in Eastern Ladakh is being dominated by physical patrolling and through technical means and our territorial integrity is being ensured," he added. Meanwhile, Army units involved in the Galwan clash-

es in eastern Ladakh with the troops of Chinese PLA dominated the commendation and appreciation certificates handed out at Tuesday's Northern Command investiture ceremony.

"It is a matter of immense honour for me to be presiding over the first segment of the investiture ceremony at Srinagar. Of the four Chief of the Army Staff appreciation certificates, three were awarded to units involved in

Operation Snow Leopard undertaken in the Ladakh sector after the Galwan clashes in June 2020.

Of the 49 GoC-in-C's commendation certificates, 18 were given to units deployed in Ladakh while they also bagged nearly half of the 24 appreciation certificates.

Referring to the security situation in the region Lt-Gen Dwivedi said, "The security situation in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh poses

many challenges in terrain and operational dynamics, especially from different adversaries along the Northern and Western borders.

We are committed to defending India's sovereignty and territorial integrity while upholding democratic traditions of Nation. "We are maintaining a constant vigil, monitoring all developments and will take all necessary steps to protect our national interests," he said. **PNS**

## 'Alternative routes must be decided for VIPs during UP GIS to ease citizens' woes'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra asked officials to look for alternative routes for the VIPs during the Global Investors' Summit so that there should not be any inconvenience to the common man.

"Along with the main route, alternative routes should also be decided for the VVIPs. Adequate number of police personnel should be deployed on the routes. The guests should reach the site on time and for that, the time taken to reach the venue from the place of their stay and the route should be displayed at the

reception of the hotel," Mishra said while reviewing the arrangements for the GIS.

He said drivers should also be properly briefed about which route they have to use to reach the venue and where they have to park their vehicles.

Special priority should be given to ambulances and fire-fighting vehicles. In the event of an emergency, an alternative route should also be decided for the ambulance, he said. "Adequate number of cranes should be kept ready, as should mechanics to fix minor problems in vehicles so as to prevent traffic jams in case of breakdowns," he said. Additional Chief Secretary, MSME, Amit

Mohan Prasad spoke about the preparations for the exhibition in the GIS. He said all the stalls and halls would be ready in time.

Lucknow Municipal Commissioner Inderjit Singh said it would be a 'zero waste' event. The entire zone is ODF as 250 toilets have been installed at the venue and over 1,000 sweepers have been pressed into service for cleaning. Vehicles have also been deployed for road washing and dust removal.

The work of tent city has almost been completed while the work of arranging accommodation and allotment is in progress.

## Meghalaya people do not trust BJP: Cong MP

PTI ■ KHLIEHRIAT (MEGHALAYA)

Congress Meghalaya unit Chief Vincent H Pala alleged that the people of the northeastern state "do not trust" the BJP.

He also accused the BJP of putting the Christians at "the receiving end" in states where it is in power. "In Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh or Karnataka and even in Assam, the Christians are at the receiving end. The Christians are at the receiving end wherever the BJP has set foot. The share of the Christian population in Meghalaya is over 75 per cent



and they do not trust the BJP" Pala said. The Congress MP also said, "The BJP has not provided anything worth mentioning to the people of Meghalaya even after nine years of its rule at the Centre." The state Congress president said it would do well for the prime minister and union home minister to visit Shillong

and inaugurate schemes and projects but they should "avoid making political comments as the cost of their visits here is borne by the central government".

"How can a prime minister or a home minister visit Meghalaya as a star campaigner when their travel costs are being borne by the government? Come and lay foundation stones for projects that will benefit the people of the hill state," he said. "He (PM Narendra Modi) had campaigned in the Garo Hills (in earlier years) because they can bring crowds from Assam," he said on Monday.



## A friend in need

India has been prompt in sending the relief teams to Turkey which has been devastated by three quakes

Turkey is pleasantly surprised by India's assistance at the time when it has been hit by a natural calamity. Three earthquakes in a span of 24 hours have left thousands dead and caused mass devastation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was prompt to offer condolences to the loss of life; more importantly, the expression of sympathy was more than verbal; relief to the quake-hit was immediately organised; by the time of writing of these lines, an Indian Air Force plane with a relief team from India had already reached Adana in Turkey. Evidently, Ankara did not expect such a friendly gesture from New Delhi, for the former has been quite critical of the Modi regime for some time. In September last year at the UN General Assembly session, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan raked up the Kashmir issue during his address to world leaders, much to the anger of India. "India and Pakistan, after having established their sovereignty and independence 75 years ago, they still haven't established peace and solidarity between one another. This is much unfortunate. We hope and pray that a fair and permanent peace and prosperity will be established in Kashmir," he said. Turkey has also tried to embarrass India at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In this, it has been aided by Pakistan, a close ally of Turkey's.

Erdogan, in particular, seems to nurture the ambitions of becoming some kind of Caliph; the nurturing has coincided with the oil-rich Arabs, especially Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), losing interest in spreading jihad worldwide. Erdogan has almost undone the secular legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey. While Atatürk promoted Turkish nationalism, Erdogan has been a votary of Islamism. Three years ago, Erdogan had transformed Istanbul's iconic Hagia Sophia, a historic monument, into a mosque. He even led worshippers in the first prayers in it. Against this backdrop, it must have delighted the powers that be in Ankara that New Delhi did not let its antipathy towards them colour its reaction to the calamity. Turkish Ambassador to India Firat Sunel tweeted: "Dost" is a common word in Turkish and Hindi... We have a Turkish proverb: 'Dost kara gunde belli olur' (a friend in need is a friend indeed). Thank you very much India." Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan visited Turkey's embassy. Rescue and medical teams have already left from India to Turkey. The Prime Minister's Office held a meeting, where it was decided to send two teams of the National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF). The teams will include 100 personnel with specially trained dog squads and the requisite equipment. It may be mentioned here that such endeavours are not an exception but the rule; in the past too India helped other countries, including the hostile ones, when they faced humongous crises. PM Modi himself spearheaded Vaccine Maitri. The MEA must capitalise on the equity created by India's generosity.



An airplane passes in front of a full moon as it descends for landing in Mexico City

## Aussies show the way

Australia moves out of the colonial past without much fuss

Australia is slowly but surely moving out of its colonial past. It is taking small yet effective steps that would snap its colonial ties. The recent announcement to do away with the picture of the British Monarch from its 5-dollar bill is a case in point. Though history cannot be wished away it can definitely be rectified. Australia is reevaluating its history and cultural identity in two ways: first by getting rid of the symbols that remind it of its colonial past and second taking firm steps to make its Constitution and policy more inclusive, giving proper space to the indigenous people of Australia. What is remarkable about Australia's approach is that it is doing so without creating any ill-will and hatred with the erstwhile colonial masters. The country is undergoing a cultural revolution of sorts as it acknowledges the injustices committed against Indigenous Australians, and the effects of colonization on their culture, language, and way of life. This includes the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families, the loss of traditional lands and cultural practices. The recognition of the First Nations peoples in the Australian constitution and the creation of Indigenous-led initiatives and programs aimed at preserving Indigenous cultures and languages are some very substantial measures. Moreover, Australia has also been actively working to eliminate the symbols and monuments of its colonial past, with many cities and towns removing statues and monuments that commemorate controversial historical figures and events. This is part of a larger effort to decolonize public spaces and to recognize the contributions and experiences of Indigenous Australians and other marginalized communities. The education system is also being revamped, with a growing emphasis on teaching accurate and inclusive history in schools. This includes incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum and teaching students about the history of Indigenous culture. Though getting rid of the colonial past is a long and ongoing process, these changes would result in big dividends. As the country continues to acknowledge its history, it will be able to move forward and create a brighter future for all its citizens. Perhaps India could take a leaf from Australia and do better than just changing the nomenclatures of streets. A thoughtful approach would be more in line with the course the country must take as a confident and independent nation.

# Invest in defence modernisation

The Government should shed the illusion of strength; we need modern warfare technology to face the menacing China threat

The only surprise in the defence budget was no surprise: static, in real terms, a negative budget for modernization - the litmus test of capability enhancement for maintaining deterrence in order to meet the two-and-a-half threat challenge plus government articulated missions of retaking PoK and Aksai Chin. Much of the capital is consumed by committed liabilities - payment for equipment already ordered and in the pipeline. Overconfidence in a strong government and leader, the chimera of G20 grandeur, and 'it is not an era of war' but 'Amrit Kaal has ruled out conflict with China and Pakistan. Northern Army Commander, Lt Gen Dwivedi earlier and former Army Chief, Gen Naravane, only last month, revived illusions of 'we are in a position of strength' in Ladakh. In the last nine years, the ruling government has invested more in lip servicing and symbolism than in closing the capability gap with China as defence budgets have hovered between 1.5 and 1.6 percent of GDP. Former Defence Minister Arun Jaitley would admit: "we have no money, we can't put cess on defence". So the government has renamed anonymous islands after PVC winners, built giant statues, installed tall flags, and embellished Jai Jawan Jai Kisan Jai Vigyan with Jai Anusandhan.

In the current fiscal defence has dropped to 1.4 percent of GDP and for the first time in decades, dipped below 2 percent of GDP if the pension bill is included. The capital acquisition increased from Rs 12,000 crore to Rs 1.6 lakh crore just an 8 percent increase well below inflation and the falling rupee. As there is no National Defence Strategy and a Policy, Plans, and Budgeting System to evaluate inter se capabilities, allocation is erratic and prioritized by CDS. IAF chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhuri has thrice publicly mentioned the dangers of combat squadron strength dwindling to 28/30 squadrons against the authorized 45 squadrons. PM Modi acquired 38 Rafales against 126 MRCA urgently sought by IAF.



Its requirement of 114 MRCA has been languishing for years: Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) is still not fructified i.e. forget it.

Similarly, the Navy, whose missions have multiplied - from the Gulf of Aden to the Indo-Pacific - is woefully deficient in submarines, and the indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant is minus aircraft and other subsystems. At this pace of modernization, the third aircraft carrier is a mirage. Manpower-intensive Army needs a new tank, a light tank, and a new gun. The increased capital segment of the revenue budget is to make up for deficiencies in ammunition and equipment to fight a 30-day war not 10 days of intense conflict. Neither the hand-picked service chiefs bar Chaudhuri, nor the deeply-selected CDS Gen Anil Chouhan, has pointed to shortfalls in the modernization budget. They are unlikely to do so in the prevailing environment when discretion has become a better part of valour. Young officers have proven the backbone as an ADC of President Murmu gently ticked off Modi when he tried to step ahead of her during the Republic Day parade.

Two instances need recall. Former Army Chief, Gen Shankar Roy Choudhury warned the government that Army will not be responsible

for any operational mishap due to inadequate funding and



THE GOVERNMENT TOOK HUGE OPERATIONAL RISKS BY KEEPING THE ARMY ALONE DEFICIENT OF 300,000 SOLDIERS: NO RECRUITMENT WAS DONE FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS DUE TO COVID

former CNS Adm Vijay Shekhawat declared at a press briefing that naval shipyards not receiving ship orders will have a negative effect on naval capabilities. The next day Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav invited Shekhawat to breakfast. It is inconceivable that the highly nationalistic government that has excelled in capex - infrastructure hikes and doubled railway budget - has kept the sword arm insufficiently sharpened.

The government took huge operational risks by keeping the Army alone deficient of 300,000 soldiers; no recruitment was done for the last three years due to Covid. While the annual demobilization of 65,000 soldiers continued, no salaries had to be paid for the void in recruitment. Only now will 46,000 Agniveers be recruited on a low salary and no pension. It's OROP whose cost equaled modernization allocation but has reduced to Rs 1.3 lakh crore that is hurting. OROP arrears worth Rs 23,000 crores are due by 31 March. Modi must rue his 2014 BJP election manifesto in signing up for OROP. This is indeed an era of war. As Russia's invasion of Ukraine enters its second year, India has to review its relations with Russia which has China, a no-limit strategic partner-

ship. India is still dependent on Russian military hardware, technology, and spares. Serge Chemezov, CEO of Russia military industrial Rostek was in India last month for payment of dues on account of Russian oil and S400 AD systems. The Americans are making determined efforts including the use of sanctions and diplomatic pressure to wean India away from Russian equipment. All European countries are increasing defence budgets to meet twin Russia-China challenges. The UK, France, and even Germany have reached 2 percent of GDP spending levels. Japan has erased the one percent GDP embargo and will spend USD332bn over the next five years. In Asia Pacific, South Korea, and the Philippines are increasing defence capabilities by 8 and 5 percent respectively. Despite active LAC and LoC and a sensitive internal environment, the Modi-Shah government is happy to let China march ahead with a defence budget thrice India's size. There is an urgent need for recapitalization of defence to deter China.

(The writer, a retired Lt Gen, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, & founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### UNEXPLAINED WRATH OF NATURE

Sir — Man's science and thinking are a complete failure in front of nature and its upheavals. Millions of human beings consider themselves knowledgeable and scientific. But what is happening inside the earth, they have no idea. The latest proof of this came in South Turkey and North Syria on Monday morning with an earthquake. So far, only 4,000 people have been reported dead but this figure can easily touch 40,000 with the passage of time. Because such incidents of repeat earthquakes, measuring quite high on the Richter scale and that too at a depth of only 10-17 km below the earth's surface, don't happen very frequently.

The result is that almost all the houses and structures in 10 provinces of Turkey have suffered damage. It is said that 70,000 lives were lost in an earthquake in Turkey in 1939. We blame climate change for floods, droughts, landslides, storms, snowfall, expansion of sea coast, melting of glaciers, rise in temperature etc. But who is to blame for the earthquake? No science has given us the answer to this to date. It can neither be stopped nor predicted. We just have to bear its horror silently.

It must be said that India has done the right thing in providing the timely succor in the time to the two devastated countries and it bodes well for India's underlying philosophy of 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam'. India has behaved as a president of a G20 nation should. It deserves all the praise for its effort.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

### BUDGET HAS NOTHING NEW

Sir — The absolute figures in the Union Budget speak louder than the Finance Minister's speech. The increase in the budgetary estimate of net tax revenue for 2023-24 over the revised estimate for 2022-23 is just ₹2.44 lakh crore. This is only 52 per cent of all receipts. Debt receipts made up 40 per cent. According to the IMF, India's debt-to-GDP ratio reached 84 per cent by 2022 end. A recent study has established a threshold of 77 per cent as the right debt-

## A serious matter, this



Once, former PM Chandra Shekhar was on a long trip when a woman sought his help in solving the drinking water problem in her village. Chandra Shekhar said he had no power but he could raise this matter in Parliament, with the result that the problem was solved. Now, Rahul Gandhi has followed Chandra Shekhar's example by sharing his experiences during Bharat Jodo Yatra and explaining how the youth are facing problems getting jobs even after getting college degrees and diplo-

mas, how the farmers and poor families in rural India are facing problems as well as the lack of infrastructure. However, he devoted most of his speech time on Adani, which appeared to be an out of proportion outburst.

The image of Rahul has improved from being a 'Pappu' and his Parliament speech was a matured one. He mentioned that a Bangladeshi power contract was allotted to Adani due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pressure. It is a serious charge: If it is proved wrong, then Rahul should apologise, and if the allegation is found correct, a detailed investigation should follow. Rahul made two more allegations claiming that Modi was helping Adani secure the maximum share of contracts available. Since the tone of Rahul's speech was serious, its reply is also expected to be in the same manner as the image of the PM is involved.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

to-GDP ratio. Debt above that affects the annual real growth. Interest payments and servicing debts surged from ₹8.05 lakh crore in 2021-22 (Actuals) to ₹9.41 lakh crore in 2022-23 (RE) and to ₹10.80 lakh crore in 2023-24 (BE).

The budgeted expenditure for fiscal year 2023-24 shows an increase of ₹3.16 lakh crore over the RE of 2022-23. The Finance Minister reduced the outlays for schemes/projects coming under certain Ministries and departments to keep the increase in expenditure at the targeted level. The Budget numbers betray the envisaged capital expenditure of over ₹10 lakh crore. The Budget offers little for ordinary people in the absence of new policy initiatives or mitigating measures.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

### FORLORN UK AWAITS MESSIAH

Sir — The colonial British Empire that appropriated wealth from subjugated nations had been thriving on indentured immigrants for ages. Over time, reduced to a mere kingdom with the centres of economy shifting elsewhere, it found

some eminence together with the EU. Thus was the rise of Rishi Sunak to eminence, though his parents were immigrants. Now three months into office as the PM of UK, Sunak is already facing dissent. His choice for the office was not predicated on any illusions to ethnic equity but to have him wrestle with Britain's highly skewed economy in the aftermath of an ill-thought Brexit.

Expectedly, odds against him are only increasing with high inflation and strikes. The 1980s saw the UK in identical straits when it took a Margaret Thatcher to wield an iron hand to restore economic order. In the past three years, as many PMs have met their Waterloo and thus Sunak's political longevity was suspect *ab initio*. Now, neither the change of a Tory PM nor opting for a Labour Government can redeem the UK's economic trajectory till it comes together in bipartisan pragmatism and reinvents its multifaceted links with European nations.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

The propaganda was to target the government and make allegations using HAL's name. Such falsehood, no matter how big, frequent or high, is always defeated in the face of truth.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

They have recovered some remnants off the surface of the sea...We have no intention to return spy' balloon Debris to China.

US Security Council spokesman — John Kirby

Adil has finally decided to leave me and stay with Tanu. He used me to enter Bollywood. I will go to court. He has taken my money. I have all the evidence.

Actor — Rakhi Sawant

India can go to hell if they don't want to come to Pakistan to play cricket. It does not make any difference to us.

Former Pakistan Cricketer — Javed Miandad

There can be only one reason (for Mamata's silence) - her closeness with Modi and new friendship with Adani. She might have instructions from Modi or the Adanis to not do anything that will go against the group's interests.

Senior Congress leader — Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury



FIRST COLUMN

AFTER COVID, NURSING MOVES CENTRE-STAGE

Upskilling of nursing can prove to be transformative



Nursing has become an important part of the healthcare industry post-Covid. As technology takes center stage in nursing after the pandemic outbreak, the profession has gone through significant changes. The transformation in nursing care calls for upskilling of healthcare workers across the world.

Right from monitoring patients remotely to using tools to understand a patient's needs, hospitals need to train their nurses following huge technological intervention in the post-Covid era.

Nurses account for more than half of all the world's health workers, providing vital services throughout the health system, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Not only in the past, but today as well, nurses are at the forefront of fighting epidemics and pandemics that threaten health and human life across the globe. As they responded to an unprecedented crisis with bravery and courage, never has their value been more clearly demonstrated.



Nurses are the backbone of any health system, and they were on the frontline in battle against the pandemic. Today, there are just under 28 million nurses worldwide. Nursing numbers increased by 4.7 million worldwide between 2013 and 2018, but this still leaves a global shortfall of 5.9 million. The greatest gaps have been found in countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region as well as some parts of Latin America.

Well trained nurses with certifications in basic life support and advanced cardiovascular life support can make a huge difference in a hospital's ability to successfully deal with critical care and emergencies. While imparting such skills has been a time-taking and costly process for hospitals, including training and equipment, technology disruption has enabled digital learning solutions for healthcare professionals.

Today, there are complete online resuscitation and cardiac training modules for hospital staff that have made upskilling faster and better. Upskilling nurses can also solve the care home crisis due with an increase in elderly population. Also, upskilling is imminent in the era of telehealth, when nurses should be able to monitor and analyse the body parameters of a distant patient and raise an alarm by quickly informing doctors in case of emergency. The nurses will be able to handle a critical situation only if they are aware of new technologies such as wearable bands, computers, tablets, or smartphones.

While the upskilling or reskilling concept is relatively new to the US healthcare industry, other countries like India have been using upskilling with great success. During the pandemic, an online upskilling initiative had prepared over one lakh Indian nurses to fight Covid-19. From recording audios to translating them using tools to understand a patient's needs, nurses are using as many tools as possible today. This rapid use of technology began after the pandemic outbreak. Hospitals can also invest in such tools to upskill their nurses, to take the patient care at a new level. For instance, if a patient is from another country or state, nurses can be trained in using specific tools or software that can translate what they are saying and then cater to their needs.

Similarly, virtual reality and Artificial Intelligence enabled tools can be used by nurses to transform the patient care. Recently, IIT Madras had joined hands with the state unit of the National Health Mission (NHM) to prevent maternal and neonatal deaths and improve the overall health of newborn babies and their mothers by upskilling healthcare workers.

According to a report, nursing makes up 50 per cent of the healthcare workforce and by 2022, it will be the most in demand profession in the US. Upskilling nurses by harnessing technology and developing new care models will help hospitals and for this they will need to invest in training and tools to empower their healthcare staff.

*(The author is Co-founder & CEO of MedLern)*

‘PARKING Gson’s law of mobility, and us

Since the demand for parking is insatiable, new mobility services and mass transit must complement each other

As we celebrate hosting this year's G-20 annual forum, our resolve to organise over 200 meetings in 50 cities across 32 different work streams spotlighting LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) may put to test the rigours of urban mobility. The congestion on roads and pressure for parking already make for a stressful experience as is evident from the frequent road rage incidents in India.

Though new technologies and business models have helped to improve transportation systems and services in the direction of a more sustainable mobility approach, it is shared mobility that has emerged as a possible answer to the rising number of vehicles. Shared mobility or shared transportation—where commuters can share resources such as vehicles, bikes, and parking space—has the potential to emerge as the most practical solution to meet a city's urban transportation needs without unduly adding to the parking pressures. It can help cities maximise the use of public spaces and symbiotically aid ride hailing firms to generate revenue, and consequently employment.

Yet, it remains a concept well resonated but seldom seeded in our policy initiatives on the ground. Shared mobility must be principally enabled as a commercial choice rather than a regulatory one.

On its part, the Central Government has expressed a larger intent of promoting shared mobility. The enabling provisions of the 'Cab Aggregators Guidelines' of the Ministry of Road Transport allow for bikes, scooters, motorcycles, three wheelers, and cars to be on a single tech platform to be used throughout the day by several people for different trips.

However, hailables do not necessarily get incubated into a single aggregators' license issued by the state government. This is due to narrow interpretations driven by local political imperatives. Only a few states have shown the progressive intent to issue a single licence to aggregate 'Bike Taxis, Autorickshaws and Cabs'. Most, on the other hand, have not adopted this universal interpretation but instead choose to promote a multiple licensing regime, almost reminiscent of the pre-1991 license era.

This selective interpretation leads to suboptimal regulations. For instance, the 'Bike Taxis', which are extremely popular in Goa do not find an expression in the regulations of some of the large congested cities, despite their growing popularity despite being quick and light and best suited to avoid traffic snarls.

A larger auto or cab gets thus deployed for a single passenger leading to a bigger than necessary carbon footprint. The other aspect of alleviating parking pressure and the attendant congestion and pollution lies in the larger outlook of States towards land required to park vehicles. Most cities are still trying to fulfill the insa-



CARS OR TWO-WHEELERS ACCOUNT FOR 85 PER CENT OF PARKING SPACE USAGE BUT PROVIDE FOR ONLY 4-5 PER CENT OF TRAVEL DEMAND. IN CONTRAST, CABS ACCOUNT FOR 4-5 PER CENT OF PARKING AND ON AN AVERAGE CARRY 15-20 TIMES MORE PASSENGERS THAN A PRIVATE CAR



table demand for parking, using up large tracts of the scarce land, even as real estate development has gone vertical.

Lessons from global experience are instructive. Globally, the governing principles of parking policy are changing. Instead of promoting unlimited supply of parking, parking demand is sought to be reduced by discouraging personal vehicle usage in congested areas. Such a move towards shared mobility is being encouraged in cities like Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, Portland, etc., where fiscal disincentives have been put in place on use of personal vehicles, making public transport or a commercial hire a more lucrative financial choice. This frees up street spaces and parking lots, converting them into cycle lanes and recreational areas.

Since India faces similar challenges, it is only natural that India's response should also resonate with action taken across the globe. According to a study by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a car in India on an average is parked for over 95 per cent of the time and is driven for less than five per cent of its life. The survey concluded that on an average, a car spends 8,360 hours parked and is only driven for 400 hours in a year.

Cars or two-wheelers account for 85 per cent of parking space usage but provide for only 4-5 per cent of travel demand. In contrast, cabs account for 4-5 per cent of parking and on an average carry 15-20 times more passengers than a private car.

The study also highlighted the vast land usage committed to this

ever-rising parking demand in urban areas. It estimated that the annual additional demand for parking spaces can be equivalent to as much as 471 football fields in Delhi, 100 in Chennai, 58 in Chandigarh, and 179 in Gurgaon.

The Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA), has gone on record to state that provisions of parking for personal vehicles cannot be considered a matter of public good. Land is a limited resource, so there is a limit to the additional parking spaces that can be created in a city. Decades of experience in India and across the world bear testimony to the fact that the demand for parking is insatiable. New mobility services and established mass transit must complement each other to build systems that serve consumers regardless of where they live within the cities or their circumstance.

Already, for many of the millennials and Gen Z in India, the car has gone from being seen as a property asset to becoming a service that young people pay for only when they need it. It is expected that by the end of the decade, more apps, shared services, and electrification will significantly expand mobility's scope and modes. New mobility services have the potential to carve out a meaningful role in future mobility for themselves. These are cues for policymakers to get more actively involved in envisioning these new services in the urban transportation system. One of the most powerful outcomes of shared mobility is the impact on the environment. The ability of states to garner revenues to com-

bat the environment lies in innovative regulations. A commercial vehicle contributes substantially higher taxes, tolls and GST—a part of which needs to be channelised right to get this segment to grow. Despite the Green fund subsidies for manufacture of EVs through the FAME schemes, the current sales of electric vehicles (EV) is less than five per cent of the total vehicle sales against an ambitious target of a complete switch over for all new vehicles by 2030.


Due to a higher initial capital cost, a loan for purchasing an EV entails higher EMIs than its fossil fuelled equivalent, offsetting some of the advantage of the lower running cost. A targeted interest subvention scheme for purchase of EVs by the marginal earners of commercial vehicles would create excellent self-employment opportunities. Further, Priority Sector Lending (PSL) for green mobility can be expanded to the last mile to cover purchase loans, especially for women drivers which would enable more women to earn their livelihood with complete flexibility in working hours.

The tech platforms could also provide enhanced safety for women riders by mapping them to women drivers as a preference. The possibilities to convert this into an opportunity are endless.

However, state governments must be exhorted to bring out the attendant rules and regulations to enable the tech platforms to aggregate all vehicles without an exception—through a single licence. The road to success need not be lined with many tempting parking spaces.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

ALLOWING NOMINATED COUNCILLORS TO VOTE (IN THE MAYORAL ELECTION) IS ILLEGAL AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL. THIS IS OPEN HOOLIGANISM.  
— DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER  
MANISH SISODIA



IF THE AAP DECIDES TO MOVE COURT, IT SHOULD FIRST GIVE A COMMITMENT TO ABIDE BY THE COURT'S DECISION.  
— DELHI BJP SPOKESPERSON  
PRAVEEN SHANKAR KAPOOR

Mother tongue is a medium for higher studies

The disadvantaged sections will gain from the adoption of mother tongue in higher education institutes

The Budget is a carefully crafted document aiming to cultivate voters of nine states going to polls this year with largess showered on agriculture and infrastructure projects. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is right in believing that the voter wants the glitz of infra in every field. It is a politically paying proposition.

Mother tongue is the ideal medium for expressing one's thoughts and feelings because language is such a potent tool. It is the language that a child picks up without his or her conscious effort while interacting with members of his or her own social group.

From the very first years of school, UNESCO has been setting the example and promoting multilingual educa-



(The author is Founder, Top Parent)

tion based on the mother tongue. According to research, mother tongue education is essential for inclusivity and high-quality learning. It also enhances learning outcomes and academic achievement. Most importantly, mother tongue-based multilingual education gives all students the ability to participate fully in the society. Moreover, in India, the promotion of Indian languages in higher education is in sync with one of the focal points of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. About 95 per cent of students, who receive primary education in their mother tongue, face difficulty during their Higher education and should not be left out in their pursuit of higher studies.

NEP provides for higher education institutions and programmes in higher education to use the mother tongue or local language as a medium of instruction, besides offering programs bilingually. According to research, having a strong mother tongue foundation leads to a much better understanding of the curriculum as well as a more positive attitude toward school. It simultaneously fosters a whole host of other essential skills, such as critical thinking and literacy skills. Thus, it is critical that children keep their first language when they start school in a different language, as it also equips children with the skills they need to learn additional languages, allowing them to transfer their understanding of the

structure of language to several new languages.

Moreover, research by Yared Seid showed that when children were taught in their primary schools with their mother tongue as the medium of instruction, it did improve their education outcome.

It also enhances the attributes of learning for students such as emotional development, besides having a very powerful impact on the formation of the individual. Mother language has such an important role in framing one's thinking, emotions, and spiritual world, because the most important stage of one's life, childhood, is spent in its imprints.

This is especially relevant for students who are first-generation learners (the first ones

in their entire generation to go to school and receive an education) or the ones coming from rural areas, who may feel intimidated by unfamiliar concepts in an alien language.

In terms of education, the mother tongue, home language, or first language refers to the language that a child uses to communicate with others, interact with the outside world, and make sense of their surroundings.

There is an impending challenge to ensuring the availability of 'Quality Material in Regional Languages' such as textbooks and scholarly literature. Along with availability, ensuring quality control of the translations has become pivotal. Attracting and retaining quality teachers who are willing and able to teach in region-

al languages is a challenge. Language diversity is important for the balance of cultures, whereas focusing on one language can restrict exposure to different places and cultures due to language barriers. We may lose our advantage of being multilingual, for which ensuring a balance of languages is important. Moreover, a strict focus on regional languages can slow down the capacity of competing at global levels of education. Delivering technical courses in regional languages may prevent students from competing in global labor and education markets, where fluency in English yields a distinct edge. It is important to create a strong and successful bilingual/multilingual programme in the early years of

schooling in a multilingual nation like India. The goal of teaching English in the early years should be to achieve basic conversational ability. However, when using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, the accessibility barrier is removed because it accepts prospective students and their parents.

For multilingual children, there isn't a single model that fits all of their learning needs and contexts. Each school and community should determine what works best for them in terms of multilingual and mother tongue education. However, in general, the educational benefits that can be predicted are larger the longer a child can learn in and through his or her native languages.



# Russia hits more civilian targets amid doubts over offensive

AP ■ KYIV, UKRAINE

Russian shelling damaged a hospital and apartment buildings in Ukraine, local officials said Tuesday, while military analysts expressed skepticism about the potential impact of what Kyiv says is a brewing Moscow offensive around the anniversary of its invasion.

The shelling in the north-eastern town of Vovchansk caused multiple fires late Monday, including at its two-story municipal hospital, the regional State Emergency Service said in an online statement. Emergency crews evacuated eight civilians from the site before putting out the blaze, which caused no casualties, authorities said.

Vovchansk is in the Kharkiv region, which was occupied by Russia after its full-scale invasion began on Feb. 24 and subsequently retaken by Ukraine during a



late summer counteroffensive.

The anticipated Russian push may seek to recapture territory Moscow lost in that counteroffensive. Battlefield setbacks in Ukraine have embarrassed the Kremlin, and Russian President Vladimir Putin is keen to cement public support for the war. Ukrainian officials say they

expect Russian forces to make a new drive in eastern and southern Ukraine, as the Kremlin strives to secure territory it illegally annexed in late September and where it claims its rule is welcomed.

Some Western military analysts were skeptical, however, of Russia's ability to mount a large new offensive in

coming weeks, particularly in time for the Feb. 24 anniversary, that might alter the course of the war. Ukraine and Russia are both still training their new troops and amassing weapons. The U.K. Ministry of Defense said in an assessment Tuesday that Russia is "requiring undermanned, inexperienced units to achieve unrealistic objectives

due to political and professional pressure."

"Russian leaders will likely continue to demand sweeping advances," it added. "It remains unlikely that Russia can build up the forces needed to substantially affect the outcome of the war within the coming weeks."

Michael Kofman, an American military analyst and director of Russia Studies at the CAN research organization in Arlington, Virginia, tweeted on Monday it was unclear how big an offensive Russia is able to mount.

He added, "but I suspect it may prove underwhelming, focused largely on the Donbas."

Michael Clarke, visiting professor of war studies at King's College London, said he would be "amazed, I mean, truly amazed, if (the Russians) are in any shape to launch a strategic offensive on the 24th."

# Russian court upholds shutting top independent newspaper

AP ■ MOSCOW

A court in Moscow on Tuesday upheld an earlier verdict to revoke the license of a top independent newspaper that has been critical of the Kremlin for years, part of the authorities' relentless crackdown on dissent.

The ruling by the Moscow City Court against Novaya Gazeta, which was Russia's most renowned independent newspaper until the authorities ordered it shut last year, comes as Russia's grinding military campaign in Ukraine approaches its one-year mark.

The court rejected Novaya Gazeta's appeal against September's ruling by a district court in Moscow that approved a petition by Russia's media regulator to revoke Novaya Gazeta's license.

The regulator accused the newspaper of failing to submit its newsroom charter to authorities on time, the claim that Novaya Gazeta rejected as a cover for what it described as the authorities' effort to muzzle an



independent voice.

Dmitry Muratov, Nobel Peace Prize-winning editor-in-chief of the newspaper, denounced Tuesday's ruling, saying that it "serves a bunch of people who want to leave the nation facing only propaganda."

Days after Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine on February 24, the Kremlin-controlled parliament approved legislation that outlawed alleged disparaging of the Russian military or the spread of "false information" about the country's military campaign in Ukraine.

Dozens of Russian independent media outlets were banned as a result, while others announced that they were halting any reporting related to Ukraine.

Novaya Gazeta announced March 28 that it was suspending its operations for the duration of what the Kremlin called the "special military operation" in Ukraine. But Novaya Gazeta's staff who moved abroad launched a new project, Novaya Gazeta Europe, that has been strongly critical of the military campaign in Russia's ex-Soviet neighbour.

# European Parliament planning for possible Zelenskyy visit in days

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union's legislature was preparing plans Monday to host Volodymyr Zelenskyy should the Ukraine president decide to come to Brussels to attend an EU summit later this week.

Two sources in the parliament, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said such plans are only meant to prepare the legislature to host Zelenskyy if security conditions permit him to attend Thursday's meeting.

"When he would come, we would be ready," said one of the sources, stressing that because of security concerns any decision could only come at the last moment. EU leaders from 27-nation bloc will be gathering for Thursday's summit in Brussels, enabling Zelenskyy to meet all major leaders of the bloc in one day. Zelenskyy has often addressed



EU summits only through video calls from Ukraine. Zelenskyy has long had an open invitation to come to Brussels if he chose to.

It remains unclear whether Zelenskyy would be able to travel as Russian forces are keeping Ukrainian troops tied down with attacks in the eastern Donbas region amid concern that of a new Russian offensive could be in the offing.

EU Council President Charles Michel and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited Kyiv last Friday where they told Zelenskyy he had the bloc's unrelenting support in Ukraine's fight against Russia.

# Paris mayor: No Russian team to be invited at 2024 Games if war continues

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo says there should be no Russian delegation allowed at the Paris Olympics next year if Moscow continues its war against Ukraine.

Hidalgo previously said Russian competitors could take part under a neutral flag but she backpedaled on Tuesday in an interview with French media France Info.

Acknowledging that a final decision belongs to the International Olympic Committee, Hidalgo said she wishes Russian athletes will be banned "as long as there is this war, this Russian aggression on Ukraine."

"It is not possible to parade as if nothing had happened, to have a delegation that comes to Paris while the bombs continue to rain down on Ukraine," Hidalgo's comments came after Ukraine's sports minister last week renewed a threat to boycott the games if Russia and

Belarus are allowed to compete and said Kyiv would lobby others to join.

No nation has so far declared it will boycott the 2024 Summer Games. But Ukraine won support from Poland, the Baltic nations and Denmark, who pushed back against an IOC plan to allow delegations from Russia and ally Belarus to compete in Paris as "neutral athletes" without flags or anthems.

Hidalgo said she would find it "totally indecent" if Russian athletes competed in the French capital under those terms. But she left the door open for Russian dissidents who don't support President Vladimir Putin's actions to parade in Paris "under a refugee banner."

Russia has cautiously welcomed the IOC's decision to give it a path to the Olympics but demands it drop a condition that would leave out those athletes deemed to be "actively supporting war in Ukraine."

# Russian, Iraqi FM's discuss unpaid dues to companies



**Baghdad:** Visiting Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held meetings with top Iraqi leaders in Baghdad to discuss bilateral ties and unpaid arrears to Russian energy companies in Iraq due to US sanctions over Moscow's ongoing invasion of Kiev

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said in a joint press conference with Lavrov that the two sides "discussed how to deal with the dues of Russian companies operating in Iraq, and we will discuss this issue during our visit to Washington on Wednesday", reports Xinhua news agency

"The sanctions should not be imposed on Iraq because its cooperation with Russian companies continues," Hussein told the press conference. IANS

# Myanmar, Russia sign pact on developing nuclear power

AP ■ BANGKOK

Myanmar's military-led government, working with Russia's state atomic energy company, has inaugurated a nuclear power information center as a step toward developing atomic power to fill energy shortages in the strife-torn Southeast Asian nation.

Myanmar state media reported Tuesday that the head of the military government, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, met with Alexey Evgenievich Likhachev, director general of the Russian State Atomic Energy Corp., or Rosatom.

Officials from the two sides met at the newly opened Nuclear Technology Information Center in Myanmar's largest city, Yangon, on Monday, the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper said.

Myanmar hopes to build and operate a reactor under a preliminary agreement between Myanmar and Rosatom that was signed in 2015, the newspaper said. The two sides signed memoran-

dums of understanding in Moscow in July on nuclear energy, training and promotion of public understanding of atomic power.

"Thanks to the cooperation of Rosatom, Myanmar will have to enhance the human resources related to the construction and running of a Small Modular Reactor in Myanmar and to produce qualified experts for respective sectors," the newspaper quoted Min Aung Hlaing as saying.

"Both sides frankly exchanged views on the effective use of nuclear energy in health and agricultural sectors including electricity production and further cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy," the newspaper said.

The development is likely to ignite concerns that Myanmar's military would like to develop a nuclear weapons capability. There were suspicions a decade ago that North Korea was supplying nuclear arms technology to Myanmar, but there was no definitive evidence.

# Russia pledges military support to Mali during Lavrov visit

AP ■ BAMAKO (MALI)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov pledged military support to Mali during his first visit to the West African nation Tuesday and dismissed criticism of Moscow's growing influence on the continent.

Russia has delivered "very large supplies of aviation equipment" to Mali over the past few months which has "significantly increased" the capability of local forces to fight extremists, Lavrov told journalists.

"We will now be planning additional steps in the field of education through military higher educational institutions and in the field of supplies of weapons and military equipment," Lavrov said, refusing to go into specifics.

Lavrov's trip to Bamako, Mali's capital, comes as Western countries express their concerns about alleged human rights abuses committed by Russian mercenaries working for the private military contractor Wagner Group.

The Russian foreign minister made no mention of Wagner by name during a press conference, but criticised unnamed Western powers of "neo-colonial approaches and double standards."

# UN chief concerns world is heading toward a wider war

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS



The United Nations chief warned ON Monday that the world is facing a convergence of challenges "unlike any in our lifetimes" and expressed fear of a wider war as the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine approaches.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said experts who surveyed the state of the world in 2023 set the Doomsday Clock at 90 seconds to midnight - the closest ever to "total global catastrophe."

He pointed to the war in Ukraine, "runaway climate catastrophe, rising nuclear threats," the widening gulf between the world's haves and have-nots, and the "epic geopolitical divisions" undermining "global solidarity and trust". In

a wide-ranging address Guterres urged the General Assembly's 193 member nations to change their mindset on decision-making from near-term thinking, which he called "irresponsible" and "immoral," to looking "at what will happen to all of us tomorrow - and act."

He said this year's 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should serve as a reminder that the foundation of the inalienable rights of all people is "freedom, justice and peace."

Guterres said the transformation needed today must start with peace, beginning in Ukraine - where unfortunately, he said, peace prospects "keep diminishing" and "the chances of further escalation and bloodshed keep growing."

"I fear the world is not sleepwalking into a wider war. It is doing so with its eyes wide open," he said. The world must work harder for peace, Guterres said, not only in Ukraine but in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict "where the two-state solution is growing more distant by the day," in Afghanistan where the rights of women and girls "are being trampled and deadly terrorist attacks continue" and in Africa's Sahel region where security is deteriorating "at an alarming rate".

SUPERIOR FINLEASE LIMITED									
CIN : L74899DL1994PLC061995									
Regd. Off: NS-92, Khasra No-33/21, Ranaji Enclave, Najafgarh, Near Arjun Park Bus Stand, New Delhi-110043									
Email id : superiorfinlease@gmail.com; Website : www.superiorfinlease.com									
Extract of Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and Nine Month ended 31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2022									
Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended			Nine Month ended			Year ended	
		31/12/2022	30/09/2022	31/12/2021	31/12/2022	30/09/2022	31/12/2021	31/03/2022	31/03/2022
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited
1	Total Income from operations	36.54	51.51	25.85	138.22	75.12	140.30		
2	Net Profit for the period (Before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	2.17	25.52	1.46	39.98	38.13	25.40		
3	Net Profit for the period Before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	2.17	25.52	1.46	39.98	38.13	25.40		
4	Net Profit for the period After Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	2.17	25.52	1.46	39.98	38.13	18.80		
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit) for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax)	2.17	25.52	1.46	39.98	38.13	18.80		
6	Equity Share Capital	300.10	300.10	300.10	300.10	300.10	300.10		
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet as shown in the previous year	3.31	3.31	3.31	3.31	3.31	3.31		
8	Earning Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) (a) Basic (in Rs.) (b)Diluted (in Rs.)	0.01	0.09	-	0.13	0.13	0.06		
Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly and Nine Months ended Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Results are available on the Stock Exchange Website i.e. www.msei.in and www.bseindia.com and Company's website i.e. www.superiorfinlease.com.									
For Superior Finlease Limited Sd/- (RAJNEESH KUMAR) Director DIN: 02463693									
Date : 06.02.2023 Place : New Delhi									

JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED									
CIN: L74899DL1994PLC059252									
Regd. Office: 110, Bahar Road, New Delhi 110001									
EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31.12.2022									
Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended			Nine Months Ended			Year Ended	
		31.12.2022	30.09.2022	31.12.2021	31.12.2022	30.09.2022	31.12.2021	31.03.2022	31.03.2022
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	-	-	-0.45	-	-	-0.45	19.92	
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#)	-2.02	-3.19	-3.48	-10.43	-11.48	8.97		
3	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#)	-2.02	-3.19	-3.48	-10.43	-11.48	8.97		
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#)	-1.68	-10.68	-4.31	-8.97	-14.4	19.47		
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)	-9.08	1.4	-0.52	-3.47	5.96	40.1		
6	Equity Share capital	300.89	300.89	300.89	300.89	300.89	300.89		
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year	486.55	495.63	455.87	486.55	455.87	490.01		
8	Earning per Share (face Value of Rs. 10/- each)(not annualised)								
1. Basic		-0.06	-0.03	-0.14	-0.03	-0.48	0.65		
2. Diluted		-0.06	-0.03	-0.14	-0.03	-0.48	0.65		
NOTE : 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Annual financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/Annual financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange website www.bseindia.com . The same is also available on the Company's website www.jilt.co.in. 2. The above results duly reviewed by the Audit Committee, were approved by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 07.02.2023.									
For Jindal Leasefin Limited Sd/- (SURENDER KUMAR JINDAL) Managing Director									
Date : 07.02.2023 Place : New Delhi									

HSBC	
POSSESSION NOTICE	
(For immovable property)	
(Under Rule 8 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)	
Whereas the undersigned being the authorized officer of The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation is a Banking Company having it's office at 25 Barakhamba Road New Delhi and branch office at K-14-18, Sector 18 NOIDA U. P under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002), and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices dated <b>31.10.2017</b> under Section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the borrower Mr. Mahmood Alam Khan to repay the amount mentioned in the said notices being Rs.1,59,91,314 (Rupees One Crore Fifty Nine Lakh Ninety One Thousand Three Hundred Fourteen Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notices.	
The borrower mentioned herein above having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower mentioned hereinabove and to the public in general that undersigned has taken physical possession of the property described herein below with the help of Court Receiver i.e., Naib Tehsildar, Badshahpur, Gurgaon appointed by Ld. District Magistrate, District Gurgaon, Haryana vide order dated 02.07.2019 amended on 23.11.2022, in exercise of powers conferred on me under sub section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with the Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this the 2nd day of February the year 2023.	
The borrowers mentioned hereinabove in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the said property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the Charge of The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited for an amount of <b>Rs.2,28,63,029.05 (Rupees Two Crore Twenty Eight Lakh Sixty Three Thousand Twenty Nine and Paise Five Only)</b> due as on 24.06.2022 and interest thereon.	
The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY	
<b>"Residential Apartment No. 1202, 12th Floor, Tower 14 having super area 2562 square feet alongwith the undivided and impartible pro-rata share only in the land underneath of the said building situated in "Orchid Petals" Sohna Road, Sector-49, Behind Omaxe Mall Gurgaon (Haryana)"</b>	
Rohit Dutt Tyagi Authorized Officer (The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited)	
Dated: 2nd February 2023	



कार्यालय नगर निगम हल्द्वानी – काठगोदाम

नैनीताल रोड, हल्द्वानी पिन कोड – 263139 टोल फ्री नं०: 8882610000

ई-मेल: haldwaninagarnigam@gmail.com दूरभाष: 05946-220035, www.nagarnigamhaldwani.in



नगर निगम हल्द्वानी

पत्रांक : 2797 / 2022-23

ई-निविदा सूचना

दिनांक : 07 / 02 / 2023

नगर निगम हल्द्वानी-काठगोदाम क्षेत्रांतर्गत निर्माण कार्यों हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है, निविदा के सम्बन्ध में समस्त शर्तें एवं सूचनाएँ <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> पर दिनांक 09-02-2023 को अपराह्न 2.00 बजे से दिनांक 22-02-2023 को अपराह्न 2.00 बजे तक उपलब्ध रहेंगी।

क्र.सं.	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत (रु० लाख में)	कार्य की जमानत राशि (रु० लाख में)	निविदा फार्म का मूल्य	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	निविदा की वैधता
1	एफ0टी0आई0 के समीप रामपुर रोड से बरेली रोड लिंक मार्ग पर पाकिंग के निर्माण का कार्य।	98.93	1.98	4000+18% G.S.T.	06 माह	45 दिन
2	नैनीताल रोड शीशमहल स्थित रामलीला ग्राउण्ड में सामुदायिक भवन का पुर्ननिर्माण का कार्य।	163.41	3.27	5000+18% G.S.T.	02 माह	45 दिन
3	वार्ड नं० 27 गोंधीनगर में सामुदायिक भवन का पुर्ननिर्माण का कार्य।	45.92	0.92	3000+18% G.S.T.	06 माह	45 दिन
4	वार्ड नं० 60 गौजाजाली लाईब्रेरी / सामुदायिक भवन का निर्माण कार्य।	43.72	0.80	2500+18% G.S.T.	06 माह	45 दिन
5	नैनीताल रोड से नवावी रोड को जोड़ने वाले हिट्डीन वाली रोड का मरम्मत / पुर्ननिर्माण का कार्य।	39.29	0.79	2500+18% G.S.T.	06 माह	45 दिन

(डा. जोगेन्द्र सिंह रौतेला)

महापौर, नगर निगम हल्द्वानी

(पंकज कुमार उपाध्याय)

नगर आयुक्त, नगर निगम हल्द्वानी



# Will safeguard interests over balloon shutdown: China

AP ■ BEIJING

China said Tuesday it will “resolutely safeguard its legitimate rights and interests” over the shooting down of a suspected Chinese spy balloon by the United States, as relations between the two countries deteriorate further.

The balloon prompted U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to cancel a highly-anticipated visit to Beijing this week that had offered slight hopes for an improvement in relations.

China claims it was a civilian balloon used for meteorological research but has refused to say to which government department or company it belongs.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning on Tuesday reiterated that the “unmanned airship” posed no threat and entered U.S. airspace accidentally.

Mao again criticised the U.S. For overreacting rather than adopting a “calm, professional” manner, and for using force in bringing the balloon down Saturday in the Atlantic Ocean just off the U.S. Coast.

Asked if China wanted the



debris returned, she only reasserted that the balloon “belongs to China.”

“The balloon does not belong to the U.S. The Chinese government will continue to resolutely safeguard its legitimate rights and interests,” Mao said at a daily briefing without giving further details.

Beijing’s attitude has hardened considerably following a surprisingly mild initial response on Friday, in which it described the balloon’s presence as an accident and expressed “regret” for the balloon having entered the

U.S.

Subsequent statements have grown firmer, in the same tone used to confront the U.S. over issues from Taiwan to trade, technology restrictions and China’s claim to the South China Sea.

China says it lodged a formal complaint with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, accusing Washington of having “obviously overreacted and seriously violated the spirit of international law and international practice.”

Recent developments have laid bare the extremely fragile

nature of what many had hoped could be a manageable economic, political and military rivalry.

U.S.-China tensions have stirred deep concern in Washington and among many of its allies.

They worry that outright conflict could have a strong negative impact on the global economy, especially since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last year, on which China has largely sided with Moscow.

Balloons either suspected of or confirmed to be Chinese have been spotted over countries from Japan to Costa Rica.

Taiwanese media have reported that mysterious white balloons had been spotted over the island at least three times in the past two years.

That’s especially concerning because China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary and routinely sends warships and military aircraft into the island’s air defence identification zone and across the middle line of the Taiwan Strait dividing the sides.

# S Korea responsible for Vietnam War massacre: Court



AP ■ SEOUL (SOUTH KOREA)

A South Korean court on Tuesday ordered the government to pay 30 million won (USD 24,000) to a Vietnamese woman who survived a gunshot wound but lost several relatives when South Korean marines rampaged through her village during the Vietnam War in 1968.

In awarding the compensation to 62-year-old Nguyen Thi Thanh, the Seoul Central District Court dismissed the government’s argument that it was unclear whether South Korean troops were responsible for the slaughter in the village of Phong Nhi.

The court also rejected the government’s argument that civilian killings were unavoidable as the Korean troops were dealing with Viet Cong guerrillas who often blended with locals, according to Thanh’s lawyer, Lim Jae-sung.

The ruling marks the first time a South Korean court found the country’s government responsible for mass

killings of Vietnamese civilians during the war, and could potentially open the way for similar lawsuits.

Then ruled by anti-communist military leaders, South Korea sent more than 320,000 troops to Vietnam, the largest foreign contingent fighting alongside US troops.

South Korea’s Justice Ministry didn’t immediately respond to a query whether the government will appeal.

According to US military documents and survivors, more than 70 people were killed and around 20 others injured after South Korean marines allegedly fired at unarmed civilians during search operations at Phong Nhi and the nearby village of Phong Nhut in February 1968.

Thanh, then 7 years old, was treated for gunshot wounds in her stomach while five of her family members died, including her mother, sister and brother. She filed the lawsuit against the South Korean government in 2020 and testified at the Seoul court last August.

The trial also included the testimonies of other Vietnamese villagers and South Korean war veteran Ryu Jin-seong, a member of the marine unit linked to the attacks in Phong Nhi and Phong Nhut. He provided a first-hand account of how the Korean soldiers shot at unarmed civilians, many of them children and women.

# Australian, NZ leaders’ talk focuses on China



AP ■ CANBERRA (AUSTRALIA)

Australian and New Zealand prime ministers met Tuesday to talk about China’s importance to their national economies, resolving to voice their disagreements with their most important trading partner that is becoming more assertive in their region.

New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins made Australia the destination of his first overseas trip as his government’s leader since his predecessor Jacinda Ardern announced her surprise resignation in January.

The visit to Australia’s Parliament House comes two weeks after Hipkins assumed office on Jan. 25. He used a joint press conference with his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese to give an assurance that he was keeping New Zealand’s foreign policy direction.

“Our foreign policy position hasn’t changed just because there’s a change of prime minister,” Hipkins said. “The government foreign policy is the same as it was under Prime Minister Ardern.”

A reporter put to Hipkins that Ardern had been reluctant to stand up against “bad behaviour by China” and asked if he was concerned about Chinese

coercion in the South Pacific.

“China is an incredibly important partner for New Zealand, a very important trading partner, and a partner in other areas as well,” Hipkins replied. “That doesn’t mean there aren’t going to be areas where we disagree from time to time, and we’ll continue to voice our disagreements with China when that happens and we’ll always continue to strive to strengthen that ongoing relationship.”

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Vikas Sharma S/o Om Prakash Sharma who is the owner of the subject property PLOT No. 15A, AREA MEASURING 570.20 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT VILLAGE/SECTION, NAMOLI, KISAN ABADI, GREATER NOIDA, DISTRICT GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, (UP); from Mr. Vikas Sharma S/o Om Prakash Sharma who is the owner of the subject property by virtue of and the bo Mr. Vikas Sharma intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. That the Original Lease Deed-01.03.2019- Executed by Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority in favour of Mr. Gurbachan Singh Singh in respect of Plot No. 15-A, area measuring 570.20 Sq. Mtrs., duly registered vide Document No.7774, Book No.1, Volume No. 31611, on pages 1-42, dated 01.03.2019, SRO Greater Noida, Gautam Buddh Nagar, have been Lost and not available and an FIR has lodged on dated 03.02.2023 with LR No:112459/2023 for loss of document. If any Person having any type of claim/right/title/interest over the said property may inform in writing at the address mentioned below, about his objections within 3 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, Charge, disputes etc.

Chetan Sharma Advocate  
G-37, Jangpura Extn. Ground Floor Delhi

# Report: 146 NYC police committed misconduct in 2020 protests

AP ■ NEW YORK

Nearly 150 New York City police officers committed misconduct, including using excessive force, while responding to the 2020 protests over the killing of George Floyd, according to a report released Monday by a civilian review board.

The city’s Civilian Complaint Review Board, or CCRB, also found that many officers disciplined by the police department received punishment that was less than the panel recommended, and in some cases officers found to have committed misconduct were not disciplined at all.

Investigations into more than 600 complaints about police conduct during the protests had to be closed because officers could not be identified.

In many cases that was because police purposely wore mourning bands over their badges or refused to provide their names, or because the department failed to track where officers were deployed, the 590-page report says.

The board received 321 complaints during the protests that were determined to be within its jurisdiction and 226 were investigated.

The document describes, for example, police actions during one protest in Brooklyn on May 30, 2020, that drew numerous complaints.

An officer drove a police vehicle into the crowd and knocked protesters to the ground. Another officer pulled down a demonstrator’s coronavirus-protecting mask and pepper sprayed him in the face. On the Brooklyn Bridge that day, officers tackled protesters and hit them in the head with batons, the report says.

# Sub-Saharan Africa new epicentre of Islamic extremism: UN

AP ■ NAIROBI (KENYA)

The new global epicentre of violent Islamic extremism is sub-Saharan Africa where people are increasingly joining because of economic factors and less for religious ones, says a new report by the UN’s international development agency.

A significant increase of 92 per cent of new recruits to extremist groups are joining for better livelihoods compared to the motivations of those interviewed in a previous report released in 2017, according to the UNDP report released on Tuesday.

Many Africans’ lives have been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation, and climate change,



said the report.

There has been a 57 per cent decrease in the number of people joining extremist groups for religious reasons, it said.

Nearly 2,200 people were interviewed for the report in eight African countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan. More than 1,000 inter-

# 2 pilots walk away from Boeing 737 tanker crash in Australia

AP ■ PERTH



Two pilots walked away with minor injuries after a Boeing 737 jet, converted for firefighting, crashed in Australia, officials said Tuesday. The twin-engine tanker owned by Canadian-based Coulson Aviation crashed in Fitzgerald River National Park in southern Western Australia state while fighting wildfires late Monday.

Both pilots received only minor injuries even though the plane was engulfed in flames and smoke upon impact, Emergency Services Minister Stephen Dawson said.

“It’s nothing short of miraculous that they were able to walk away from that plane,” Dawson told reporters. The men, believed to be Canadian citizens,

were released from a hospital on Tuesday, Australian Associated Press reported.

Three American aviators died when a C-130 Hercules tanker, a four-propeller plane also owned by Coulson Aviation, crashed in the east coast state of New South Wales while fighting wildfires in January 2020.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau, the nation’s crash investigator, said Monday’s crash was the first serious accident involving a Boeing 737 in Australia.

**Municipal Corporation Aurangabad (M.H.) (Mechanical Section)**

<b>Tel No. :</b> (0240)233536-40	<b>Add :</b> Aurangabad Municipal Corporation Aurangabad.
<b>Fax No. :</b> (0240)2331213	<b>Executive Engineer (Mechanical)</b>
	<b>Head Office :</b> Town Hall Aurangabad - 431001
	<b>E-Tender (Contact)</b>
	<b>Cell:-</b> 9764999565
	<b>No./AMC/Mech/02/2023</b>
	<b>Date :</b> 03 /02/2023

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Bid Submission End Date
01.	Supply of Bio Mining Machine with Test & Trial -01 No. Capacity : 100 TPH (+/-10%) (Tender Amount: 1,75,00,000/-)	17.02.2023

**Note :** Detail Information available at Website [www.mahatenders.gov.in](http://www.mahatenders.gov.in)

Sd/-

**Executive Engineer (Mech)**

**Municipal Corporation Aurangabad.**

जा.क्र / मन्पा / बा / ०२ / २०२३

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

To be known to all that I, Sheela W/o Shri Rattan Lal, R/O 17/469, DDA Janta Flat, Madangir, New Delhi. 110062 has applied for conversion of DDA Janta Flat No. 17/469, DDA Janta Flat, Madangir, New Delhi. 110062 from Lease Hold to Free Hold in DDA. The Original documents i.e. Demand-cum-Allotment Letter of the above flat has been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch in vide S.O. No. 430/2014, LR No. 112964/2023 Date : 03/02/2023. 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. 931033947 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (LAB) H or Director (H)-1, D Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi

**UJVN Limited**

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani, Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006

Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508

CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

Letter No: 120

**E- Tender Notice**

Date: 06/02/2023

Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil-I), UJVN Limited, Gupta Kashi, Rudraprayag, invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below: -

**Tender No.: 15/EE(Civil-I)/Urgam/2022-23**

**Name of work:** Protection & Repair work at Intake and water conductor system at Urgam SHP (2x1.5 MW) in Distt- Chamoli.

**Estimated Cost:** Rs.33.85 Lakh (Plus GST Extra)

**Date of availability of bid document on website :** 06.02.2023 from 17:00 Hrs onwards

**Last date for submission of bid on website :** 02.03.2023 up to 16:00 Hrs

For full & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal **"http://uktenders.gov.in"**

**Executive Engineer (Civil-I)**

**"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"**

**E AUCTION NOTICE**

**ACCIDENTAL DAMAGED 3,581 KG OF SEAMLESS COPPER TUBES**

Interested Buyers are invited to participate in the e-Auction for the disposal of "Accidental damaged 3,581 Kg of seamless copper tubes" on "Per Kg" Basis. The subject salvage will be sold on "As is Where is", Whatever there is" and "No Complaint" Basis. The subject materials can be inspected at Narsinghpur, Kherki Daula, Gurugram-122004, between **09-02-23 to 10-02-23** between **10 AM to 5 PM** on working days only.

**E-Auction will be held on 13-02-23**

Kindly contact **Mr. Shamsher Singh at 9709709992** for inspection and to obtain the form containing terms & conditions of e-Auction or download from website **<https://www.sealtheideal.co.in/>**.

Auctioneers: Seal The Deal having registered office at Shop No. 148, Pocket C2, Sector 5, Rohini, Delhi - 110085.

**Last date of Submission of form & EMD Demand Draft is 10-02-23**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

No. Duba/cons/434/Mr/2023 (14) Mr. Fitesh Kumar Sharma S/o Ravinder Kumar Sharma A-103, Old No-105-b First Floor New Ashok Nagar, Delhi Pin-110096, Delhi, India. **Present Address :** Ground Floor, Amin Building No. 24, Al Muraqqabat, Dubai And **Miss.Thakshala Deepthi Kumari Darakamkanange** Daughter of Sisil Prasanna Darakanange A/15/C/2/21 Ranoopunagama Housing Scheme, Nittambu, Resident of Sri Lanka **Present Address:** Ground Floor, Amin Building No.24, Al Muraqqabat, Dubai Above Mentioned Indian National and Sri Lankan National are presently residing in The UAE have given notice of intended Marriage Between Them Under The Foreign Marriages Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, He/She should file the same with the Undersigned According to the procedure laid down under the Act / Rules within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice on E-mail: [cons1.duba@mea.gov.in](mailto:cons1.duba@mea.gov.in), cons2.duba@mea.gov.in.

(Bijender Singh) **Marriage Officer** Consulate General of India P.O. Box: 737, Dubai (UAE) Fax No. 0097143970453

**Sd/-**

**New Delhi, Date:07-02-2023**

**Authorised Officer**

**SRF LIMITED**

Regd. Office: The Galleria, DLF Mayur Vihar, Unit No. 236 & 237, 2nd Floor, Mayur Vihar Phase, Noida Link Road, Mayur Vihar Phase I Extn, Delhi-110091

Corporate Office: Block-C, Sector 45, Gurugram, Haryana-122 003

Tel. No (Regd office) : (+91-11) 49482870; Fax : (+91-11) 49482900

E-mail: [cs@srf.com](mailto:cs@srf.com), Website: [www.srf.com](http://www.srf.com); CIN: L18101DL1970PLC005197

**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that Share Certificates pertaining to shares of the Company detailed below have been reported lost and request(s) for issue of duplicate Certificates in lieu thereof have been received by the Company. Shareholder(s)/Claimant(s) shall also be entitled to Bonus Shares in the ratio of (4:1) on these shares from Investor Education & Protection Fund Authority :-

Sl. No.	Folio No.	Name of the Share Holder/ Legal Heir (Claimant)	Cert.-No.	Dist-No. (from)	Dist-No. (to)	Lost Shares
1	S 0006208	SARLA GUPTA	41607	2477176	2477200	25
			145862	5834898	5834909	12
			341473-75	16546864	16546889	26
			490473-75	24566656	24566681	26
			90174217	13090025	13090039	15
2	A 0002891	ANILA SHAMA	49004-5	2675601	2675700	100
			55496	2819467	2819499	33
			95679-80	4096335	4096400	66
3	SRF0030631	JAGDISH B K	90065491-93	8917666	8917765	100
			90189794	14924620	14924669	50
4	SRF0138628	DERSHAN LAL JAIN	458968	23919914	23919963	50
5	P 0001567	PARVEEN ARORA	25131	2009026	2009050	25
			137376	5634507	5634522	16
			976430	18585439	18585446	8
6	B 0003861	BRIJESH KUMAR GUPTA	99065	4185813	4185838	26
			975300	18550171	18550223	53
7	SRF0038304	RAKNA GANGAR	375679-81	17140329	17140351	23
		JAYESH GANGAR (Joint Holder1)	524679- 81	25160121	25160143	23
			90080537	9372930	9372949	20
8	K 0001692	SAVITA SETHI (Claimant)	124831	5245086	5245101	16
		KAUSHALYA KAPUR (Deceased Shareholder)	975872	18568622	18568654	33

Any person having any claim /objection in respect of the above requests should lodge such claim/ objection with the company at its Corporate Office within 15 days of the publication of this notice, failing which the company will consider to give effect to the above requests.

Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with the aforesaid share certificates.

For SRF LIMITED

Sd/-

**RAJAT LAKHANPAL**

Sr. VP (Corporate Compliance) & Company Secretary

Place: Gurugram

Date: 07-02-2023



# Banks' exposure to Adani group 'insufficient': Fitch

'Face limited risk'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian banks' exposure to Adani group is "insufficient in itself" to pose a substantial risk to their credit profiles, Fitch Ratings said on Tuesday.

Adani group has faced stock rout and questions after a US short seller Hindenburg Research came out with a damning report alleging financial and accounting fraud by the ports-to-energy conglomerate. Adani Group has denied all charges and threatened to sue Hindenburg.

"Fitch Ratings believes that Indian banks' exposure to the Adani group is insufficient in itself to present a substantial risk to the banks' standalone credit profiles," the rating agency said in a note.

Ratings of banks remain driven by expectations that the banks would receive extraordinary sovereign support if needed.

Fitch on February 3 stated that the controversy over the



short-seller report had no immediate impact on the ratings of Fitch-rated Adani entities and their securities.

"Even under a hypothetical scenario where the wider Adani group enters distress, exposure for Indian banks should, in itself, be manageable without adverse consequences on the banks' viability ratings," Fitch said. State Bank of India last week stated that its share of the group's loans had fallen to 31 per cent by 2022-end from 55 per cent in 2016.

"We believe loans to all Adani group entities generally account for 0.8-1.2 per cent of total lending for Fitch-rated Indian banks, equivalent to 7-13 per cent of total equity," the

rating agency said.

"Even in a distress scenario, it is unlikely that all of this exposure would be written down, as much of it is tied to performing projects. Loans involving projects still under construction and those at the company level could be more vulnerable. However, even if exposures were fully provisioned for, we do not expect it would affect banks' Viability Ratings, as banks have sufficient headroom at their current rating levels."

Fitch said banks could have some unreported non-funded asset exposure, such as commitments or through holdings of Adani group bonds or equity, particularly as collateral.

# Sensex, Nifty decline on FMCG, steel stocks selling

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower for a second straight day on Tuesday due to selling in FMCG, metal and auto shares ahead of the RBI monetary policy.

The 30-share BSE barometer declined further by 220.86 points or 0.37 per cent to close at 60,286.04, as 22 of its constituents ended in the red. The index opened flat amid mixed global trends. It moved in a range of 60,655.14 to 60,063.49 in the day.

The broader Nifty of the National Stock Exchange fell by 43.10 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 17,721.50, with 31 of its scrips ending in the red. The index touched a high of 17,811.15 and a low of 17,652.55 during the session.

Profit-taking in the FMCG and auto majors was weighing on the sentiment while buying in select heavyweights in banking and financials capped the fall, analysts said.

"Sentiments in the domestic market were hammered by bears that dominated the US market post the release of strong jobs data. Global markets are currently driven by central bank policies and the



surge in bond yields in expectation of more rate actions," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

A recovery was seen in the second half of the day as US futures inched higher as investors await US Fed Chief Jerome Powell's speech, Nair added.

Among Sensex stocks, Tata Steel fell the most by 5.23 per cent after posting weak financial results for the December quarter. The steel maker slipped into the red in the third quarter due to a drop in revenue and higher cost.

ITC, Sun Pharma, Maruti, M&M, Tata Motors, HCL Tech,

Wipro, Infosys, HUL, Bharti Airtel and Reliance were among the major losers.

Banking stocks gained ahead of the RBI monetary policy announcement on Wednesday.

Kotak Bank rose the most by 1.59 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank (1.22 per cent), SBI (0.32 per cent) and HDFC Bank (0.10 per cent).

Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, L&T, SBI, TCS and HDFC Bank also closed higher.

"Participants are closely eyeing the outcome of the RBI meet for cues. However, indications are pointing toward prevailing choppiness to continue until Nifty decisively breaks the range of 17,550-17,900 levels," Ajit Mishra, VP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

Adani group stocks, which have been hammered following the Hindenburg Research report alleging stock manipulation and accounting fraud by the Gautam Adani-led group, ended their decline.

Adani group flagship Adani Enterprises rose by 14.63 per cent after hitting the upper circuit during the day. The stock was the lead gainer among Nifty50 stocks.

# Rupee gains 6 paise to end at 82.70 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 6 paise to close at 82.70 against the US dollar on Tuesday, as a weak American currency against major rivals overseas boosted investor sentiments.

However, muted domestic equities, unabated foreign capital outflows and rising crude prices restricted the rupee's rise, forex dealers said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened strong at 82.68 and touched an intra-day high of 82.62 and a low of 82.80 against the greenback.

It finally settled at 82.70, up 6 paise over its previous close of 82.76.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, slipped 0.08 per cent to 103.54.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 1.69 per cent to \$82.36 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 220.86 points or 0.37 per cent to end at 60,286.04, while the broader NSE Nifty slipped 43.10 points



or 0.24 per cent to 17,721.50.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Monday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,218.14 crore, according to exchange data.

This week, the key trigger for the markets is likely to be the decision of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee on the interest rate that will be announced on Wednesday.

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday said core inflation in India has been declining sequentially, and an elevated 6.25 per cent policy rate limits the need for further rate hikes.

Economists at SBI said they expect the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to hit the pause button on an interest rate hike at its upcoming monetary policy review.

# Moody's says bank exposure to Adani not large to affect credit quality

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Investor Service on Tuesday said banks' exposures to Adani are not large enough to affect their credit quality materially.

"While we estimate that the exposures are larger for public sector banks than for private sector banks, they are smaller than 1 per cent of total loans for most banks," it said.

"Risks for banks can increase if Adani becomes more reliant on bank loans."

However, the group's access to funding from international markets can be curtailed because of heightened risk perception. "Yet the overall quality of Indian banks' corporate loans will be stable," it said.

"Corporates in general have deleveraged in the past. This is reflected in modest growth in their corporate loan books."

# Govt gets 33.44% stake in Vodafone Idea post equity allocation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Debt-ridden telecom operator Vodafone Idea on Tuesday said its board has approved the allotment of equity shares worth Rs 16,133 crore to the government, which post-allocation holds a 33.44 per cent stake in the company.

The shares have been allocated to the government in lieu of conversion of interest dues arising from deferment of adjusted gross revenue and spectrum auction payments, the company said in a regulatory filing.

"...It is hereby informed that the board of directors of the company has, at its meeting held today approved the allotment of 16,133,198,899 equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each at an issue price of Rs 10 per equity share aggregating

to Rs 161,331,848,990 to the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, Government of India," the filing said. The government cleared conversion of Rs 16,133 crore interest dues of debt-ridden Vodafone Idea into equity after receiving a firm commitment from Aditya Birla Group to run the company and bring necessary investment.

"Post the aforesaid allotment the shareholding of the Government of India in the company stands at 33.44 per cent in the expanded paid-up capital base of the company," the filing said.

The paid-up share capital of the company stands increased to Rs 482,520,327,840 comprising of 48,252,032,784 equity shares of the face and paid-up value of Rs. 10/- each.

# Clix Capital aims to double its profit to ₹100 crore in FY'24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NBFC player Clix Capital Services looks to double its profit to ₹100 crore in the next 2023-24 fiscal by focusing on lending to MSMEs and other segments. The post-pandemic period saw massive pent-up demand amongst sectors severely impacted due to Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdowns, such as travel and tourism, education, healthcare and automobiles, the company said in a release.

"Clix Capital diligently utilised the Covid-induced disruption as an opportunity to reassess its business strategy as well as digitalise its core-operating model at scale," it said.

Clix Capital is poised to cross an AUM (Assets under Management) of ₹5,000 crore by the end of this fiscal and aims to surpass ₹9,000 crore by 2024-25, it said.

# Sebi to auction properties of MPS Group firms, 5 others on Mar 3 to recover investors' money

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi on Tuesday said it will auction 22 properties belonging to companies of MPS Group, Tower Infotech and four others on March 3 for a reserve price totalling ₹91 crore in a bid to recover investors' money.

Apart from MPS Group and Tower Infotech, the regulator has put on block properties of Vibgyor Group, Prayag Group, Multipurpose BIOS India Group and Waris Finance International Group.

These companies had raised funds from investors without complying with regulatory norms.

The 22 properties to be auctioned include land parcels, storied buildings, flats and a commercial space, situated across West Bengal, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a notice.

Inviting bids, Sebi said auction of the properties will be



conducted through online mode on March 3 during 11 am to 1 pm.

Of the 22 properties to go under the hammer, 11 belong to MPS Group of companies; 3 each relate to Multipurpose BIOS India Group and Vibgyor Group of companies; two each are of Prayag Group of companies and Tower Infotech Group of firms; and one property of Waris Finance International Group.

Total reserve price of these properties is pegged at ₹91 crore and Quikr Realty has

# Gold jumps ₹128; Silver declines ₹38

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose by ₹128 to ₹57,275 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid firm global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had ended at ₹57,147 per 10 grams.

Silver, however, declined by ₹38 to ₹67,975 per kg.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹57,275 per 10 grams, up ₹128 per 10 grams," said Samuil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities. In the overseas markets, gold was trading higher at \$1,874 per ounce while silver was flat at \$22.42 per ounce.



# Ambuja Cements Dec quarter net profit up 13.2% to ₹487.8 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ambuja Cements, now part of the Adani Group, on Tuesday reported a 13.2 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹487.88 crore for the December quarter of 2022-23.

The company had clocked a net profit of ₹430.97 crore in the year-ago quarter, Ambuja Cements said in a BSE filing.

Its revenue from operations rose 3.69 per cent to ₹7,906.74 crore as compared to ₹7,625.28 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year.

Ambuja Cements' total expenses were at ₹7,278.89 crore, up 6.01 per cent from ₹6,865.61 crore a year ago.

The consolidated results of Ambuja Cements include the financial performance of its step-down firm ACC Ltd, in which it owns around 51 per cent stake.

On a standalone basis, Ambuja Cements reported an increase of 45.95 per cent in its net profit to ₹368.99 crore as against ₹252.81 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Its standalone revenue from operations increased 10.39 per cent to ₹4,128.52 crore, as against ₹3,739.92 crore earlier.

Sales volume on a standalone basis was up 12.33 per cent to 7.7 million tonnes (MT) from 7.2 MT.

This was "supported by an increase in blended cement, better route planning and high-level operational synergies with its subsidiary, ACC. Market leadership strongly maintained across key markets," said an earning statement from Ambuja Cements.

However, on a consolidated basis, its sales volume declined 3.52 per cent to 137 MT in the October-December quarter.

# Kalyan Jewellers India Q3 consolidated PAT rises 10% to ₹148.43 cr

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Kalyan Jewellers India on Tuesday reported a 10.34 per cent growth in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) during the quarter ending December 31, 2022, at ₹148.43 crore.

The jewellery retailer's PAT stood at ₹134.52 crore in the October-December quarter of the previous financial year, Kalyan Jewellers India said in a regulatory filing.

The company recorded a 13.06 per cent growth in consolidated revenue during the quarter under review at ₹3,884.09 crore against ₹3,435.39 crore in the year-ago period.

The India operations recorded EBITDA of ₹276 crore for the quarter, compared to ₹253 crore in the same period a year ago.

The e-commerce division, Candere, recorded a revenue of ₹44 crore for the quarter ver-



sus ₹47 crore a year ago.

Total revenue from operations in the Middle East grew by 24 per cent during the third quarter of FY23 was at ₹641 crore against ₹515 crore in the December quarter of the previous year.

The Middle East region contributed around 16.5 per cent to the overall consolidated revenue of the company.

"We are seeing a robust momentum in revenue and footfalls across all markets largely driven by the ongoing wedding season demand despite a continued spike in gold price," Kalyan Jewellers India Executive Director Ramesh Kalyanaraman said.

# Sebi returns Go Digit General Insurance IPO papers; Co to refile documents in due course

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has returned the preliminary IPO papers of Go Digit General Insurance Ltd, a firm backed by Canada-based Fairfax Group, and now the company is looking to refile the documents with certain updates.

The company had filed the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in August 2022 to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO).

Go Digit's proposed IPO comprises fresh issuance of equity shares worth ₹1,250 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 10.94 crore equity



shares by a promoter and existing shareholders. In the OFS, Go Digit offers to sell 10,94,34,783 equity shares.

According to an update with Sebi on Tuesday, the markets regulator has returned the draft papers on January 30.

In a statement, the insurance company said the DRHP (Draft Red Herring Prospectus) has been returned in terms of Sebi's ICDR (Issuance of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) rules, which exempts rights granted under employee stock option plans to subsist at the time of filing the draft prospectus, but does not similarly exempt employee stock appreciation rights.

The company said it is currently evaluating amendments to its employee stock appreciation rights scheme and will refile its DRHP with Sebi in due course.

Cricketer Virat Kohli and his wife and actor Anushka Sharma are among the investors in the firm.

# Electric passenger vehicles retail sales decline 10.51% in Jan

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Electric passenger vehicles retail sales declined by 10.51 per cent sequentially to 3,346 units in January 2023 over 3,739 vehicles sold in December last year, according to automobiles body FADA.

Tata Motor's electric PV sales were down 17 per cent at 2,426 vehicles in January as against 2,926 units delivered in December 2022.

MG Motor sales volume also dropped 12.55 per cent to 425 units against 486 units sold in the month earlier.

BYD India reported 164 per cent growth in ePV volumes at 132 vehicles in January 2023 as compared to 50 vehicles



retailed in December last year while BMW India sales stood 123 cars against 29 units in December 2022, according to FADA.

Hyundai Motor India ePV sales were recorded at 111 units in the previous month over 91 units retailed in December 2022.

The electric CV sales were recorded 23 per cent lower at 131 units over 170 units in December last year, as per FADA data.

The e-three wheelers sale also dropped 3 per cent sequentially at 32911 vehicles in comparison in January this year from 33949 vehicles in the last month of 2022.

However, the e-two-wheeler volumes stood flat at 64,363 vehicles as against 64,348 units retailed in December 2022, showed the Federation of Automobile Dealers' Association (FADA) data, released on Tuesday.

# BYPL ties up with MCD for 100 EV charging stations in Delhi

New Delhi: BSES is playing a major role in the promotion of the Electric Vehicle (EV) sector in the national capital and driving the EV revolution. In the latest instance, BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) has partnered with the MCD to set-up 100 EV charging stations at its conveniently located parking stations across Delhi. This is expected to give a big-boost to the last mile EV charging infra and will greatly contribute to alleviate user anxiety.



In the first phase, 27 charging-stations have been inaugurated in East Delhi by Addl. Deputy Commissioner-RP Cell, MCD Amit Bhardwaj, & BYPL CEO Amarjeet Singh. Senior officials from BSES, ETO Motors, EVRE and MCD were present on the occasion.



# SPORTS SAVED ME FROM BECOMING INSURGENT, SAYS BOXER DEVI

PTI ■ AMINGAON (ASSAM)

I was influenced by militants to move towards insurgency and transported weapons for them, but sports changed me and motivated me to work for the glory of my country," champion boxer Laishram Sarita Devi said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the ongoing Y20 summit here, Devi recollected the horror of insurgency during its peak in early 90s in her home state Manipur and said only sports saved her from becoming an insurgent.

"I lived in a small village and I used to see the militants everyday when I was 12-13 years. At home, around 50 insurgents visited daily. I used to see their guns and wanted to be like them. I moved towards insurgency," she added. The former world lightweight boxing champion confessed that she used to transport weapons from



one place to another for the insurgents and she got influenced by the underground extremists.

"I dreamt of becoming like them and I loved playing with guns. I had no idea what to do with sports and did not even know that sports could bring name and fame to me as well as

my country. I survived insurgency through sports," she added. Then one day, Devi's brother beat her up for aiming to become an insurgent and that incident changed her life afterwards, the pugilist said.

"I took up sports and then represented India for the first time in 2001 at the Asian Boxing

Championships in Bangkok and won a silver medal. I saw China receiving the gold medal, their National Anthem was played and everyone paid respect to it. That is the moment, when I got emotional," she added.

Devi then determined to bring glory to India by winning the gold, ensuring playing of the

Indian National Anthem at the award ceremony.

"After that, I worked hard and played a number of games from 2001 to 2020 winning a number of medals. I continued to play for my country. Sports changed me. I want to see the same change with the youths of my country," she added.

She advocated making sports compulsory for youths in schools as it has a positive impact on health.

Talking about drug abuse, Devi said, "Nowadays, children are taking drugs and it is a big problem in my state. They can be changed by sports. These children can also bring glory to the nation with the help of sports."

Appealing to sports authorities to motivate the youths to join sports, the boxer pointed out that many young lives have been lost due to the drug menace in Manipur as well as other states of India.

## India's football 'factory' Manipur thrilled at its first date with Blue Tigers



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A tiny state of Manipur in the Northeast India, better known as the 'football factory' of the country, is anxiously waiting to host the senior national team.

On Monday, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh announced that the state for the first time will host the senior India team when the Blue Tigers compete in a Tri-Nation Friendly Football Tournament in Imphal from March 22-26. Kyrgyz Republic and Myanmar are the other teams in fray. As the news trickled in, the state, which has been the supply line for India by producing quality players, is thrilled at the opportunity.

"I was thrilled, happy that at last Manipur is getting something it deserved," said former India footballer Kiren Khongsai, the first player from the state to don India colours way back in 1989.

Since then, Manipur has contributed over 50 players to the Indian men and women senior national teams.

"I was lucky to play for India when I did... It

is an honour and I am glad that I share this honour with many more Manipur players," said Khongsai who has scored one goal in six appearances for India.

Oinam Bembem Devi, one of the game's greatest female players, believes that hosting an international at the Khuman Lampak will inspire more young players to keep their heads down and work hard to earn their stripes.

"I can tell you from personal experience that hosting these sort of prestigious events goes a long way to providing motivation for players. When the Women's Nationals was hosted in Imphal in 1991-92, I was very young, and I remember watching the games, seeing such big players and hoping to emulate them."

"Watching Sunil Chhetri and others in the flesh will be a massive morale booster for today's youngsters who have heard of them, seen them on TV but never otherwise," she added.

The decision is part of the All India Football Federation's Vision 2047 programme to spread the game far and wide.

AIFF executive member, and former India women international Thongam Tababi Devi was keen to add that while the men had the honour of passing through Imphal first, it also sowed hope for the women. "Many girls in the Women's team are from Manipur and many in the past also have been from the state," she said.

"It's good that they are bringing the Men's team here in March. Hopefully after this the women will also get to turn out in front of their home fans, friends and family."

## Ancelotti: Attacks on Vinicius problem of Spanish soccer

AP ■ MADRID

The hate attacks against Vinicius Junior are a problem of Spanish soccer and must be dealt with, his Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Tuesday. Vinicius, the Brazilian forward who is Black, has been subjected to hate attacks since he arrived in Spain in 2018. The most recent were on Sunday at a Spanish league game in Mallorca. Last month, his effigy hung off a bridge in Madrid before the derby against Atletico Madrid.

"The question I ask is this: What does Vinicius have to defend himself against? What do his teammates have to defend themselves against?" Ancelotti said on Tuesday on the eve of Madrid's debut at the Club World Cup in Morocco.

"Is Vinicius the problem? It seems like the problem is Vinicius, but the problem is what happens around him. Period."

"It is a problem of Spanish football. I am a part of Spanish football and I think it's a problem that we have to solve. Because it seems that Vinicius is the culprit, but he is being the victim of something that I don't understand." Vinicius has been outspoken about the insults and often complained on social media of how he's been treated.

He was also targeted because of his dances while celebrating goals, and recently his teammates called attention to the high number of fouls he was re-



ceiving in games. Last week, Valencia defender Gabriel Paulista was sent off after a vicious foul on Vinicius in a league game.

"Vinicius is an incredible person, with great values," teammate Federico Valverde said. "He is different than most on the field, he enjoys soccer in his own way, in a happy way. I don't think the rival fans are thinking about the person, they don't realize that he could be the son of anyone who is in the stands. People need to be responsible for what they do, they shouldn't take it out on a 22-year-old. You need to have respect."

Racism in Spanish soccer has attracted more attention recently but little has been done to punish anyone.

The Spanish league was investigating the attacks on Sunday at Mallorca after TV images showed someone calling him a monkey. Vinicius was also insulted after the match when he stopped to pose for photos and

sign autographs for fans.

Authorities have yet to find those responsible for hanging Vinicius' effigy last month, and so far teams have not been punished for the racist insults inside their stadiums.

The first trial against a fan who racially insulted a player in Spain is expected to begin this year following remarks by an Espanyol supporter against Athletic Bilbao forward Iñaki Williams a few years ago.

Mallorca defender Antonio Raulo said last year that Vinicius was using the card of racism when accused of provoking opponents. Other players have complained of the Brazilian's attitude on the field as well.

Madrid will face Egyptian club Al Ahly on Wednesday in the semifinals of the Club World Cup. Madrid has won the world club title a record seven times, including three times when the competition was called the Intercontinental Cup.

## Former Chelsea forward Atsu rescued after Turkey earthquake

AP ■ LONDON

Former Chelsea and Newcastle forward Christian Atsu was rescued from the rubble of a collapsed building following the deadly earthquake that struck Turkey, the Ghana Football Association said in a Twitter post Tuesday.

The Ghana international plays for Turkish club Hatayspor. A club spokesman on Monday told Turkish media that Atsu was thought to be in a building that was brought down by the 7.8 magnitude earthquake and aftershocks that struck southeastern Turkey and neighbouring Syria and has killed more than 5,000 people.

Atsu's whereabouts and condition were unconfirmed overnight until the Ghana FA posted an update on its official Twitter site on Tuesday saying:



"We've received some positive news that Christian Atsu has been successfully rescued."

Atsu was receiving treatment but the GFA didn't give details of any injuries.

The 31-year-old Atsu joined Hatayspor, which is based in the southern city of Antakya, last year.

The quake hit early Monday and was centered in Turkey's southeastern province of Kahramanmaraş. It was felt as far away as Cairo in Egypt. Multiple aftershocks caused more destruction.

## Justin wins at Pebble Beach to end 4-year drought

AP ■ PEBBLE BEACH

Justin Rose had a different set of goals at the start of the year. His back was starting to become bothersome. His world ranking sank to its lowest point in 13 years. And he had reason to wonder if he would spend the first full week in April somewhere other than Augusta National.

All that changed Monday morning when Rose capped off a long week at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am with three quick birdies and four steady pars that gave him a three-shot victory, his first in four years.

Along with the crystal trophy — his 11th on the PGA Tour, 23rd worldwide — and the \$1.62 million prize comes an invitation to the Masters. Rose has been eligible for every major dating to St. Andrews in 2010, a streak he did not want to end.



"Augusta's definitely been a big part of being on my mind," Rose said after closing with a 6-under 66 in cool but pristine conditions at Pebble Beach. "I thought the simple way to approach it was try to play my way into the top 50 in the world ... Claw my way up the world rankings and make it that way."

"Obviously this," he said, tapping the crystal on a table next to him, "is a better way to make it by winning a tournament. So yeah, big relief from that point of view."

The wind-delayed tournament forced a Monday finish, and Rose had staked himself to a two-shot lead Sunday night with an eagle-birdie-par stretch along the ocean.

And then he delivered a knockout punch early to as many as a dozen players who were within three shots of the lead at various points on the course. After a good two-putt

## Ma Long leads star-studded field for WTT star contender Goa

PTI ■ PANAJI

Reigning Olympic champions Ma Long and Chen Meng from China will be among a galaxy of stars to visit India for the World Table Tennis (WTT) Star Contender Goa from February 27 to March 5.

The 34-year-old Ma, widely regarded as the best to have ever played the game, is a two-time Olympic champion and will also have his countryman and rival Fan Zhendong, the current world champion and world number one, for company in the men's singles.

Veteran Sharath Kamal and Sathiyan Gnanasekaran will lead the Indian challenge.

Among other leading lights of the men's game, world number four Tomokazu Harimoto of Japan and world number six Truls Moregard of Sweden, world number eight Lin Yun-Ju from Chinese Taipei and world



number nine Darko Jorgic from Slovenia will also be seen in action.

In the women's section, besides Chen, her countrywoman and world number one Sun Yingsha has also confirmed participation along with world number five Hina Hayata of Japan, world number eight Kasumi Ishikawa from Japan, world number nine Doo Hoi Kem from Hong Kong, China and world number 10 Ying Han from Germany.

Also trying to give them a run for their money on home turf will be the India number one and world number 34 Manika Batra.

Expressing her views on the WTT Star Contender Goa, Manika said, "Playing my first World Table Tennis event in Goa is going to be a great experience. It is always a great honour to play in front of a home crowd, and I can't wait to hear them cheering us all on. We hope to make them proud."

## Defeat against Nepal dents India's chances at SAFF U20 Women's Ch'ship

PTI ■ DHAKA

India were staring at an early elimination from the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship after suffering a 1-3 defeat against Nepal at the Mostafa Kamal Stadium here on Tuesday.

Apurna Narzary handed India lead with her 21st-minute

stroke but Nepal bounced back with a goal each from Anjali Chand (48th), Preeti Rai (69th, penalty) and Amisha Karki (89th) and secured their final berth.

India now have four points from three games after the group stage, while Nepal have six.

Hosts Bangladesh just (four

points) need to draw against Bhutan later in the day to seal their spot in the final.

"It's quite sad that we started well, but we went slower and slower. Nepal got a penalty, which was of course not good for us, and then the girls started slowing down," India head coach Maymol Rocky said.

## How Manchester City came to face Premier League charges

AP ■ GENEVA

The English Premier League vs. Manchester City: a legal fixture for the ages. Soccer's richest and most watched league challenged its defending champion on Monday with more than 100 charges of alleged financial wrongdoing and failures to cooperate with an investigation that took more than four years.

Dozens of charges allege breaches of the league's financial monitoring rules dating from 2009, or the first full season Man City was owned by the ruling family of Abu Dhabi. Thirty more charges relate to Man City's lack of cooperation in the past five seasons with a Premier League investigation that opened after leaked, and likely hacked, club internal communications were published in 2018.

That leaked evidence led UEFA investigators to examine likely breaches of financial rules designed to create stability in an often-volatile European soccer industry. UEFA-appointed judges imposed a two-year

ban from the Champions League in 2020, which the club overturned on appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Man City seems more at risk from the English case, which does not involve a statute of limitations on evidence that was a problem for UEFA lawyers.

The Premier League rule book — signed off by member clubs like Man City — gives its disciplinary commissions sweeping powers to punish teams if charges are proven. That could range from imposing a fine to taking away a title or even ejecting Man City from England's top division.

Here's a closer look at the case: **WHAT ARE THE FINANCIAL RULES?**

Known as Financial Fair Play, the regulations are aimed at preventing clubs from spending more than they earn. FFP was established in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, which deepened worries in European soccer that clubs could go out of business if the cost of player



transfers and wages kept rising.

Critics believed they would favor storied clubs with established global appeal, such as Bayern Munich, Real Madrid and Manchester United. They said FFP would be used to thwart emerging clubs who had wealthy owners ready to spend heavily and accelerate growth.

At the same time, historically underachieving Manchester City was

bought in September 2008 with sovereign wealth from the United Arab Emirates. When UEFA in 2011 began monitoring finances of clubs who qualified for European competition, City had made progress by spending big on players.

The first round of FFP judgments in 2014 saw the heaviest penalties for Man City and Paris Saint-Germain — each lost 20 million euros (\$21.4 mil-

lion) in Champions League prize money.

Both were suspected of booking inflated revenue in their accounts through sponsor deals at above market rates with companies from Abu Dhabi and Qatar.

"If clubs use unrealistic deals as a way to get around Financial Fair Play," Arsène Wenger had warned in 2012 when coach at Arsenal, "it will make a mockery of the rules."

The English Premier League later adopted a version of UEFA FFP rules. **WHAT WAS THE LEAKED EVIDENCE?**

In November 2018, Man City was the Premier League champion with three titles in the first decade of its Abu Dhabi era, and a talented squad coached by Pep Guardiola.

Yet skepticism remained about the club's commercial results.

German magazine Der Spiegel then published the "Football Leaks" series of articles based on the club's internal documents and communications.

They suggested Man City had broken FFP rules in financial relationships with "related-party" sponsors from Abu Dhabi, its use of image rights payments to players and the contract of Roberto Mancini, who was manager from 2009-13. He allegedly doubled his base salary for advising a club in Abu Dhabi.

Man City did not deny the documents were authentic but said they were illegally obtained by a Portuguese man, Rui Pinto. He later went on trial in Lisbon. A verdict is scheduled in April.

**WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE UEFA CASE?**

After the Football Leaks publication, UEFA's club investigators revisited their case and asked the judging chamber to ban Man City from European competitions.

In February 2020, those judges banned Man City for two seasons for "serious breaches" of rules from 2012-16, including overstating sponsor revenue and failing to cooperate with investigators.



## India's Anuj in FIFA's working group for agents

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's Anuj Kichlu, who facilitated star players like Bala Devi and Sandesh Jhingan in their European club transfers, has been named as the lone Asian member of the prestigious FIFA Football Agent Working Group to advise on how football agents operate in the region.

The 18-member Working Group was set up by the FIFA on Monday after the FIFA Football Agent Regulations (FFAR) came into force.

The Working Group consists of representatives of professional stakeholders and agent organisations from across the world that will act as a permanent consultative body in relation to football agent matters, including practical implementation of the new framework, as well as possible future amendments or changes to the FFAR.

The Working Group is dominated by the Europeans and Latin Americans.

Kichlu, who operates from Kolkata and is a part of the Spanish agency Best of You (BOY), has been a football player-agent since 2012.

He was instrumental in Bala Devi joining the Rangers Women's Football Club in Scotland in 2020 to become the first Indian female player to sign with a top European side, besides men's national team defender Sandesh Jhingan joining HNK Sibenik in Croatia in 2021 for a brief period.

Kichlu was also involved in Indian women players Jyoti Chauhan and Soumya Guguloth joining Dinamo Zagreb last year.



# WPL AUCTION: 409 PLAYERS TO GO UNDER HAMMER

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A total of 409 cricketers will go under the hammer at the inaugural Women's Premier League auction with the likes of Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Alyssa Healy and Sophie Ecclestone keeping themselves in the highest base price bracket of Rs 50 lakh.

IPL chairman Arun Dhumal had told PTI on Monday that the entire 22 matches of the league will be held in Mumbai from March 4-26. The auction will be held in Mumbai on February 13.

Out of 409 players, 246 are Indians and 163 are overseas of which eight are from the associate nations.

The total capped players are 202, while 199 are uncapped and eight are from the associate nations.

A maximum of 90 slots are available with the five teams of which 30 are for overseas players.

Twenty four players have put themselves in the Rs 50 lakh base price category. Thirty players are in the auction list with a base price of Rs 40 lakh.

Besides India captain



Harmanpreet, Mandhana and Australian star Healy and number one England spinner Ecclestone, the others in the highest base price bracket include U-19 World Cup

winning captain Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Jemimah Rodrigues, England's Nat Sciver, Australia captain Meg Lanning among others.

India's U-19 stars, who won the World Cup in South Africa, will also be part of the action. They include uncapped Parshavi Chopra, Archana Devi, Titas Sadhu, Shweta

Sehrawat and Mannat Kashyap (Rs 10 lakh base price for all).

"The Women's Premier League Player Auction list is out with a total of 409 cricketers set to go under the hammer at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai on February 13, 2023," said the BCCI in a release.

"A total of 1525 players registered for the inaugural Women's Premier League Player Auction & the final list was pruned to 409 players."

With the five teams sold for Rs 4669.99 crore and the BCCI selling the media rights for Rs 951 crore, the WPL is the second biggest T20 League in the world behind the Indian Premier League.

Apart from three IPL team owners -- Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Capitals -- Capri Global Holdings (Lucknow) and the Adani Sportsline have bought the five franchises.

Each team will have a purse of Rs 12 crore at the players' auction and will need to buy a minimum of 15 players and maximum of 18. Up to five overseas players, including one from associate member country, will be allowed in the playing eleven.

## Ashwin quality bowler but we have tools to counter him, says Smith

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Australia vice-captain Steve Smith may have done a week's simulation of Ravichandran Ashwin's doppleganger Mahesh Pithiya but he is not overthinking about the star India spinner's impact in the Border Gavaskar Trophy beginning here on Thursday.

Australian batters have been focussed on tackling the spin threat and there is a team of Indian net bowlers who is helping the visitors prepare for the four Test series.

Is Australia over-thinking about Ashwin?

"There has been many off-spinners we played and Mahesh is one of them. He bowls a similar style (to that) of Ashwin. We are not overthinking things. Ash is a quality bowler but we have the tools in our kit bag to counter that," Smith told reporters during a media conference.

He has had a look at the pitch and good length spot at the far end looks pretty dry.

"Pretty dry, particularly one end. I think it will take a bit of spin, particularly the left-arm spinner taking it into our left-handers. There's a section there that's quite



dry," he added.

But Smith also said that he won't be over reading the track.

"Other than that, I can't really get a good gauge on it. I don't think there will be a heap of bounce in the wicket, I think it will be quite skiddy for the seamers and maybe a bit of up-and-down movement as the game goes on."

"The cracks felt quite loose. I'm not entirely sure -- we'll wait and see."

Smith seemed pretty happy with the preparation.

"We had a few good sessions in Bangalore and now here as well. The boys are shaping up well. I think it will be a bit skiddy, slow but not entirely sure," Smith said.

However, he did also confirm that Cameron Green isn't in a position to play.



## Oz will play Green as pure batter in 1st Test against India: Gilchrist

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Legendary wicketkeeper-batter Adam Gilchrist feels Australia will play all-rounder Cameron Green as a pure batter at the number six spot in the first Test against India beginning on Thursday.

The 23-year-old is recovering from a surgery on the index finger of his right hand, which he had broken during the Boxing Day Test against South Africa last December.

Australia coach Andrew McDonald has already confirmed that Green is currently unable to bowl.

"Such is the way of this psyche of the selectors and this team, I think they'll start with Green at six, assuming he's fully fit and not hindered by that finger injury at all," Gilchrist told 'Sen Radio'.

"I think that's the nature of this group, they're pretty trusting of each other and really keen to back each other in every situation."

Green, who has played 18 Tests, has an average of 35.04 with the bat and impressed in the three innings in Sri Lanka last year. He has also taken 23 wickets with his seam bowling, with 5/27 as his best so far.

"The way he played in Sri Lanka, it almost looks like Green develops before our eyes every time he plays a game of cricket... I reckon the steps forward he took in Sri Lanka, they'll be hoping he can keep that process going."

Australia will be without quicks Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood due to injuries in the opening Test, starting in Nagpur on Thursday.

With Green unable to bowl, Scott Boland, who boasts of an impressive 12.21 average with the red ball in national colours, is expected to get his first overseas Test.

## Dravid's sweep tips for Gill, domestic offies dominate nets

PTI ■ NAGPUR

There is every possibility that the strategy to prepare rank turners for demolishing Australia could backfire and that is the reason most of the Indian batters committed themselves to doubles shift in the nets against slow bowlers ahead of the series-opener.

Steve O'Keefe, the forgotten man of Australian cricket, had one good show against India in Pune six summers back when a snake pit of a 22-yard boomeranged badly on the hosts, giving the left-arm spinner 12 of his 35 Test wickets in a single game.

If that wasn't enough, Lyon asked a lot of questions in next Test in Bengaluru.

On Tuesday, the Indian team had as many nine specialist spinners -- four in main squad and five from domestic and India A fringes helping the batters out.

While Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav would like to conserve energies for the big five days, there were off-spinners Pulkit Narang and Jayant Yadav along with leg-spinner Rahul Chahar and left-arm orthodox Ravisrinivas Sai Kishore and Saurabh Kumar who did bulk of the job.

The paucity of good off-break bowlers in domestic cricket is pretty evident that Narang and India international Jayant, both of whom aren't even in top 10 domestic wicket-takers, being called for simulation.

While Lalaj Saxena continues being ignored, Jayant's presence shows that Lyon is very much in India's head.

"The things that, obviously, we have worked on is playing spin, and we know the pitches are going to play here in India and what to expect. Keeping that in mind, we have practiced playing spin," vice captain KL Rahul gave a sneak peak into team's preparation in the lead up.



While Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli did play the sweep shot, Cheteshwar Pujara was more intent on negating the off-breaks with a big forward stride.

"Each person has his own individual plans. Everybody wants to play a certain way, or everyone has their own set way which has been discussed with the coaches. We have discussed this as a batting group in an attempt to try and play spin better," said the Indian vice captain.

In fact, head coach Rahul Dravid devoted considerable amount of time with Gill and was explaining the various methods to

keep the sweep down with some shadow batting. He was seen showing Gill as to how he can avoid offering catch to forward short leg or leg gully if there is big turn on offer. Gill was later seen himself standing at forward short leg wit fielding coach T Dileep giving him close in catching practice. The team combination isn't being spelt out but it seems that Gill, who is in the midst of a purple patch, will have to make way for Rahul at the top.

However with a dry patch on one side of the track, the ball will do its bit from day one itself and a good wicketkeeper will be need of the hour.



## Siraj, Shubman nominated for ICC Player of Month Award

PTI ■ DUBAI

India pacer Mohammed Siraj and opener Shubman Gill were on Tuesday nominated for the ICC Player of the Month Award for their stellar show in January.

New Zealand opener Devon Conway, who has had a fine start to the year with three hundreds and two fifties across formats, is the third contender for the award.

Following a fruitful 2022, Gill displayed his batting prowess in both the white-ball formats last month while Siraj led India's fast-bowling attack with distinction in ODIs in recent times, showcasing his brilliance consistently, especially with the new ball in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah.

Gill was handed his maiden T20I cap in the first match against Sri Lanka in Mumbai, where he managed just seven, before another single-digit score in the second game. He made a steady 46 in the third T20I in Rajkot.

Gill then registered scores of 70, 21 and 116 in the three ODIs against the island nation, but it was his breath-taking display in the first ODI against New Zealand in Hyderabad that stole the show.

The 23-year-old struck 208 off 149 balls in an incredible knock on a day when none of his teammates crossed 28.

Gill got to 200 with three consecutive sixes off Lockie Ferguson, and with it, became the youngest player to the milestone in ODIs.

## Sneh Rana jumps to career-best sixth in ICC T20I bowlers' ranking

PTI ■ DUBAI

India's Sneh Rana jumped four spots to a career-best sixth place while compatriot Deepti Sharma slipped a place down to third among bowlers in the latest ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings issued on Tuesday.

Off-spinner Rana advanced four places after taking two for 21 in the Tri-Series final against South Africa, which also featured the West Indies.

South Africa left-arm spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba dislodged Deepti from the earlier second position after a fine performance against India in the final of the Tri-series.

Mlaba grabbed two for 16 in the final in East London to finish with six wickets in just 8.66 runs apiece and she conceded just 3.25 runs per over to move to a career-best 753 rating points, just 10 points behind England's Sophie Ecclestone, another left-arm spinner.

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Playing at home, India will go into the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as favourites but former South African JP Duminy says Australia could trump the hosts 2-1 in the much anticipated Test rubber.

India will be without two of its key players in Rishabh Pant and Jasprit Bumrah, but premier all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja will be back to the action after a knee surgery.

The Test series will begin on Thursday in Nagpur.

"I see it as a very close series, but I genuinely think that Australia stand a good chance. They certainly have been the team to beat," Duminy said during a virtual interaction, facilitated by SA T20, where he coaches Paarl Royals team.

"I feel it would be 2-1 to Australia and for me the Player-of-The-Series would be Usman Khawaja," he said of the Australian left-hander, who hit a career-best unbeaten 195 against South Africa in Sydney Test in January.

Duminy was quick to add that one can never "write off" India in their home conditions. "You think about (Ravichandran) Ashwin who has a prolific Test record in India, he's probably going to be the key for them."

"When it comes to Test

## Australia could win Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2-1: Duminy



cricket, you have got to utilise your resources. Guys like (Cheteshwar) Pujara, Virat Kohli who are prolific in Test cricket. They churn out runs after runs. It's an opportunity for those guys to step up.

India's '360', Suryakumar Yadav has been in sensational form in T20 format and is part of the Test squad.

Asked whether he's primed for a Test debut, Duminy said: "Probably he's one of the most exciting players for India right now. From the way Test cricket is going, as a country you need to decide what is the line of

cricket, you would be playing. And if it's of the attacking mindset, then he becomes an option, certainly."

There has already been a debate over whether India play to their strength and prepare rank-turners for the upcoming four-Test series. Duminy feels it's absolutely fair to play to your advantage.

"That's the beauty of having a home series. You have the opportunity to play to your advantage. Why would you not. It would be silly to think that you would not want to utilise that (rank-turners) in your favour."

## Australia's Finch retires from international cricket

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's most successful AT20 International batter and captain Aaron Finch, who led the country to its maiden shortest format World Cup triumph in 2021, announced his retirement from international cricket on Tuesday.

The 36-year-old will, however, continue to play for the Renegades in the Big Bash League and would consider domestic T20 opportunities in other countries.

"Our World Cup winning, longest serving men's T20I captain has called time on a remarkable career. Thanks for everything @AaronFinch5," Cricket Australia (CA) said on its official Twitter handle.

Finch's retirement from international cricket was on expected lines. He played just five Tests, the last one being in 2018, and retired from the ODIs last year after a much-publicised struggle for form as captain of the Australian team.

He captained the team to their first T20 World Cup title when they defeated New Zealand in Dubai in 2021 and is one of only four male Australians to captain a World Cup winning side.

But, the Australian team under him failed to qualify for the semifinals T20 World Cup at home last year. His last international match came in the T20 showcase when he top-scored with 63 as Australia beat Ireland by 42 runs.

## There's temptation to play three spinners but you never know with Nagpur pitch: Rahul

PTI ■ NAGPUR

India's Test vice-captain KL Rahul feels it's never easy to predict the nature of a track but there is a "temptation" to play three spinners in the first Test against Australia, beginning here on Thursday.

With less than 48 hours left for the Border Gavaskar Trophy to begin, Rahul didn't provide any definitive answers about three key slots in the team -- the wicketkeeper, the third spinner and the number five in the batting order.

Asked if Shubman Gill will bat in the middle-order, Rahul said: "We still haven't decided

on the final XI. It's going to be a tough decision to make. There are guys who have performed exceedingly well and there are a few spots open so there are a few discussions going on and the players are being spoken to."

The VCA track is expected to assist spinners from day one itself but Rahul doesn't want to be a soothsayer when it comes to reading the 22-yard strip.

"Yes, we did see it (the pitch), but it's still too early to really know what the pitch is going to do. We need to come here on the day of the match to know how it's really going to play," he told reporters.

"We can only look at it and



assume it's going to play a certain way, but you never know with pitches. Yes, there is the temptation to play three spinners because we're playing in

India. We'll take that call on the day of the game or the day before the game," the stylish right-hander said.

With skipper Rohit Sharma

back in the mix, Rahul was asked if he would like to bat in the middle-order where he had started his Test career back in 2014.

"If it arises, then I'm more than happy to do that. Whatever little cricket I've played for the country, I've always done that."

"Whatever the team has asked me to do, I try and prepare that way and try and do my best for the team, and if that is something that the team wants me to do here, I'll be more than happy to do it," Rahul said, although it is unlikely that he would come down the order.