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**VIJAYWADA****RANCHI, SUNDAY** FEBRUARY 5, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3

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## SC gets 5 judges as Govt keeps pledge

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

A day after promising the Supreme Court that the Collegium's pending recommendations for the elevation of five High Court judges to the apex court will be cleared soon, the Centre on Saturday notified the appointments. The five judges elevated to the apex court are Justices Pankaj Mithal, Sanjay Karol, PV Sanjay Kumar, Manoj Misra and Ahsanuddin Amanullah.

Law Minister Kiren Rijiju tweeted to announce the appointment of the judges.

Justices Pankaj Mithal, Sanjay Karol and PV Sanjay Kumar are Chief Justices of Rajasthan, Patna and Manipur High Courts respectively. Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah is a judge of the Patna High Court and Justice Manoj Misra is a judge of Allahabad High Court.

On Friday, the Supreme Court had expressed displeasure and pulled up the Central Government for delaying the appointments of the five judges, who were recommended by Collegium on December 13, last year. A Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Abhay S Oka had given the Centre an ultimatum to process the appointments within ten days, after Attorney General N Venkataramani had submitted that they would be done "soon".

When the Bench insisted for a specific timeline, the AG said that appointment warrant



will be issued on Sunday.

Justice Pankaj Mithal, currently serving as the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court, was Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court. His parent High Court is the Allahabad High Court. Justice Sanjay Karol is currently the Chief Justice of Patna High Court and was Chief Justice of Tripura High Court. His parent High Court is the Himachal Pradesh High Court.

Justice PV Sanjay Kumar is Chief Justice of Manipur High Court and served as a judge of Punjab & Haryana High Court. His parent High Court is Telangana. Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah is presently a judge of the Patna High Court and was a judge at Andhra Pradesh High Court before being transferred back to Patna, his parent High Court. Justice Manoj Misra has been a judge of the Allahabad High Court for the past 12 years.

Currently, the Supreme Court has 34 judges and there

are seven vacancies. With these five new judges, its strength will up go to 32, with just 2 vacancies. On January 31, the SC Collegium had recommended the names of Allahabad High Court Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Gujarat High Court Chief Justice Aravind Kumar for elevation to the Supreme Court.

### Public is 'malik', nobody can give warning: Rijiju

**Prayagraj:** A day after the Supreme Court warned of action for any delay in clearing transfer and appointment of judges, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday said, "Public is 'malik' (master) of this country and we are servants. We all are here for service and the Constitution is our guide.... The country will be governed under the guidance of the Constitution and wishes of the public. Nobody can give warning to anyone." **P4**

## India's image unaffected by Adani's FPO pullout: FM

**PNS ■ MUMBAI**

India's economic image is not affected due to Adani Group's recent decision to pull out ₹20,000 crore FPO amid allegations of financial wrongdoings, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday.

The Finance Minister said there has been an accretion of USD 8 billion to the forex reserves in the last two days alone. "...Our macroeconomic fundamentals or our economy's image, none of which has been affected. Yes, FPOs (follow-on public offers) come in, and FIIs (foreign institutional investors) get out," Sitharaman told reporters here.

The Minister said there are "fluctuations" in every market but the accretion over the last few days establishes the fact that the perception of both India and its inherent strengths is intact.

Answering a broader question on the allegations against Adani Group, she said the country's independent financial sector regulators will be looking into the aspect and added that capital markets watchdog Securities and Exchange Board of India has the wherewithal to ensure stability in markets.

"...For keeping the market and the markets regulated in prime condition, the Sebi is the authority. And it has the wherewithal to keep that prime condition," she said.

The FM also said that the RBI has already spoken out on the issue, referring to Friday's statement, which said the bank-



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with MoS for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary addresses a press conference in Mumbai on Saturday

**PTI**

ing sector is resilient and stable.

About ten days ago, US-based short seller Hindenberg Research made a slew of allegations on the corporate governance front against Adani Group. The Ahmedabad-based group has denied all the allegations and termed it as a calculated attack on India. It has cancelled the FPO even after managing subscriptions to it.

Finance Secretary TV Somanathan on Saturday stood by his comment on the controversy where he called it a storm in a teacup, clarifying that this is in the context of macroeconomic terms and the stability of India's public financial institutions.

Meanwhile, on the decision to convert outstanding dues into equity at Vodafone Idea, Somanathan said the transaction is being done as a package for all telcos.

He said the Government share will be held by the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) where the stake will be considered as a public shareholder.

DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said the price has been taken at ₹10 despite the Vodafone Idea shares trading lower on bourses because, as per laws, preferential allotments have to happen at the face value of a share.

The Finance Ministry officials present at the meet also made it clear that the tweaks on taxation in the insurance front will not impact the policy agenda of deepening penetration and clarified that there was sufficient data to suggest that investments were masquerading as insurance premiums due to which a decision was taken to tax the same.

### Steps in place to address excess volatility: Sebi

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Amid a raging controversy over a meltdown in Adani Group stocks, regulator Sebi on Saturday said it is committed to ensuring the stock market's integrity and all necessary surveillance measures are in place to address any excessive volatility in individual shares.

Without naming Adani Group specifically, the capital markets watchdog said in a statement that unusual price movement in the stocks of a business conglomerate has been observed in the past week. Officials confirmed that the statement has been issued in the wake of the Adani matter only.

"As part of its mandate, Sebi seeks to maintain orderly and efficient functioning of the market and has put in place a set of well-defined, publicly available surveillance measures (including the ASM framework) to address excessive volatility in specific stocks. This mechanism gets automatically triggered under certain conditions of price volatility in any stock," Sebi said.

BSE and NSE have put three Adani group companies under their short-term additional surveillance measure (ASM).

## TN firm linked to vision loss, death in US told to stop making eye drops

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Tamil Nadu-based Global Pharma Healthcare, which is facing allegations that its eye drop was linked to vision loss of five people and death of a person in the US, has been asked to stop manufacturing all ophthalmic products till the inquiry is completed in the matter, officials said on Saturday.

Officials in the Union Health Ministry said the direction came after the manufacturing plant of the Global Health Pharma was inspected by Indian drug regulatory bodies. A three-member team each from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and the State Drug Controller visited the plant in Tamil Nadu's Kancheepuram, 40 km from Chennai, on Friday after the company recalled the eye drop.

The teams have also collected samples of eye drop — Artificial Tears — which were exported. The eye drops are



not sold in India.

According to an official report, the joint investigation at the firm's manufacturing site at Thirupurur in Tamil Nadu's Kancheepuram was conducted on February 3 by the team of senior central and state drugs officials, under the supervision of Tamil Nadu's Director of Drugs Control and CDSCO's Assistant Drugs Controller (South Zone).

During investigation, it was found that the firm has exported two consignments of 24 batches of Artificial Tears to the USA which were manufactured in 2021 and 2022.

## Sharjeel among 11 'scapegoats' freed in Okhla violence case

**STAFF REPORTRE ■ NEW DELHI**

A court here on Saturday discharged 11 people, including student activists Sharjeel Imam and Asif Iqbal Tanha, in the Jamia Nagar violence case, saying as the Delhi Police was unable to apprehend the actual perpetrators, it booked the accused as "scapegoats".

The court, however, ordered framing of charges against one of the accused, Mohammad Ilyas.

"Marshalling the facts as brought forth from a perusal of the chargesheet and three supplementary chargesheets, this court cannot but arrive at the conclusion that the police were unable to apprehend the actual perpetrators behind the commission of the offence, but surely managed to rope the persons herein as scapegoats," Additional Sessions Judge Arul Varma said.

An FIR was lodged in



connection with the violence that erupted after a clash between police and people protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in the Jamia Nagar area here December 2019.

The judge said there were admittedly scores of protesters at the site and some anti-social elements within the crowd could have created an environment of disruption and havoc.

"However, the moot question remains — whether the accused persons herein were even prima facie complicit in taking part in that mayhem? The answer is an unequivocal no," he added.

## Modi to open India's largest copter making unit in K'taka tomorrow

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

With the objective of rapid indigenisation in defence manufacturing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday will dedicate a helicopter manufacturing factory in Karnataka. It will produce light utility helicopters designed within the country.

Giving details here on Saturday, Defence Ministry officials said Modi will dedicate the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) factory at Tumakuru. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and senior officials of the Ministry of Defence will be present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister had laid the foundation stone of the plant in 2016.

The Greenfield Helicopter Factory, spread across 615 acres, is planned with a vision to become a one-stop solution for all helicopter requirements of the country.



It is India's largest helicopter manufacturing facility and will initially produce Light Utility Helicopters (LUHs).

The LUH is an indigenously designed and developed 3-tonne class, single engine multipurpose utility helicopter with unique features of high maneuverability. Initially, this factory will produce around 30 helicopters per year and can be enhanced to 60 and then 90 per year in a phased manner. The first LUH has been flight tested and is ready for unveiling.

## ED seizes heroin, arms in 10 raids on Punjab border dist

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Searches by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case linked to a Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act case on 10 different premises in different villages of Tarn Taran district in Punjab led to the recovery and seizure of 2.2 kg of heroin and other contraband items weighing about 14 kg of narcotics.

In addition, the ED also recovered documents of properties besides two rifles, three pistols and live ammunition from the premises of the suspects.

The ED had launched the search operations on Friday at 10 premises in Sheron, Naushera Pannuan and Bugha villages of Tarn Taran district.

The agency searched the business and residential premises of Skattar Singh, alias Laddi, Gajjan Singh, Makhan Singh, other members of their family and some other associates under the



Prevention of Money Laundering Act, officials said.

"During the course of search, various incriminating evidence was recovered and seized relating to numerous immovable properties worth crores of rupees in the names of these accused persons, members of their family and their associates," the agency said in a statement.

A few packets of psychotropic substance appearing to be opium and its derivative products, including heroin, were also recovered from the residential premises of Skattar Singh and his family at Sheron village.

## Orphans will study free of cost in DU: VC

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Delhi University Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh on Saturday stated that thousands of orphan children, including those who lost their parents to COVID-19, will get an opportunity to pursue higher education free of cost with the university's new initiative to reserve seats for them.

The vice chancellor said the university has been responsible for providing education to the students seeking higher education without any discrimination on any grounds.

The varsity decided to reserve seats in its UG and PG programmes for orphans under supernumerary quota from the next academic year.

## Veteran singer Vani found dead at Chennai home

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■**  
CHENNAI

Vani Jairam, the versatile playback singer who strode over the South Indian film industry for more than five decades, is no more.

Jairam (77) was found dead in her residence in Chennai on Saturday morning by her maid servant Kalaivani. Chennai Police, who rushed to her home on being informed about her death, held a preliminary inquiry and shifted the mortal remains to Government Hospital for autopsy.

A case under sections of



unnatural death has been registered by the police. Last week the Government of India had honoured Vani Jairam with Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award of the country.

## 'AI could help deliver personalised cancer treatment'

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

In good news in the cancer care segment, a team of researchers have leveraged artificial intelligence (AI) technology to identify genes critical to a cancer cell's survival, and could help deliver personalised cancer patient treatments.

They analysed different types of cancer cells to understand different gene dependencies for identifying the genes, the study said.

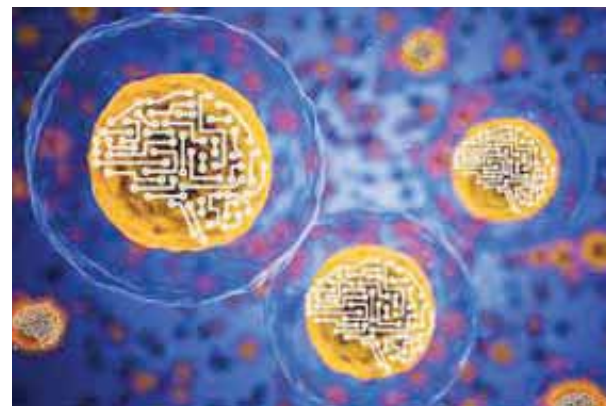
Researchers at the University of Sussex, UK, have done this by developing a prediction algorithm that works out which genes are essential in the cell, by analysing the genetic changes in the tumour.

This can be used to identify actionable targets that in time could guide oncologists to personalise cancer patient

treatments, the study said.

"Our vision is to take advantage of the decreasing cost of DNA sequencing and to harness the power of AI to understand cancer cell differences and what they mean for the individual patient's treatment. "Through our research, we were able to identify cell-specific gene dependencies using only the DNA sequence and RNA levels in that cell, which are easily and cheaply obtainable from tumour biopsy samples," said Dr Frances Pearl, Senior Lecturer in Bioinformatics at the University of Sussex.

"This is an incredibly exciting step in our research which means that we can now work to improve the technology so that it can be offered to oncologists and help in the treatment pathways for their patients," said Pearl.



Cancer treatments are primarily prescribed on the basis of the location and type of cancer. Genetic differences in tumours can make standard cancer treatments ineffective.

Using a personalised approach to guide treatment could improve life expectancy,

quality of life and reduce unnecessary side effects of cancer patients, the study said.

In each cell, there are around 20,000 genes that contain the information needed to make proteins. Around 1,000 of those genes are essential, meaning they are required for the cell

to survive.

When normal cells become cancer cells, oncogenes, or genes with the potential to cause cancer, become activated and tumour suppressor genes become inactivated, causing a rewiring of the cell.

This causes the cell to become dependent on a new set of genes to survive, and this can then be exploited to kill the cancer cells. By using this new AI technology to target protein products of tumour-specific dependent genes, cancer cells can be killed, leaving the normal cells which are not dependent on these genes relatively unharmed, the study said.

Although dependencies can be determined using intensive laboratory techniques, it is costly and time consuming and would not be feasible to analyse all tumour samples in this way, the study said.



# Adityapur Toll Bridge goes chashless



PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Adityapur Toll Bridge Company Limited (ATBCL) is a limited company incorporated in 1996 with the participation of State Government and Tata Steel Ltd. along with other industries in Jamshedpur & Adityapur.

ATBCL was created to implement the project for second road bridge, connecting the industrial towns of Jamshedpur and Adityapur on a Public - Private - Partnership

(PPP) format.

FASTag is a rechargeable tag that is fixed on the windshield of a vehicle. It uses Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to make toll payments cashless. This Fastag system has three major entities, Toll Plaza, Acquirer Bank and NPCI (National Payment Corporation of India). Vehicle FASTag stickers are read by RFID readers which are installed near ATBCL toll booths. The RFID reader

sends the FASTag ID to the ATBCL server to check the balance of the tag. If sufficient balance is available in the tag, the barrier will open and let the vehicle pass.

After that this transaction is sent to the Acquirer bank HDFC by server in the encrypted file format. The acquirer bank after processing sends this file to the NPCI system and then sends the acknowledgment data to ATBCL server for matching that transaction. This backend

process is working 24 x 7 to provide a hassle-free toll experience. In the presence of esteemed guests flagged off the official inauguration of FASTag and successfully tested FASTag transactions. Prem Ranjan, RD JIADA, Chairman ATBCL, Pranay Sinha, MD, ATBCL, Ashok Das, Chief Engineer, WRD, Dhananjay Singh, CO Rajnagar, S.N. Thakur, Director ATBCL, and Vijay Anand Moonka, Director ATBCL, were among those present.

## 24-hour mega ticket checking drive in all divisions of ECR

PNS : RANCHI

A 24-hour special ticket checking campaign was conducted at stations and trains by forming separate teams of officers in all the five divisions of East Central Railway. 57 stations and 378 trains were covered in this mega ticket checking drive. During this, a total of 14 thousand 145 passengers were caught without ticket or without proper authorization from which more than 80 lakhs were recovered as fine. About 900 TTEs, 60 RPF personnel and 21 commercial officers were deployed in this campaign. 09 officers and 18 commercial inspectors were also posted from the headquarters. It may be noted that in all the five divisions of East Central Railway ticket checking is being done continuously to arrest the passengers traveling without ticket and without proper authority and such mega drives will continue to be organized in future also.

# Bokaro Steel Plant takes another step towards digitization

R SHARMA : BOKARO

Moving towards digitization, Bokaro Steel Plant has implemented a QR code system to identify different types of material in MW-26 Depot of Central Store. It was inaugurated on February 4 by Anarendu Prakash, Director in-charge of BSL, CEO (BPSCL) KK Thakur, ED(Works) BK Tiwari, ED(Projects) CR Mohapatra, ED(Finance & Accounts) S Rangani, ED(MM & P&A) Amitabh Srivastava, Executive Director (Mines) J. Das Gupta, Chief General Managers, Heads of Departments and other senior officers and personnel of Material Management

Department were present. Notably with the launch of QR code in the MW-26 depot of Central Store, the departments of the plant will be able to easily identify different types of materials for their use, which will also reduce inventory. It may be noted that the initiative to use QR code to identify materials in the entire cell has been taken by the Material Management Division of Bokaro Steel Plant for the first time.

While addressing the officers and personnel on this occasion, DIC Prakash congratulated the Material Management Department on this achievement and gave a message to implement this system in all the stores of the



plant. It is worth mentioning that as a result of the untiring efforts of the personnel of the Central store during the last one and a half years, success has been achieved in developing the QR code. During the programme, DIC Anarendu Prakash congratulated the

CCS, RGBS and Electronics and Telecom Department for their remarkable contribution in the field of inventory in the month of October-December by conferring the Inventory Champion award in heavy, medium and light categories respectively.

## GOOD LIFESTYLE, AWARENESS KEY TO PREVENT CANCER: AJMERA

AVINASH ANJAN: HAZARIBAG

On World Cancer Day, Director of Hazaribag Arogyam Hospital, Harsh Ajmera said that every year a new theme is released on Cancer Day. Its purpose is to inform people about the symptoms and prevention of cancer. The theme of World Cancer Day 2023 is "Close the Care Gap" which focuses on closing the gap in access to cancer care services across the country based on income, age, gender, ethnicity etc. According to WHO, there are about 45,9000 deaths from inside every year in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Cancer has become a burden to society that places physical, emotional and financial stress on individuals, families and communities. He said that every year on 4th February, we all celebrate Cancer Day to promote awareness about cancer as a public health issue and to strengthen quality care, screening, early diagnosis and treatment. Cancer can be cured if detected in time. Ajmera said that during the treatment at Arogyam Hospital, the doctor definitely conducts a checkup on any kind of doubt related to cancer. He also said that cancer screening camp will also be organized soon in Hazaribag. Be aware of cancer, as well as we all need to take a pledge to make people aware and educated about this disease. He also said that controlling lifestyle and awareness is the only way to prevent cancer.



# HCDSH organises free dental checkup camp

71 patients were examined, doctors gave proper advice to the patients

PNS : HAZARIBAG

Under the joint aegis of Hazaribag College of Dental Sciences and Hospital and NSS unit, a free dental camp was organized at Kushiwaha Bhawan, Mandai Khurd on Friday.

Free medicine and tooth brushing kit were distributed at free of cost. A total of 71 patients were benefited in the camp. Oral health awareness and education program was organized for the villagers by the doctors. Secretary of Hazaribag College of Dental Sciences and Hospital, Dr.



Praveen Srinivas said that basic treatment like dental cleaning of the patients in the camp is free and patients was given 30 to 70 percent discount in other treatments. He also told about important rules for maintaining oral health and side effects of tobacco consumption. Dr. Soumya Raj from the Department of Public Health Dentistry gave necessary advice on various diseases and their treatment. Many dignitaries including the local Panchayat Samiti member were greatly impressed by the camp and thanked the Hazaribag Dental College for organizing the free camp. Dr. Souvik Chandra, Dr. Kaushar Khan, Dr. Atish Ghosh, Dr. Ankika Anand, Dr. Pihu Priyanka, Dr. Sheeba Khan rendered their services during the camp. Public Relations Officer Raj Kumar Das made good arrangements for the camp.

## IT IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE ENJOYABLE AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATION: DEO



ferent schools on the subjects of Mathematics, Language, Environment, Science, Social Science. As the chief guest in the program, District Education Officer Das Sunanda Chandramouleswar said that information technology has changed the entire scenario in the field of education. It is necessary to provide educational, enjoyable and innovative education to children through TLM. In his address, the Sub-Divisional Education Officer motivated the teachers towards the use of TLM. Also created awareness about innovation in TLM. Rashmi Khes, Barchandra Yadav and Kumari Archana got first, second and third place respectively for model in language by the jury. In environment science, Bhajan Chakraborty stood first, Rahul Kumar second and Rahul Kumar third, Nutan Pushpa Devi first in mathematics, Navneet Kumar Garu second and Vijay Lakshmi third and in social science Soni Smriti Ekka first, Pratibha Turkey. Second and third prize was given to Premdani Kujur.

# ICSI organises soft skill and stress management programme



PNS : RANCHI

ICSI Ranchi chapter together with Dhanbad and Jamshedpur Chapter had organised a full day programme on soft skill and stress management at Latratu Dam Khunti Jharkhand on Saturday. The Managing Committee of all the three chapters congratulated Chief Guest CS Satish Kumar with Tricolour.

Special guest at the event was DPRO, Khunti District, Aman Kumar, Chairman, greeted CS B Parui Company Secretary BCCL, Amrendra Pradhan, Company Secretary CCL and Nimesh Anand and Amit Mishra, Company Secretary Electricity Board and past chairmen of Ranchi Chapter. Present Chairman CS Aman Kumar started the event with his welcome speech followed by giving honour to the chief guest present there. The

programme started with a speech of CS Satish Kumar. Followed with breakfast and some recreational activities over soft skill. Post lunch CS Satish Kumar rendered special thanks to D.C. Khunti for Supporting the TEAM ICSI for organising this grand occasion, he has also thanked the organising team CS Aman Kumar, CS Arun Kumar Sinha, CS Vinod Bakshi, CS Suman Jee, CS Roshu Agarwal of Ranchi Chapter, CS Ankit Singh, CS Ankit Majumdar from Jamshedpur Chapter, CS Kanan Bansal, CS Abhinav Chinmay, CS Roshan Lal from Dhanbad Chapter. It was the first event ever organised by ICSI in Jharkhand with a huge number of members and students present. DPRO Khunti greeted all the members and expressed his gratitude for selecting the place for organising the event.

## SAIL RSP and NIT, Rourkela sign MoU for promoting Joint Research & Development Projects



PNS : BOKARO

SAIL. Furthering the cause of industry-academia interface so as to catalyze innovation and growth in technology, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) and National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela on 1st February 2023. S R Suryawanshi, ED(Works) and Prof. K. Umamaheshwar Rao, Director, NIT, Rourkela signed the document on behalf of their respective organisations, in a ceremony organised at the Office of ED(Works) of RSP. Many senior officers of RSP as well as the Registrar and Professors of NIT were present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion Suryawanshi said, "With this MoU, RSP shall gain work-ready talent with specialist knowledge and practical training, and NIT shall benefit by having opportunities to work on relevant

technologies and challenging problems. This industry-academia collaboration shall be a defining moment for the progress of both these elite institutions and shall contribute handsomely to the vision of a Digital India." Expressing his happiness over inking of the MoU, Prof. K. Umamaheshwar Rao said that although RSP and NIT used to have many collaborative projects earlier, this new partnership will be instrumental in further advancing research and creating a skilled workforce. "Let the combination yield major breakthroughs in research and innovation and become an example for others," he said. S. Pal Chowdhury, CGM (Automation & Instrumentation) proposed a vote of thanks. It is worth mentioning here that the objective of the MoU is to pursue joint research & development projects leading to publications, patents, copyrights etc.

# Orphan children connected with social security schemes in Garhwa

NITYANAND DUBEY : GARHWA

Deputy Commissioner, Garhwa Ramesh Gholap linked two orphan girls and one orphan boy to Government assistance on Saturday. The DC connected them under the schemes of Jharkhand government's public welfare scheme Women, Child Development and Social Security Department, Mission Vatsalya under child purpose (sponsorship) and linked to Child Protective Services.

Jasmatiya Devi, grandmother of orphan girls, a resident of Salga village of Bardia block under Garhwa district, submitted an application to the Deputy Commissioner in the Janata Darbar worrying about the upbringing of the girls and told that Babita Kumari, 14 years and Anshu Kumari, 12 years, both daughters of Late Naresh Rajwar and late Meena Devi mother are orphans after death of their parents. These children are taken care of with the help of an old grandmother. Along with bringing up both, there are problems in their studies. Therefore, a request was made for better education of orphan girls.

They were given approval to provide a supplementary



amount for education, health and nutrition for 3 years at the rate of 2-2 thousand rupees per month under Mission Vatsalya Child Protection Services.

Apart from this, another orphan child Neeraj Thakur, age 12 years, class 5, resident of Chironjia of Sadar Block, son of Late Yogendra Thakur and Mother- Late Baby Devi, were also linked with Mission Vatsalya Child Protection Services at the rate of Rs 2000 per month for 3 years. Approval was given to provide a supplementary amount for education, health and nutrition. Orphan child Neeraj Thakur, along with his aunt Sheela Devi, met the Deputy Commissioner, narrated her problems and apprised him about the difficulties she was facing in his studies.

This assistance amount received for assistance can

be given to the children in future as per the requirement till they turn 18 years old. Apart from this, Babita Kumari, age 14 years, in class 6th, has been approved to give Rs 2.5 thousand per year and Anshu Kumari, age 12 years, class 5, Rs 1.5 thousand per year, under the pre-matric scholarship scheme. Along with this, elder sister Babita Kumari was told to enroll in Kasturba Gandhi Residential School. On being asked by the Deputy Commissioner about the education of Usha Kumari, the eldest sister of the orphan girls, it was found that she had left her studies after studying up to class VIII. When Usha Kumari expressed her desire to study further, the Deputy Commissioner directed to enroll her in the school as well.

Being aware of the prob-

lems related to the treatment of the grandmother of the girls, Jasmatiya Devi was given a golden card for free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh for her treatment. Along with this, all the above mentioned orphan boys/girls were also directed to make golden cards.

In order to solve the problem related to the housing of orphan girls, the Deputy Development Commissioner Gadhiwa was directed to allot the house in the name of the grandmother of the orphan girls.

The Deputy Commissioner asked the grandmother who came with the orphan girls and her aunt who came with the child to make them study regularly and everyone was advised to study diligently. The reason for the death of the parents of the orphans was that the Deputy Commissioner was asked to take care of them like his own children.

Deputy Development Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Rai, District Welfare Officer, Niles Kumar Murmu, District Public Relations Officer Saket Kumar Pandey, District Child Protection Officer Ashok Kumar Nayak, Salaga Panchayat chief Umesh Prajapati and others were present on the occasion.

# Cancer Survivor meet at BNMH



PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

On the occasion of World Cancer Day, a Cancer Survivors meet program was organised at the Chemotherapy Ward of Brahmaanda Narayana Multispecialty Hospital.

The program was inaugurated by Facility Director Vinit Raj, cancer specialist Dr. Amit Kumar, cancer surgeon Dr. Ashish Kumar by lighting the lamp. The main theme of the program was to interact with cancer survivors.

The chief guest of the program was Ritu Rungta who herself is a cancer survivor, certified yoga trainer and a social reformer. She conducted a yoga session for cancer survivors, cancer patients and trainees. She explained the role of yoga, pranayama and meditation in cancer recovery and said that for any disease it is very important to have mental balance of the patient to get rid of the disease.

If the power of the patient is strong, then a deadly dis-

ease like cancer can be defeated.

Facility Director Mr Vinit Raj said Cancer is the leading cause of death and its burden is continuously increasing. We at NH Brahmaanda provide comprehensive Medical and surgical oncology services to the patients and provide all necessary support services for the patients mental and physical well being.

On this World Cancer Day, we should all join hands to raise awareness for early detection, educate ourselves about the disease, help patients and their family and above all lead a healthy lifestyle so that we can reduce the burden of cancer on society. Cancer surgeon Dr Ashish Kumar said that awareness is very important in Cancer prevention. We all should bridge the gap between cancer and care. Cancer Specialist Dr Amit Kumar said that Don't be afraid of cancer, fight cancer, and the main weapon to fight with cancer is Awareness.



# UNION HOME MINISTER LAYS FOUNDATION OF IFFCO NANO UREA PLANT IN DEOGHAR

LIQUID UREA PLANT TO PRODUCE 6 CRORE UREA BOTTLES EVERY YEAR

PNS : RANCHI

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah today performed the Bhumii Pujan and laid the foundation stone of the fifth plant of the world's first IFFCO Nano Urea Plant at Deoghar. Shah offered prayers at Baba Baidyanath Temple and prayed for the progress and prosperity of the country. On the occasion of IFFCO's Nano Urea Plant foundation stone laying ceremony, MP from Godda Nishikant Dubey, IFFCO Chairman Dilip Sanghani and many dignitaries were also present.

Amit Shah said in his address that today the foundation stone of the production plant of Nano Urea Plant of IFFCO has been laid here. Liquid urea is very important for the conservation of the

soil of our country. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi made land conservation a major issue and gave priority to all land conservation works, be it natural farming, organic farming or speeding up the process from research to production of Nano Urea. Shah said that with the formation of Nano Urea's Deoghar unit, about 6 crore liquid urea bottles will be manufactured here every year, which will reduce our dependence on its imports and India will become self-sufficient in this sector.

The Union Minister said that this one small bottle of 500 grams would be a substitute for a full bag of urea. In many places in the country, farmers spray urea as well as liquid urea, which damages not only the crop but also the land. He said that the production would probably



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with his wife Sonal Shah offers prayers at Baba Baidyanath Dham Temple in Deoghar on Saturday. PNS

increase if farmers sprayed liquid urea. Shah said that the research of nano liquid urea has been done for the

protection of Mother Earth. Chemical fertilizer kills the earthworms present in the soil which make natural fer-

tilizers, while the spraying of liquid urea will not make the soil toxic in any way.

Amit Shah said that if the use of chemical and urea fertilizers is not eliminated from agriculture soon, then like in many countries of the world, the productivity of the land will be negatively affected. He said that IFFCO, a farmers' cooperative, has made liquid nano urea for the first time in the world and is now moving towards DAP (D-Ammonium Phosphate). It is a matter of pride for India and the entire cooperative sector. Shah said that Prime Minister Modi announced several schemes in the budget to promote cooperatives. Under this, the rate of income tax has been reduced from 26 per cent to 15 per cent for new cooperative units in the field of production.

The Union Minister said

that after the formation of the Ministry of Cooperatives, work has been done to create a data bank of cooperatives across India. In the next 5 years, the government will facilitate the establishment of new multipurpose cooperative societies, primary fisheries societies and dairy cooperative societies in every panchayat. He said that such storage procedures are going on in the country for years which are not favorable to our country. The farmer's produce is first brought to godowns and then taken back to the village for distribution. Due to this, 50 per cent of the benefit that the government wants to give to the poor is spent on transportation. But now modern godowns with storage capacity of two to five thousand tonnes will be built in every tehsil, so that the farmer's produce will be stored at the

tehsil center itself and from there the mid-day meal and free food grains will be distributed to the poor in the same tehsil, so that transportation of food grains will be done. Expenses will come down by about 80 per cent.

Amit Shah said that Prime Minister Modi has announced the world's largest cooperative food storage scheme in the budget, it is a matter of pride for the whole country. This will make packs multidimensional and their income will increase. He said that the Ministry of Cooperation has also recognized PACS as community centers with the support of the IT Ministry. Now 300 services of Government of India and State Government will be available through Pax, such as birth-death registration, air-train ticket booking, banking etc.

The Union Home and

Cooperation Minister said that today liquid urea is being exported to about 5 countries. He said that this liquid urea made by IFFCO would not only help the farmers of India but also of the world. India used to import urea once but many urea factories were revived by the Prime Minister and today this small liquid urea factory built on 30 acres will create an alternative to imported 60 million urea fertilizer bags, making India self-sufficient in this field. . Due to this, the land of the farmer will also be protected and production will also increase. Extending his best wishes to the farmers of entire Eastern India, Shah said that this liquid nano urea factory would prove useful in increasing the production in the fields of farmers not only in Jharkhand but also in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal.

## Union Minister Jitendra Singh lauds Budget as 'Futuristic'



PNS : RANCHI

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation of a stable Indian Economy, which could withstand all domestic and global upheavals and still earn the IMF title as a "bright spot" among major economies of the world.

Briefing the media in Ranchi, about the "futuristic budget" presented to Parliament on Wednesday, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the revolutionary measures and transformative reforms since May, 2014 made India's Macro-Economic Outlook rock solid. The Minister said, on this "rock" foundation, the budget of 2023-24 promises to build the invincible future India over the next 25 years. World

today looks up to India as it jumps 40 positions higher on Global Innovation Index, he said.

Describing it as a budget which addresses the aspirations of every section of society, Dr Jitendra Singh said, from middle class to big industry, from women to youth, from farmer to StartUps, it is an inclusive budget for all. At the same time, priorities like Green Growth target the global benchmarks of the 21st century, he said. Dr Jitendra Singh pointed out that the first major economic reform of the Goods and Services Tax rolled out on the midnight of 1st July, 2017 was a Path-breaking legislation for New India, which led to One-Nation, One-Tax and One-Market and in fact was the realization of dream of Sardar Patel to make "Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat". Dr Jitendra Singh said, apart from this, several pro-business reforms unleashed by Modi in the last Nine Years like reduction in compliance requirements, removal of retrospective taxation, simplification of the corporate tax rate structure, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) have improved India's "rank in ease of doing business from 142 in 2014 to 63 in 2022, as per World Bank report.

Dwelling on the overall Budget outlook for entire country and all the States, Dr Jitendra Singh said, it has specific provisions for the State of Jharkhand and pointed out that 75 out of 705 Schedule Tribes identified as PM Particularly Vulnerable

Tribal Groups, 9 belong to Jharkhand. He said, Rs 15,000 crore allocated to provide these families with basic facilities such as housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education, health and nutrients.

Referring to 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools, Dr Jitendra Singh said, 7 such schools are operational in Jharkhand and pointed out the General Budget has proposed to recruit 38,800 teachers and supporting staff for Eklavya Model Schools serving 3.5 lakh tribal students. He also underlined that out of total 500 Blocks selected as aspirational blocks, 34 belong to Jharkhand.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, for saturation of essential services across multiple domains such as health, nutrition, education, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure. Referring to the first budget in the Amrit Kaal of India, Dr Jitendra Singh said, this budget is for all sections of society and addresses the concerns of all sectors, but overall it gives priority to the deprived and un privileged sections in rural areas.

Paraphrasing Prime Minister Modi, Dr Jitendra Singh said, "From women living in the cities to villages, employed to home-makers, the government has taken significant steps such as Jal Jeevan Mission, Ujjwala Yojna and PM Awas Yojana etc. that will further empower the welfare of women".



Chief Minister Hemant Soren and JMM Chief Shibu Soren being garlanded by party workers during the Foundation Day ceremony of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) in Bokaro on Saturday. PNS



## ASCOT INTL SCHOOL CELEBRATES 10TH FOUNDATION DAY

The anniversary and foundation day of Ascot International School will be celebrated on 5th February (Sunday). Regarding which a press conference was held on Saturday. During this, the director of the school, Kunal Kashyap, said that due to the Corona epidemic, our education system has been greatly affected. Willingly or unwittingly, we all have become mobile and other devices etc. The program will show how modernization dominates us and how to reconcile with it. The fragrance and culture of Mari of Jharkhand will also be seen in the programme.

## Bajrang Mahto to be Congress candidate from Ramgarh



PNS : RANCHI

Congress has opened its cards for the Ramgarh by-election and Bajrang Mahto will be the party candidate from the seat. Bajrang Mahto is the husband of former MLA Mamta Mamta Devi. He will file nomination on February 7 along with his supporters. The nomination for the bye-election has started from January 31. The nomination process will continue till February 7. Scrutiny will be on February 8. Along with this, the date of withdrawal of nominations is till February 10. Polling on this seat will be held on February 27. The result will be announced on March 2.

Ramgarh's Congress MLA Mamta Devi was sentenced to 5 years in the IPL firing case. She was disqualified by the state assembly after being convicted in a criminal case. The matter is of the year 2016. In which there was a movement against the IPL management for the demands under the banner of Nagrik Chetna Manch.

Meanwhile, Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee (JPCC), on Saturday, attacked Prime Minister, Narendra Modi for ongoing Gautam Adani imbroglio. Addressing a press meet at the party head-quarter JPCC Chief, Rajesh

Thakur said that Modi's hard work of 20 years, when he was the Chief Minister. The hard work of when he became the Prime Minister and by working so hard, Modi inflated a balloon, puffed up, the air ran out. He said that keeping all the rules, regulations and laws in mind, Modi brought up a man and what happened today. He said that if this was a matter between Modi and Adani then what would be our objection, we would have kept quiet, you would have kept quiet.

The JPCC Chief said that now even one cannot remain silent, we also cannot remain silent because this matter is now the hard-earned money of each and every Indian which is now in danger through LIC. He said that we have been listening to the advertisement of LIC since childhood. Now the tagline of 'Zindagi Saath Bhi, Zindagi Ke Baad Bhi' will also have to be changed. 'Life was with you, now it is with Adani'. This is the condition of LIC. At the same time, he said that the PM is the prime mentor, Adani's prime mentor is the Prime Minister who is very silent. At the same time, he said in this regard that you will not hear a word from the mouth of Prime Minister, Modi.

## DC asks officials to keep city clean and tidy ahead of G20 meetings

PNS : RANCHI

An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Ranchi Rahul Kumar here on Saturday regarding preparations related to "G20". In the meeting SSP, Ranchi, Kishor Kaushal, City SP, Ranchi, Naushad Alam, SDO, Ranchi (Sadar) Deepak Kumar Dubey, and ADM (Law and Order), Rajeshwar Nath Alok and NDC Ranchi, Kewal Krishna Agarwal and Additional Municipal Commissioner, Kunwar Singh Pahan, Building Construction

Department, Ranchi, Executive Engineer, Suresh Prashasi, Executive Engineer, and concerned district level officers and officials were present.

The places falling on the proposed route in which delegates from 120 countries are coming. In view of this, instructions were given by the DC regarding the preparation. In which instructions were given to run the "Encroachment Right" campaign for a week for beautification, painting, road construction and repair, cable shifting, furnishing, removal of encroachment from the proposed

route.

The DC directed to fill a huge pit at the airport entry gate from where vehicles get parking slips and was asked to repair it as soon as possible.

The board on the airport road (near the parking gate) is broken. Instructions were given to fix it by the DC. The DC directed to clean the bushes from the airport entry gate to Hotel Green Acres (Airport Road).

The DC directed to free the front of the shop near Hinoo Chowk and its surroundings from encroachment. Instructions were given by the DC to arrange the cables of power

cable and telecom companies near Hinoo Chowk. He instructed to paint the airport boundary from Hinoo Chowk to Birsa Chowk.

The DC directed to clean and paint the entire proposed route from the airport, arrange cables and electric wires of telecom companies and remove encroachments. He instructed them to remove the fish and chicken shop around Kailash Pati Mishra square inside the main gate and to remove vehicle parking from there and to get it cleaned as soon as possible.

The DC instructed to clean the

garage in front of the DPS School Ranchi (VIP road) and the shop in and around it. He asked to clean Argora Chowk (around Sulabh toilets) and arrange cables of telecom companies and make encroachments free.

In order to remove the encroachment from the proposed route, instructions were given to deploy magistrates as per the requirement by the DC. He directed a special encroachment right for 7 days to remove the encroachment, so that the proposed route can be made smooth.

## Shah attacks coalition Govt on corruption, infiltration in Santhal

Calls upon people of State to give all 14 Lok Sabha seats to BJP

PNS : RANCHI

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah today termed the coalition government in Jharkhand as the most corrupt government in the country. Addressing the Vijay Sankalp Maha Rally organized by the BJP at the Industrial Ground of Jasidih, Deoghar on Saturday, Shah said that the Hemant government is deeply immersed in corruption.

Deoghar resounded with deafening slogans as soon as Amit Shah came on the stage. The Union Home Minister was welcomed on the stage by State BJP President cum Rajya Sabha MP Deepak Prakash by presenting him the emblem of Baidhath Baba's temple. Babul Marandi welcomed him with a symbol of Jain Tirthankara Lord Mahavira. Godda MP Nishinkant Dubey welcomed Amit Shah by giving him the symbol of Baba Baijnath Kamnalinga. State President Deepak Prakash presided over the programme and the stage was conducted by District President and MLA Narayan Das.

Describing the Hemant

government as anti-tribal, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the Chief Minister of the State did nothing for the development and upliftment of the tribal society. In fact, the Chief Minister of the state does not want the development of the tribal society of the state. The state government has kept this society only as a vote bank.

He said that due to the policies of Congress and JMM, this area has lagged behind on the path of development. He said that in the Jharkhand of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's dreams, the BJP government worked in all areas including education, roads, electricity, water, employment, but the Hemant government ruined Jharkhand. Hemant Sarkar does corruption with tractors and water ships, he said.

Expressing concern over the decreasing population of tribals and Dalits, he said that today the number of tribal communities in the State is decreasing under Hemant Soren government. Here the demography is being changed due to the infiltrators.



He said, "Hemant Bhai, listen with open ears, now vote bank politics will not work, the tribal society understands your cleverness very well. BJP will not allow the demography here to change. It is the resolution of the BJP that Jharkhand will remain to whom it belongs."

He expressed serious concern over increasing atrocities on sisters and daughters in Jharkhand and said that the safety of daughters is the responsibility of the state government. Speaking on the murder of Rubika Paharia and Ankita, he said that the Chief Minister is responsible

for the murder of tribal and Dalit daughters.

Describing the BJP government as synonymous with development, he said that the BJP has done the work of writing a new saga of development during its tenure. Challenging the Hemant Soren government, he said that Hemant Soren ji, this crowd from Santhal Pargana in this rally is a trailer, its effect will be seen in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Shah called for the Rajmahal Lok Sabha seat to go to the BJP. He said that the BJP could not win this seat, as a result of which this

area has been away from development. To make this area as developed as the Godda Lok Sabha, it will have to be put in the hands of the BJP.

Addressing the gathering, BJP Legislature Party leader cum former Chief Minister Babul Marandi said that the present Hemant Soren government is not concerned about the people here but is concerned about himself and his family. There is a need to identify them. Hemant Soren formed the government in the state by taking votes in the name of tribals and at present this government is being run by looters and middlemen. The exploitation of mineral wealth and sand is going on continuously. The situation is that sand is not available even to build houses in the village. The law and order situation is from bad to worse. Cow smuggling is happening openly.

Marandi accused Hemant Soren of doing politics on 1932 based local policy and said that Hemant Soren is firing by keeping a gun on the other's shoulder. He said that Hemant Soren toppled the government in the name

of making local policy based on 1932, but after that when Hemant Soren's government was formed in the state with the help of Congress and the Congress government was at the center, at that time Hemant Soren made local policy based on 1932. Why it was not sent to the Central Government to be included in the 9th Schedule?

State BJP president Deepak Prakash, MLA Amit Mandal, Rajmahal MP Sunil Soren, MLA Randhir Singh, Mistry Soren, Satyanand Jha, Batul, Louis Marandi also addressed the meeting.

State President cum Rajya Sabha MP Deepak Prakash, Legislature Party leader Babul Marandi, former Chief Minister and National Vice President Raghur Das, Union Ministers Annapurna Devi, Karmaveer Singh, Nishikant Dubey among those who welcomed Union Home Minister cum Cooperation Minister Amit Shah at Deoghar airport Dubey, Sunil Soren, Narayan Das, Randhir Singh, Amit Mandal, Abhaykant Prasad, Bajrang Yadav, Krishna Mahato were included.



# Agniveer recruitment through e-test

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Given the rapidly changing nature of warfighting with stress on technology, the Army has decided to conduct written examination for all the aspiring Agniveers. Once they clear the examination, the candidates will have to undergo physical endurance test followed by the medical test. The Navy and the IAF are already following the process in the same order.

The new tweaking in selection by the Army will commence mid February, sources said here on Saturday. Prospective candidates will first be required to take an admission examination online.



The physical and medical examinations will take place later.

Previously, the Army would undertake a physical and medical examination first.

Only after passing the first two tests were candidates permitted to take the written examination. They said the new method will also help in easing screening process and the

logistics involved. For the first time in 2022, the Indian Army recruited soldiers under the Agniveer programme. Agniveer recruitment followed the same procedure as regular

soldier recruitment.

A large number of candidates are said to congregate at army recruitment rallies, which occasionally causes law and order issues. Additionally, it consumes a lot of resources.

The written examination in the first step will screen out candidates. Those who pass the written exam will be authorised to take the physical and medical exams.

"The changed methodology will ensure increased focus on cognitive aspect during selection. It will have wider outreach across the country and also reduce the large crowds seen during recruitment rallies to make them more manageable and easier to conduct," sources said.

The recruiting examination will be conducted online, and students will be assigned to the appropriate test locations for the written test. The examination will last 60 minutes. Following the written test, a merit list will be made public, after which the candidates will be contacted for a physical and medical exam. Physical testing is part of the second round of the examination, while the medical is part of the third and final round.

The army recruited 40,000 Agniveers last year, and they are currently undergoing training. Around 10,000 Agniveers will be given permanent commission after four years. 40,000 Agniveers will be recruited again this year.

# Public 'malik', says Rijiju

## Min says after SC's strong remarks over judges' transfers



PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A day after the Supreme Court warned of action for any delay in clearing transfer and appointment of judges, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday said the country will be governed according to the Constitution and wishes of the people and nobody can give warning to anyone.

"Public is 'malik' (master) of this country and we are servants. We all are here for service and the Constitution is our guide.... The country will be governed under the guidance of the Constitution and wishes of the public. Nobody can give warning to anyone," Rijiju said.

"Sometimes discussions are held in the country on some matters and in a democracy everyone has the right to express their opinion. But people sitting in responsible positions have to think before saying anything, whether it will benefit the country or not," he said, referring to reported remarks of a Supreme Court bench.

The minister was addressing an event on the 150th anniversary of the Allahabad High Court Bar Association here as the chief guest.

His remarks came a day after a bench of Justices S K Kaul and A S Oka expressed displeasure over the delay in clearing recommendations for transfer of high court judges, calling it a "very serious issue", and warned that any delay in this matter may result in both administrative and judicial actions which might not be

palatable. On Saturday, the Supreme Court also questioned the government over the delay in clearing the names of five high court judges who had been recommended for elevation to the Supreme Court. The judges were elevated to the Supreme Court on Sunday.

The remarks are the latest in a tug of war between the judiciary and the executive over the process of appointment of judges of the Supreme Court and high courts.

On the pendency of cases, Minister Rijiju said, "At present, 4 crore 90 lakh cases are pending in various courts across the country. We are solving this problem." He said that in view of the huge number of pending cases, the government has made preparations to implement the Legal Information Management System so that a person will be able to get information about the status of the case in any high court on one click.

"Being the largest high court of the country, I wish that the Allahabad High Court should play a leading role in implementing the e-courts project. The government has abolished 1,486 old and outdated laws and the process of removing 65 such laws is going on in the current Parliament session," he said.

The minister also said the Arbitration Bill is in the final stages of preparation and after its passage, a parallel judicial system will be established in the country. With the system of arbitration, small cases will be settled outside the court and the burden on courts will be reduced, he said.

# ED questions Rahul's aide in money laundering case against TMC functionary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has questioned and recorded the statement of Alankar Sawai, a close aide of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, in a money laundering case in which TMC spokesperson Saket Gokhale was recently arrested by the agency in Gujarat, officials said.

Sawai was questioned and also confronted with Gokhale in Ahmedabad over three days earlier this week, they said.

A former banker, Sawai is considered to be a close aide of Rahul, a former Congress president, and is stated to be heading his research team.

The federal probe agency

summoned Sawai after it arrested 35-year-old Gokhale on January 25 while he was in the Gujarat Police's custody in connection with alleged financial irregularities in raising funds through a crowd funding platform.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), while seeking Gokhale's remand on that day, had informed a Ahmedabad court that when he was asked about Rs 23.54 lakh deposited in his bank account in cash over a year, Gokhale had told the agency that "this amount was given in cash by Alankar Sawai of the India National Congress for social media work and other consultancy".

# India, UAE, France to speed up trilateral bid on climate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India, France and the United Arab Emirates on Saturday discussed the way to hasten up a trilateral initiative among the three countries on issues like climate change, protection of biodiversity and joint training and joint production of weapon systems.

These issues were reviewed during a telephonic conversation between the foreign ministers of the three countries on Saturday, ministry of external affairs (MEA) said here later. A joint statement was also issued.

Giving details of the initiative, MEA said on 19



September 2022, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the Foreign Ministers of India, France and the UAE met for the first time in a trilateral format.

In acknowledgement of their shared desire to promote international stability and prosperity, and to further build upon the constructive and collaborative ties that exist between the three countries, the Foreign Ministers of India,

France and the UAE agreed to establish a formal trilateral cooperation initiative, with the aim of expanding cooperation in various fields of mutual interest. It is in this context that a phone call between the three Ministers was held on Saturday to adopt a roadmap for the implementation of this initiative.

The three sides agreed that the trilateral initiative will serve as a forum to promote the design and execution of cooperation projects in the fields of energy, with a focus on solar and nuclear energy, as well as in the fight against climate change and the protection of biodiversity, particularly in the Indian Ocean region.

# BMC budget pro-contractor, it will spell Mumbai's financial bankruptcy, alleges Aaditya

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai civic body's budget for 2023-24 is pro-contractor and will pave the way for Mumbai's financial bankruptcy, said Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray on Saturday, while the Bharatiya Janata Party called it "truly for Mumbaikars".

The Aam Admi Party and the Congress also criticised the Rs 52,619-crore budget, which was presented by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) chief and administrator Iqbal Singh Chahal.

"The unconstitutional state Govt and the BMC governed by the administrator has been showing moral and legal bankruptcy for 6 months. Today's BMC budget shows that it has begun to pave way for Mumbai's financial bankruptcy," tweeted Aaditya Thackeray.

Until the term of the corporators got over last March, the Shiv Sena had ruled the BMC for more than two decades. The Uddhav Thackeray-led party split in June 2022 following a rebellion by Eknath Shinde, who joined hands with the BJP to form the government in the state. BMC elections are expected to be held this year.



Demanding the BMC to explain "hiked expenses" in its "pro contractor" budget, Aaditya Thackeray said, "While on one hand, we clearly see contractor friends of this unconstitutional State Govt benefitting, the MC's (Chahal's) speech finds a mention of curbing expenses, which should be told to the bosses in Govt rather than Mumbaikars."

The AAP targeted the BMC over utilisation of funds.

The Arvind Kejriwal-led party, which is trying to expand its footprints in Mumbai, said the budget is "an annual ritual" aimed at throwing big numbers but utilisation of funds year after year reveals a "sordid saga of ineptitude and incompetence".

The allocation of Rs 3,347 crore for education is a mere 6.36 per cent of the overall outlay, while healthcare saw a 9 per cent dip to Rs 6,309 crore and is 12 per cent of the overall figures, said AAP.

# Attempts underway by Centre to malign Bengal, says Abhishek

PTI ■ KESHPUR

TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday slammed the Centre for sending central teams to West Bengal, and said attempts are on to malign the state government as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had not bowed before it.

He also dubbed the state BJP leaders "anti-Bengal", as they have also "played a role in stopping the flow of funds" to the state.

"People here know how the BJP-led central government has halted funds for Bengal. It is doing this out of vengeance, because the party could not win the assembly elections in 2021," he said, while addressing a mega rally at Keshpur.

Abhishek Banerjee said the TMC leadership would never surrender before the "corrupt" BJP regime.

"Mamata Banerjee has never bowed her head in front of these dishonest BJP politicians, and she will never do it. She has the love and affection of the people, and they will give the answer to BJP's injustice."

"BJP leaders are sending central teams... However, they couldn't find even one case of fraud. The teams were sent to malign the people of the state," he alleged.

# Doctors welcome FM's call to increase NCCD on cigarettes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Doctors and activists have welcomed the Union Finance Minister's announcement to increase national calamity contingent duty (NCCD) on cigarettes to 16 per cent in the annual Budget of 2023-24, asserting that the move would strengthen various initiatives aimed to reduce cancer causing tobacco use in India.

However, at the same time they have urged the Government to augment these efforts increasing taxes on bidis and smokeless products that are becoming health as well as fiscal burden in the country. The NCCD on specified cigarettes was last revised three years ago.

Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, Chief Executive, Voluntary Health Association of India hailed the decision but felt that the percentage increase is minimal. "We hope that in future, the Finance Minister

will ensure a significant increase in taxation and decrease in the affordability of all tobacco products to match the message that has been sent so strongly in this budget".

The present GST rates on tobacco products combined with the compensation cess for all tobacco products is much lower than the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended tax burden of at least 75% of retail price for all tobacco products.

The total tax burden is currently only about 53% for cigarettes, 22% for bidis and 60% for smokeless tobacco. According to international experts, raising the price of tobacco products through tax increases is the most effective policy to reduce tobacco use. Higher tobacco prices decrease affordability, encourage quitting among users, prevent initiation among non-users, and reduce the quantity consumed among continuing users.

# Shah hails Naga group ENPO's decision to withdraw poll boycott call

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday lauded the decision by Eastern Nagaland Peoples Organisation (ENPO) to withdraw its assembly election boycott call, saying it is an expression of trust in the Modi government.

The ENPO, which has been demanding separate statehood - Frontier Nagaland - comprising six districts of Mon, Tuensang, Longleng, Kiphire, Shamatore and Noklak, had given the poll boycott call to press for their demand.

"It is heartening that in an expression of trust in the Modi government, the Eastern Nagaland Peoples Organisation (ENPO) in Nagaland has withdrawn its call to boycott the assembly elections. The decision will help in keeping the ongoing process of peace and development unhindered," Shah said in tweets.

The home minister said he was grateful to the group for the positive gesture reaffirming ENPO's commitment to democratic processes.

Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made untiring efforts to assure the people of Northeast India that the government is with them and the ENPO's move is an approval of these endeavours.

According to an ENPP release, the decision was taken during its executive meeting



held in Dimapur on Saturday following the request of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to review the August 26, 2022 resolution of ENPO and its constituent tribal bodies and frontal organisations to abstain in any election process.

The ENPO also requested all citizens to cooperate with the government in the conduct of the election and not create any law and order problems.

In a release, the ENPO said the meeting discussed the assurance given by Union Home Minister Amit Shah to ENPO office bearers on February 2 and after due consultation with its constituent tribal bodies and frontal organisations relaxed its resolution with immediate effect.

PNS ■ DEOGARH

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday claimed that demographic change in Jharkhand has seen the percentage of the 'Adivasi' (tribal) population declining during the Hemant Soren government's tenure in power.

Addressing the BJP's 'Vijay Sankalp Maha Rally' here, the senior party leader claimed that the population of Adivasis has declined from 35 per cent to 24 per cent due to massive infiltration from across the international border, which has been 'encouraged by the Hemant Soren government for vote bank politics'.

He alleged that infiltrators were grabbing land in the state after marrying tribal women.

"The Hemant Soren government is the most corrupt in the country. Resources are being looted using railway wagons and tractors. People will unseat this government from power in the state as it failed to fulfil the 'aspirations of development' for which the separate state was created," he said.

Shah said the BJP will win all 14 Lok Sabha seats in the state in the elections next year.

Referring to the killing of a class 12 student, who was burnt alive by her stalker in Dumka last year, Shah said, "Adivasi girls are being murdered while the Hemant Soren government is indulging in politics of appeasement."

Earlier in the day, the Cooperation Minister said the Union government has decided to provide 300 services of the Centre as well as the state governments through the Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS).

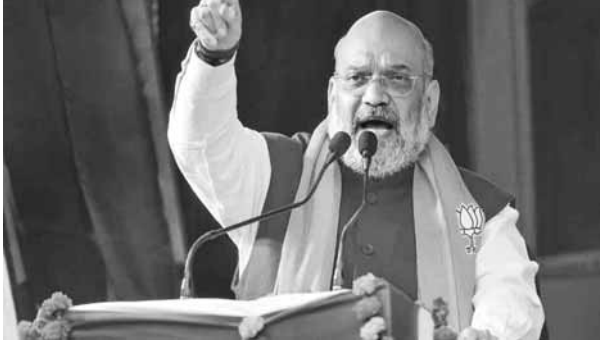
Shah said PACS would now function as Common Service Centres (CSC) and farmers can avail benefits of 300 services including no-dues certificates, birth and death registration, and many more.

"The decision was taken on Friday. The IT Ministry has supported the Cooperative Ministry in this regard," he said, while laying the foundation stone of a Rs 450-crore IFFCO nano urea

plant in Jasidih in Deogarh district.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on Friday to enable the PACS to provide services offered by Common Service Centres.

According to the agreement, more than 300 services will be made available to the rural population, including 13 crore farmer members of PACS, a statement said.



# HM lays foundation stone of ₹450-cr nano urea plant in J'khand

PTI ■ DEOGARH

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday laid the foundation stone of a Rs 450-crore nano urea plant and township of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) in Jharkhand's Deogarh.

Shah said it will help in reducing the dependence on import of urea and usher in development of the eastern region, particularly the Santhal Paraganas.

"Nano urea will benefit farmers, and it is already being exported to five countries," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the world's first nano urea plant in Gujarat last year, according to IFFCO. This will be India's fifth such plant.

"PM Modi has given priority to all works related to land conservation across the country..."

Many urea factories were revived by Modi, and this

small liquid urea factory built on 30 acres will manufacture about six crore bottles every year, which will make India self-sufficient by reducing imports in this sector," Shah said.

The facility will prove to be useful in increasing production not only in Jharkhand but also in Bihar, Odisha and Bengal, he said.

Nano urea improves crop productivity, soil health and nutritional quality of the produce, IFFCO said.

# RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

## Soldiers freed in Russia, Ukraine prisoner swap

AP ■ KYIV

Dozens of Russian and Ukrainian prisoners of war have returned home following a prisoner swap, officials on both sides said Saturday.

Top Ukrainian presidential aide Andriy Yermak said in a Telegram post that 116 Ukrainians were freed.

He said the released POWs include troops who held out in Mariupol during Moscow's monthslong siege that reduced the southern port city to ruins, as well as guerrilla fighters from the Kherson region and snipers captured during the ongoing fierce battles for the eastern city of Bakhmut.

Russian defence officials, meanwhile, announced that 63 Russian troops had returned from Ukraine following the swap, including some "special category" prisoners whose release was secured following mediation by the United Arab Emirates.

A statement issued Saturday by the Russian Defence Ministry did not provide details about these "special category" captives.

At least three civilians have been killed in Ukraine over the past 24 hours as Russian forces struck nine regions in the country's south, north and east, according to reports on Ukrainian TV by regional gov-



ernors on Saturday morning.

Two people were killed and 14 others wounded in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region by Russian shelling and missile strikes, local Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said in a Telegram update on Saturday morning.

The casualty toll included a man who was killed and seven others who were wounded Friday after Russian missiles slammed into Toretsk, a town in the Donetsk region.

Kyrylenko said that 34 houses, two kindergartens, an outpatient clinic, a library, a cultural centre and other buildings were damaged in the strike.

Seven teenagers received shrapnel wounds after an anti-

personnel mine exploded late on Friday in the northeastern city of Izium, local Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said on Telegram.

He said they were all hospitalised but their lives were not in danger.

Elsewhere, regional Ukrainian officials reported overnight shelling by Russia of border settlements in the northern Sumy region, as well as the town of Marhanets, which neighbours the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Kyiv has long accused Moscow of using the plant, which Russian forces seized early in the war, as a base for launching attacks on Ukrainian-held territory across the Dnieper river.

## China plays down Blinken's cancelled visit over balloon

AP ■ TAIPEI

China played down the cancellation of a visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken after a large Chinese balloon suspected of conducting surveillance on US military sites roiled diplomatic relations, saying that neither side had formally announced any such plan.

"In actuality, the U.S. And China have never announced any visit, the US making any such announcement is their own business, and we respect that," China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Saturday morning.

Blinken was due to visit Beijing on Sunday for talks aimed at reducing US-China tensions, the first such high-profile trip after the countries' leaders met last November in Indonesia.

But the US abruptly cancelled the trip after the discovery of the huge balloon despite China's claim that it was mere-



ly a weather research "airship" that had blown off course.

The Pentagon rejected that out of hand — as well as China's contention that the balloon was not being used for surveillance and had only limited navigational ability.

Uncensored reactions on the Chinese internet mirrored the official government stance that the US was hyping up the situation.

Many users made jokes about the balloon. Some said that since the U.S. Had put restrictions on the technology that China is able to buy to weaken the Chinese tech industry, they couldn't control the balloon.

Others called it the "wandering balloon" in a pun that refers to the newly released Chinese sci-fi film called "The Wandering Earth 2."

## ASEAN vows to conclude pact with China on disputed territory

AP ■ JAKARTA

Southeast Asian foreign ministers vowed to finalise negotiations with China over a proposed pact aimed at preventing conflicts in the disputed South China Sea in their annual retreat on Saturday in Indonesia's capital.

In the final session of their two-day meeting, the ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also agreed to unite in their approach to implement a five-step agreement made in 2021 between ASEAN leaders and Myanmar's military leader, Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing,

that seeks to end that country's worsening crisis.

China and the ASEAN member states, which include four rival claimants to territories in the South China Sea, have been holding sporadic talks for years on a "code of conduct," a set of regional norms and rules aimed at preventing a clash the

disputed waters.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said that Indonesia, this year's ASEAN chair, is ready to host more rounds of negotiations over the proposed pact, the first of which will be held in March. She said ASEAN members are committed to concluding the

discussions "as soon as possible." "Members are also committed to promote implementation of a declaration of conduct," Marsudi added.

Marsudi did not elaborate, but in the past, China has accused Washington of meddling in what it calls an Asian dispute.

## Israeli army besieges homes of fugitives in West Bank raid

AP ■ AQABAT JABR REFUGEE CAMP

The Israeli army raided a refugee camp near the Palestinian city of Jericho on Saturday, besieging houses it said were being used as hide-outs for Palestinian attackers and shooting at residents who opened fire.

The fighting wounded six Palestinians, two seriously, said the Palestinian Health Ministry, and jolted a generally quiet oasis town that has seen less violence than other West Bank cities.

The army said it entered the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp southwest of Jericho in the occupied West Bank to search for suspects involved in a shooting attack last week at a nearby Israeli settlement.

Last Saturday, with the West Bank on edge after the deadliest Israeli military raid in two decades and two subsequent Palestinian attacks in east Jerusalem that killed seven people, the army said a Palestinian gunman had opened fire in a restaurant at a settlement near Jericho. After firing one bullet, the gunman



fled the scene, the army said. No one was wounded.

The army said several Palestinians had holed up in their homes after the shooting with the help of family and were planning future attacks.

To force the fugitives to surrender, a military bulldozer clawed at the walls of one of the homes as an Israeli commander shouted threats over a loudspeaker.

Camp residents reported receiving text messages urging families to keep their children inside and avoid clashing with Israeli troops.

The suspects and family members trickled out of one of the homes and turned themselves in, the military said. Security forces had leveled much of the house, leaving a pile of rubble and twisted metal.

## Qatar boosts influence in Lebanon amid crises

AP ■ BEIRUT

Most wealthy Gulf Arab nations followed Saudi Arabia's lead in recent years and ostracised crisis-hit Lebanon because of the growing influence of the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah. The exception was Qatar.

Doha has been silently expanding its influence in Lebanon. It continued receiving Lebanese leaders and pumped tens millions of dollars into helping the country's armed forces amid a historic economic meltdown.

The small, gas-rich nation in late January began seeing the fruits of its investment, when state-owned Qatar Energy replaced a Russian firm in an international consortium that will search for gas in the Mediterranean Sea off Lebanon's coast.

And on Monday, Qatar will for the first time join a meeting in Paris along with officials from France, Saudi Arabia and the US for discussions focusing on Lebanon's political and economic crises.

Qatar portrays itself as a more neutral force in a coun-



try where for decades outside powers have used Lebanon's sectarian divisions to fight their proxy battles. Saudi Arabia long backed Lebanon's Sunni Muslim factions and tried to push out Iran's influence through Shiite Hezbollah. The rivalry repeatedly pushed Lebanon to the brink of armed conflict.

Qatar, which has good ties with Iran, has been trying to advance negotiations between Tehran and Gulf nations. Its

inclusion in the upcoming talks "is a signal that Iran will not be completely left out of that meeting and a recognition of the influence that Tehran has over Lebanon," said Mohamad Bazzi, a professor and director of the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at New York University.

"With Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states less heavily involved in Lebanon, Qatar is trying to revive its mediator role in the country," he said.

## Pope encourages South Sudanese, will raise plight of women

AP ■ JUBA

Pope Francis sought Saturday to console the long-suffering people of South Sudan as he opened his first full day in a country beset by conflict, poverty and humanitarian crises, encouraging priests and nuns to serve their flocks by joining in their tears.

After arriving in the world's newest country on the first-ever papal visit Friday, Francis was spending Saturday ministering first to church personnel and then to South Sudanese who have been forced by fighting, flooding and other crises to leave their homes.

Francis was highlighting in particular the plight of South Sudanese women, half of whom are married before age 18, are subject to rampant sexual violence and then face the world's highest maternal mortality rate.

"Let us ask ourselves what it means for us to be ministers of God in a land scarred by war, hatred, violence, and poverty," Francis said in St. Theresa Cathedral in the capital, Juba. "How can we exercise our



ministry in this land, along the banks of a river bathed in so much innocent blood, among the tear-stained faces of the people entrusted to us?"

Lush in oil and other natural resources but beset by years of civil war and conflict, South Sudan is one of the world's poorest countries and is responsible for Africa's worst refugee crisis: More than 2 million people have fled the country and another 2 million are displaced within its borders.

Joined by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and the Presbyterian head of the Church of Scotland, Francis is seeking to draw global attention to the country's plight.

## Wikipedia blocked for not removing blasphemous content in Pak

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has blocked Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, for its failure to remove offensive or blasphemous material, the country's telecomuni-cation authority said on Saturday.

The blacklisting of Wikipedia comes days after the Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) degraded Wikipedia services for 48 hours, threatening to block it if the content deemed 'blasphemous' was not deleted.

Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia, created and edited by volunteers around the world and hosted by the Wikimedia Foundation.

PTA spokesperson Malahat Obaid said the ban had primarily been imposed for non-compliance with the orders.

"The decision can be reviewed once Wikipedia removes sacrilegious content that has been identified by the regulatory authority," the spokesperson added.

The PTA spokesperson earlier stated that Wikipedia was approached for blocking/removal of the said content by issuing a notice.

## 13 dead in Chile amid struggle to contain raging wildfires

AP ■ SANTIAGO

At least 13 people were reported dead as of Friday night as a result of the more than 150 wildfires burning across Chile that have destroyed homes and thousands of acres of forest while the South American country is in the midst of a scorching heat wave.

Four of the deaths involved two separate vehicles in the Biobio region, around 560 kilometers (348 miles) south of the capital of Santiago.

"In one case they were burned because they were hit by the fire," Interior Minister Carolina Tohá said. In the other case, she said, the victims died in a crash, "probably trying to escape the fire."

The fifth victim was a firefighter who was run over by a fire truck while combatting a blaze in the area.

Later in the afternoon, a helicopter that was helping combat the flames crashed in the Araucania region, killing the pilot, a Bolivian national, and a mechanic, who was Chilean.

## Democrats set to shake up start of 2024 presidential primary

AP ■ PHILADELPHIA

Democrats are poised to reorder their presidential primary schedule beginning next year, replacing Iowa with South Carolina in the leadoff spot as part of a major overhaul meant to empower Black and other minority voters critical to the party's base of support.

The Democratic National Committee has worked for months to revamp the start of its voting calendar, and the full membership is set to vote on the plan on Saturday.

Although changes are still possible throughout the summer and beyond, the formal endorsement during the party's meeting in Philadelphia is acknowledgement that the start of 2024's primary will look very different than the one in 2020.

The proposal has been championed by President Joe Biden and would have South Carolina hold its primary on Feb. 3. That would be followed three days later by New Hampshire and Nevada, the latter of which is swapping the caucus it used to hold in favour of a primary. Georgia would vote fourth on Feb. 13, followed



by Michigan on Feb. 27, with much of the rest of the nation set to vote on Super Tuesday in early March.

"This isn't just about us," Trev Robertson, president of the South Carolina Democratic Party, told a gathering of the DNC Southern caucus earlier this week. "This is a regional thing, and it's making us all look good."

States voting early in the primary have major influence since White House hopefuls struggling to raise money or gain political traction often drop out before visiting areas outside the first five. The move marks a major shift from the current calendar, which had started with Iowa's caucuses for the last five decades, followed by New Hampshire's primary and subsequent contests in Nevada and South Carolina.

## Iranian director freed on bail after going on hunger strike

AP ■ DUBAI

Acclaimed Iranian director Jafar Panahi was released on bail Friday, two days after going on hunger strike to protest his imprisonment last summer, his supporters said.

Panahi was arrested last July and later ordered to serve six years on charges of propagandising against the government, a sentence dating back to 2011 that had never been enforced.

He is among a number of Iranian artists, sports figures and other celebrities who have been detained after speaking out against the theocracy. Such arrests have become more frequent since nationwide protests broke out in September over the death of a young woman in police custody.

Panahi, 62, had continued making award-winning films for over a decade despite being legally barred from travel and filmmaking. His latest film, "No Bears," was released to widespread praise in September while he was behind bars, a week before the protests erupted.

## Pak to seek Af Taliban leader's help to control TTP

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

A desperate Pakistan has sought Afghan Taliban chief Haibuttallah Akhundzada's help to rein in the outlawed Pakistani Taliban outfit responsible for a wave of terror attacks in the country, including the recent Peshawar mosque carnage that killed over 100 people, according to a media report on Saturday.

Pakistan has been hit by a wave of terrorism, mostly in the country's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, but also in Balochistan and the Punjab town of Mianwali, which borders the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

In the Peshawar mosque attack on Monday, a Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up during the afternoon prayers, killing 101 people and injuring more than 200 others. During the Apex Committee meeting here on Friday, Pakistan's civil and military leadership decided to seek Afghan Taliban chief Haibuttallah Akhundzada's intervention to control the



Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), according to The Express Tribune newspaper.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, who attended Friday's meeting, said the masterminds of the Peshawar Mosque attack could be in Afghanistan, and added that the federal government would raise this issue with their Afghan counterparts, the report said.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday acknowledged the failure to avert the Peshawar carnage that killed over 100 people and called for "national unity" to tackle the menace.

"There is a need for unity across the political spectrum. This act of terrorism managed to breach the security check post and reach the mosque. We should not feel hesitant in admitting the facts," Sharif said at the meeting.

## Sudan demands United Nations immediately lift arms embargo

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Sudan is demanding the UN Security Council immediately lift an arms embargo and other sanctions imposed during violence in the western Darfur region in 2005, saying the punishment did not include conditions or require the military government to meet UN benchmarks.

Sudan's UN ambassador, Al-Harith Idriss Mohamed, said in a letter to the council circulated Friday that the sanctions "are no longer relevant to the magnificent reality on the ground in Darfur today compared to the situation in 2005."

"Darfur has, for the most part, overcome the state of war, as well as previous security and political challenges," he said.

Mohamed said Sudan's transitional government is committed to addressing the remaining social and security issues in Darfur, including sporadic tribal clashes. He added that efforts are being made to form and deploy a Joint



Security-Keeping Force to protect civilians.

The Sudanese government has repeatedly urged the Security Council to lift sanctions but this letter was much stronger. It said that "Sudan will accept nothing less than the immediate lifting of these sanctions without conditions or benchmarks."

The Darfur conflict began in 2003 when rebels took up arms against the authoritarian government in Khartoum then led by Omar al-Bashir, accusing it of discrimination and neglect. The UN previously estimated 00,000 people died in the conflict and 2.7 million fled their homes.

Al-Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged atrocities in Darfur.



# India will get into global bond indices on own terms: Official

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India will not bend over backwards to get included in the global bond indices, a top finance ministry official said on Saturday.

Deploying a sartorial analogy, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan said the indices are an exclusive club or gymkhana, which insists on entry only for those wearing ties.

"...If we get into this club, it will be with our dhoti and saree. We will not change our domestic policies to suit foreign investors," he said, addressing a post-budget interaction with industry players in the financial capital.

He said there are both positives and negatives of such an inclusion, which was spoken about in a previous budget announcement, and India will not "bend over backwards" to gain entry.

India's policies will be



based on domestic requirements, and there will not be any change to the stance to suit the fancy of global bond investors, he said.

The global indices should allow entry for India only if such a stance is acceptable to them, he said.

Positives of gaining entry include higher fund flows, but the same also exposes us to risks of volatility and pullouts due to non-domestic factors, Somanathan said, pointing to the experience of 'destabilisation' in some east-Asian

economies.

Ajay Seth, the economic affairs secretary, hinted that there is no immediate plan of joining the indices.

"At the moment, there is quite a bit of uncertainty at the global level both in terms of the exchange rate and interest rate etc. It is not the right time to press the pedal on that aspect.

"When the global markets are a little bit more uniform, then at that point of time this piece will have to be picked up again," he said.

# Govt to push primary steel producers to use 50% of input from recycled steel by 2047: Scindia

PTI ■ KOCHI

Union Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Saturday said his ministry will push primary steel producers to use 50 per cent of their input from scrapped/recycled steel by 2047 to help achieve the government target of moving into a circular economy.

Currently, the level of recycled steel usage in primary steel production is only around 10 per cent even though recycled steel contributes to 22.5 per cent of the domestic total steel production of 140 million tonnes, the minister said while addressing the last day of the three-day international conference of material recycling here.

The 10th conference is being organised by the Material Recycling Association of India and is attended by over 2,000 delegates from 38 countries.

Noting that recycling is the key cog in the wheel of manufacturing as economies move

into a circular model of development, he said, "Going forward the industry should focus on the 6Rs philosophy of reduce (exploitation of natural resources), recycle, reuse, recover, re-design and reinforce".

He said the government is committed to reducing CO2 emissions in the steel sector by 5 per cent by 2030 from the current 2.85 to 1.4 CO2/tonne of crude steel, and to achieve this recycling scrap steel is an extremely important source.

"Today, scrap usage is only 15 per cent in primary steel production. We will push the steel industry to increase this to 25 per cent in the next five years, and by 2047, this should double to 50 per cent. This means that the primary steel producers consume only 50 per cent of iron ore by then," Scindia said.

This is needed as the natural resources are finite and the demand looks infinite, he said, adding the steel industry has the biggest role to play in the whole process.



The country currently produces 25 million tonne of scrap steel and annually imports 5 million tonne of scrap steel with zero import duty, he added.

The recycling industry is highly unorganised and is worth about USD 50 billion now. There are over 25,000 recycling units in the country. However, in the metals space almost 95 per cent are organised, Material Recycling Association president Sanjay Mehta said.

He also urged the minister to extend the duty-free

imports of other scraps such as copper, aluminium, zinc and other metals as many countries are adopting no export of scrap policies now. For instance last month, the European Union imposed a ban on scrap exports, and so did the UAE.

Domestic recyclers used to import 25 per cent of their shipments from the EU markets. Similarly, the UAE is also a large source market for the country. Counties are discouraging exports of scraps as they move into the circular economy.

# Not Enough: Tech industry seeks more from FM to bridge digital divide

ANS ■ NEW DELHI

Hailed as a progressive and forward-looking one by the IT and technology honchos, the Union Budget 2023-24 did fall short on some expectations by the industry, especially around consumer electronics manufacturing and bridging the digital divide in the country.

According to the India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA), the latest steps will have no significant impact on the final product price but are generally in the right direction.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mentioned that the mobile manufacturing sector crossed Rs 2,75,000 crore in 2021-22. The targeted number for 2022-23 is Rs 3,50,000 crore and Rs 4,40,000 crore in 2023-24.

She also proposed the removal of 2.75 per cent basic customs duty (BCD) on camera lens; removal of duty on inputs to parts of connectors - Palladium Tetra Amine Sulphate; reduction of BCD on parts of open cell of TV panel from 5.5 per cent to 2.75 per cent; continuation of custom exemption notifications which were facing a sunset on March 31, 2023 for another one year.

According to Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, ICEA, a high-performing sector's genuine requests have not been addressed.



"These could have provided a significant impact on competitiveness leading to better exports, arresting the grey market and boosting revenue," he said in a statement.

For example, capping of basic customs duty (BCD) on import of high-end mobile phones is required to arrest the burgeoning smuggled market which has crossed Rs 12,000 crore in 2023.

"This measure would have boosted government revenue, reduced smuggling, ensured fair trade and helped build legal businesses in India," said Mohindroo.

Also required is the removal of input duties on resin, mesh, sponge, film, gasket, logo, cover tape, adhesive tape from 8.25 per cent to 16.5 per cent to zero level.

This was essential to promote the manufacturing of a very critical vertical -- mechanics. The government should also remove input duties of 2.75 per cent duty imposed in the previous budget on the many

inputs of PCBA, inputs of connectors and inputs of camera modules.

"Removal of duty on certain parts of the chargers is also required. While we have built a huge charger manufacturing industry, these changes would have helped us to become more competitive," Mohindroo added.

The Indian industry met the 2021-22 manufacturing target of Rs 2,75,000 crore but we may fall short of the manufacturing target of FY 2022-23 because of domestic demand shrinking in 2022-23.

In spite of a glorious performance in exports which will cross Rs 70,000 crore in 2022-23 (versus Rs 45,000 crore in 2021-22 plus 50 per cent increase), the 50 per cent increase in GST from 12 per cent to 18 per cent "has dealt a very cruel hand to this high-performing industry which kept the nation's economy moving during the pandemic," said the ICEA.

According to the Internet

and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), there have been two critical concerns for the digital industry.

"First, the growth rate of digital penetration has slowed down and secondly, there is a clearly identifiable digital divide in India with some sections getting marginalised as they are not onboarded digitally," said the IAMAI.

"While the budget announcement marks the correct intention and fiscal incentives, other ministries need to complement the Finance Minister's grand vision to help realise her vision," said the industry body.

'According to Sandip Patel, Managing Director, IBM India/South Asia, it is a progressive budget that underscores technology-driven growth.

"The investment in core infrastructure will require significant thrust on digital infrastructure including digitization and automation. The budget has outlined measures to provide impetus for technology-driven accelerated change and technology will also work as a key deflationary measure," said Patel.

"India is all set for leading the change and usher in green growth which is aptly visible in the green credits to green energy to green mobility to green farming, which has found its place in the budget this year," he added.



ANS ■ NEW DELHI

Focus on the rural economy in the budget has been waning over the years and in such a scenario a revival of the rural economy would take time, JM Financial said in a report.

In the absence of a specific focus on the rural economy in the Union Budget for 2023-24, analysts don't see immediate triggers for revival in the rural economy. Moreover in the absence of specific or enhancement of allocation towards the rural economy, we believe that the rural environment would have to revive on its own. Hence we would view businesses dealing with price sensitive low ticket items as less likely to benefit, JM Financial said.

An attempt is made to make the new tax regime more

attractive after getting a low response in FY23, however we believe the benefits in the form of tax saving on enhanced no-tax limit (INR 0.2mn) is unlikely to spur demand in a meaningful manner, JM Financial said in a report.

Unlike the anticipation by a section of the market, rural focus was missing in the budget announcements. The expectations of a populist budget was linked to 9 state elections in 2023, moreover with FY24 being the last full year budget before the general elections in CY24. However, we believe that the schemes relating to empowerment of women Self Help Groups, artisans and setting up of digital infra for agriculture and farmer centric solutions would provide opportunities in the rural economy to improve their livelihood, JM Financial said.

# Educationists say more funds are required to meet NEP targets



ANS ■ NEW DELHI

In Budget 2023-24, the Education Ministry has been allocated Rs 1,12,899.47 crore - the highest ever. Due to this, the share of higher and school education has also gone up.

An amount of Rs 44,094.62 crore has been allocated for higher education, which was around 8 per cent higher than the previous year's allocation of Rs 40,828.35 crore. However, some educationists believe that the higher education need even more funds to meet the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) targets.

Professor Mamidala Jagadeesh Kumar, Chairman, UGC said, "his is to overcome the learning losses of the Covid-19 pandemic and inject more digital technology into higher education for more access and equity. Increased fund allocation will accelerate the implementation of NEP 2020, bringing further dividends to the students to make them employable and strengthen our efforts in

making India a knowledge-based economy, Kumar added.

Arvind Chaturvedi Pro Vice Chancellor, IILM University, Gurugram said that an 8 per cent increase in allocation to education sector is not sufficient. "A higher allocation was expected."

"Educationists were expecting a higher allocation to meet the NEP target of 6 per cent of GDP. In that sense, it is disappointing. However, the focus of budget proposals has been on IT education and skill development, which is a welcome move," he added.

Shishir Jaipuria, Chairman, Seth Anandram Jaipuria Group of Educational Institutions, and Chairman of FICCI Arise have a different opinion. He said, "The Union Budget 2023-24 spells out progressive initiatives and reforms for the Indian education sector in many areas, including skill development, teacher training, future-readiness of learners, and greater accessibility of learning content."

## कार्यालय : निदेशक उत्तराखण्ड चाय विकास बोर्ड, अल्मोड़ा जिला पंचायत परिसर, धारानौला, अल्मोड़ा-263601

पत्रांक : 849/4-स्टर/निविदा सूचना/2022-23 दिनांक : 04 फरवरी, 2023

## अल्प कालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

उत्तराखण्ड चाय विकास बोर्ड, अल्मोड़ा द्वारा अपने चाय बागानों में उपयोग हेतु क्रय की जाने वाली, जैविक खाद व नर्सरी सामग्री की आपूर्ति हेतु इच्छुक निविदादाताओं से ई-निविदायें दिनांक 06-02-2023 से ऑनलाइन **Website [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in)** पर दिनांक 15-02-2023 को सायं 5.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदाओं से सम्बन्धित निविदावार अलग-अलग विवरण (निविदा प्रपत्र निविदा शर्तें, सामग्री का विवरण इत्यादि) ऑनलाइन अवलोकन/डाउनलोडिंग हेतु **Website [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in)** पर उपलब्ध है।

## निदेशक

उत्तराखण्ड चाय विकास बोर्ड,  
जिला पंचायत परिसर, धारानौला, अल्मोड़ा (उत्तराखण्ड)

## RATHI STEEL AND POWER LIMITED

CIN: L27109DL1971PLC005905  
Regd. Off.: 24/1, Block A, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Estate,  
Mathura Road, New Delhi- 110044  
Email ID: [investors@rathisteelandpower.com](mailto:investors@rathisteelandpower.com), Website: [www.rathisteelandpower.com](http://www.rathisteelandpower.com)

This is to inform you that pursuant to the Regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing Obligations And Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 meeting of the Board of Directors of M/s Rathi Steel and Power Limited is to be held on Monday the 13th Day of February 2023 at the Registered office of the Company at 4.00 PM to consider and approve following businesses as under :-

ITEM NO.	AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION
<b>Take note and confirm the following:-</b>	
1.	To appoint Chairman of the meeting to call the meeting to order.
2.	To Ensure Quorum of the Meeting
3.	To grant leave of absence, if any.
4.	To take note and confirm the minutes of previous meeting of board of directors of the Company.
<b>Consider and Approve following:-</b>	
5.	To consider and approve Unaudited Financial Results for the nine month ended and Quarter ended on December 31, 2022
6.	Any other businesses with permission of the Chair.

For and on behalf of Board  
Sd/-  
**(PREM NARAIN VARSHNEY)**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
DIN: 00012709

Place: New Delhi

Date: 04-02-2023

# FM's bullishness on millets must translate into benefits for farmers

ANS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana figured just once, albeit tangentially, in the February 1 Union Budget speech by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman when she announced that the

Hyderabad-based Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), an affiliate of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), will be transformed into a centre of excellence to make India a global millets hub.

The ICAR-IIMR will share best practices, research and technologies at the international level, the Minister announced but made no financial allocation for the proposal.

This was the only announcement which brought some cheers for Telangana in what many termed as a disappointing

Budget. In tune with its focus on millets, the Centre made the key announcement in the Union Budget for 2023-24. However, the roadmap to achieve the goal of boosting production and procurement of millets was not mentioned.

Calling millets 'Shree Anna' or mother of all grains, Sitharaman quoted Prime Minister Narendra Modi to say that India is at the forefront of popularising millets, whose consumption improved food security and the well being of farmers.

The Finance Minister pointed out

that India is the largest producer and second largest exporter of millets.

"We grow several types of Shree Anna, such as Jowar, Raagi, Bajra, Ramdana, Cheena and Saama. These have a number of health benefits and have been an integral part of our food for centuries," she said.

The UN has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM) at the request of the Indian government to raise awareness and increase the production and consumption of millets.

The declaration has allowed the Centre to take the lead in celebrating IYM 2023. As part of this, Central Ministries, state govern-

ments and Indian Embassies will hold events throughout the year to promote and spread awareness about the benefits of millets.

Support will be provided for post-harvest value addition, enhancing domestic consumption, and for branding millet products nationally and internationally. As per the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), India is the largest producer of millet in the world with a share of 41 per cent in 2020

Nine types of millets are grown as Kharif crops in over 20 states. Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh are the leading producers.

# Exposition to promote clean fuels inaugurated

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

Union Minister for Heavy Industries Mahendra Nath Pandey on Saturday inaugurated a conference and exposition here on schemes for promotion of cleaner fuels in the automotive sector.

The event, named 'Towards Panchamrit', is being organised at the International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT), Manesar.

To drive India towards cleaner mobility, the government is giving a major push to clean fuels. "Towards Panchamrit" event is an effort in this direction to promote adoption of "Panchamrit" or five clean fuels -- Hydrogen, Ethanol, Bio Diesel, Gas and Electric Vehicles.

Pandey said in line with Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's announcements at COP 26 — "Panchamrit Ki Saugat", five commitments to achieve the vision of becoming a carbon neutral country by 2070, ministries are taking comprehensive efforts to move towards fulfilling this goal.

The government is also working to achieve self-reliance in the automotive industry, he added.

Minister of State for Heavy Industries Krishan Pal Gurjar highlighted the initiatives taken by the ministry to promote clean and green mobility.

He said these initiatives will give a boost to domestic manufacturing, help in employment generation, reduce dependence on exports and thereby help in achieving the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.



# ARSENAL'S PREMIER LEAGUE TITLE CHARGE HALTED BY STRUGGLING EVERTON

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Mikel Arteta said Arsenal must now show the resolve of champions after a shock 1-0 defeat to Everton dented the Gunners bid to land a first Premier League title in 19 years.

Arsenal still lead Manchester City by five points at the top of the table, but blew the chance to extend that advantage as they suffered just a second league defeat of the season.

James Tarkowski headed in the winning goal for the Toffees on the hour mark as Everton made a perfect start to life under new manager Sean Dyche to climb out of the relegation zone.

"This is not going to be a rose pathway," said Arteta of Arsenal's road to the title. "This is going to be tricky and we will have to dig in and play much better than we did today."

Everton came into the game on a run of four league defeats at Goodison for the first time since 1958.

That disastrous form cost Frank Lampard his job and Dyche's appointment got the desired bounce with a first win in 11 games.

"The minimum requirement is maximum effort and we saw that today," said Dyche.

Everton's board again stayed away due to rising tensions



between the club's hierarchy and supporters.

Protests were planned for before and after the game for fans to voice their anger at the running of the club.

The Toffees were the only Premier League club to not make any signings in the January transfer window despite their perilous position in the table.

But the home side showed there is still enough talent available to Dyche to dig themselves

out of trouble if they can harness the same level of energy and intensity on a more regular basis.

## GOODISON 'ROCKING'

A first victory since October was no more than Everton deserved and it was two of Dyche's former Burnley players who combined for the only goal of the game on the hour mark as Tarkowski headed in Dwight McNeil's corner.

"The fans are going to be massive for us. I have been here when it has been rocking. It was rocking today. But we have to give the fans something," added Dyche.

"Of course I'm going to drive home and think what a great start but I'm not naive. We have to keep working and improving."

Keeping Dominic Calvert-Lewin fit will be critical to Everton's survival hopes, but the

England international showed his rustiness in front of goal in a second consecutive injury-impacted season.

Amadou Onana's surging run and ball across the face of goal just needed a finishing touch that Calvert-Lewin could not stretch to make.

Moments later Abdoulaye Doucoure, who had been frozen out by Lampard, headed a glorious chance wide when unmarked inside the box.

It took Arsenal half an hour to even threaten Jordan Pickford's goal, but they should have led when Eddie Nketiah fired high and wide with just the goalkeeper to beat.

Conor Coady then had to react quickly to turn Bukayo Saka's volley off the line as the visitors began to find their rhythm.

Arsenal were brighter at the start of the second period and Martin Odegaard will feel he should have hit the target when teed up by Nketiah.

But just as the Gunners were beginning to turn the screw, their luck at the back ran out.

Tarkowski was fundamental to Dyche overachievements in keeping Burnley in the Premier League for six consecutive seasons between 2016 and 2022 and the centre-back rose highest to power home.



## Arsenal lacked composure in shock Everton defeat: Arteta

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Mikel Arteta admitted Premier League leaders Arsenal lacked composure in their shock 1-0 defeat at struggling Everton on Saturday.

James Tarkowski's second half header condemned Arsenal to just their second league loss this term. It was a frustrating blow for Gunners boss Arteta, who had hoped to open up an eight-point lead over second placed Manchester City.

For the first time since losing at Manchester United in September, Arsenal tasted defeat and Arteta claimed his players weren't composed enough to cope with Everton's aggres-

sive game-plan under new boss Sean Dyche.

"We had loads of the ball but we lacked that purpose and quality in the final third, we generated many chances. But then we conceded and they slowed the game down and we struggled," Arteta said.

"Everton do this to every team that is their strength with the height, the physicality is their strength, if you want to control the game against them you have to control this. We did not do that today.

"We needed more composure and to control emotionally the game better. We gave away so many unnecessary free-kicks and that's what they

want." Manchester City could close the gap on Arsenal to two points if they win at Tottenham on Sunday.

But, despite his criticism of their tepid performance at Everton, Arteta backed his players to survive the tense title race.

"Today I love them much better than the week before or a month ago. It is easy to be next to someone when they are winning well. I am still so proud of all of these players, they deserve it," he said.

"This is not going to be a rose pathway. This is going to be tricky and we will have to dig in and play much better than we did today."

## Bopanna-Bhambri lose in Davis Cup



PTI ■ HILLEROD (DENMARK)

Indian duo Rohan Bopanna and Yuki Bhambri lost to world number 9 Holger Rune and Johannes Ingildsen in straight sets to hand hosts Denmark a 2-1 lead after the doubles tie in the Davis Cup World Group Play-Off on Saturday. The Danish pair made short work of the Indians winning 6-2 6-4 in just 65 minutes as Rune's presence proved to be a decisive factor.

Earlier on Friday, India's number one Sumit Nagal had erased a one-set deficit to pip August Holmgren 4-6 6-3 6-4 in two hours and 27 minutes. Nagal restored the parity after Bhambri had a forgettable opening singles losing 2-6 2-6 to the rising ten sensation Rune.

Bhambri has quit singles and now plays only doubles on tour. The 25-year-old Nagal, ranked 506, dropped serve in the very first game of the match but once he got hold of his nerves, he was his usual fighting self.

He got the break back but squandered the chances when Holmgren offered them.

The Danish player, ranked 484, eventually sealed the set. In the second set, it was Nagal who drew the first blood and went up 5-2. He served out the set in the ninth game to force a decider.

Nagal had a chance to get the first break when he made a deep return and Holmgren's forehand return sailed over the baseline at 30-all but the home player served well to save the chance. Nagal got another chance when Holmgren netted a forehand at deuce point in the third game but he himself made a forehand error on the break-point.

While Nagal preferred to hit from the baseline, Holmgren charged the net often to create chances for volley winners.

Holmgren handed Nagal another break chance when he tried to pick a low volley but could not keep the ball in the court and followed that up with

## Zverev storms to Davis Cup win after being cleared of abuse



AFP ■ PARIS

Alexander Zverev defeated a three-time major winner Stan Wawrinka in the Davis Cup on Friday as the German star returned to the courts for the first time since being cleared of domestic abuse.

The 25-year-old Zverev swept past Wawrinka 6-4, 6-1 in Trier to bring Germany level with Switzerland after the opening day of their qualifier.

On Tuesday, Zverev was told by the ATP that there was

"insufficient evidence" to substantiate allegations against him of abusing a former girlfriend. Former world number two Zverev always denied the claims, describing them as "baseless".

On Friday, Wawrinka, who helped his country win the 2014 Davis Cup, was returning to the team competition for the first time in eight years. Now ranked 135 in the world, he was comfortably beaten for the fifth time in five meetings by Zverev.

a double fault, allowing the Indian to take a mini 3-2 lead.

That lead stayed with Nagal and he came out serving for the match in the 10th game. Holmgren's forehand error gave the Indian three match points and converted the first one on

home team player's unforced error.

In the opening singles, Rune broke Bhambri twice in each set. The 19-year-old converted four of the seven break chances while the Indian did not get a single chance to break his opponent.

## Dipa Karmakar handed 21-month ban after failing dope test

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star gymnast Dipa Karmakar has been handed a 21-month ban for failing a dope test conducted by the International Testing Agency, contrary to claims made by Indian officials that her "suspension" last year was not related to doping offence.

Karmakar's dope sample collected out-of-competition by the ITA, an independent organisation that manages the anti-doping programme of the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG), was found to contain Higenamine, which is a prohibited substance under World Anti-Doping Agency Code.

Her ban period will, however, end on July 10 this year as it was counted from the day (October 11, 2011) the sample was collected.

"The ITA confirms that Dipa Karmakar has been suspended for a 21-month period, effective until 10 July 2023 after testing positive for higenamine (53. Beta-2 Agonists as per the World Anti-Doping Agency prohibited list)," the ITA said in a statement late on Friday.

"The positive sample was collected on behalf of the FIG in the scope of an out-of-competition control on 11 October 2021," it added.

The Switzerland based non-profit organisation works under the supervision of WADA and International Olympic Committee to implement anti-doping



programmes for various international federations. The ITA further said Karmakar's dope issue was resolved under a case resolution agreement pursuant to article 10.8.2 of the FIG Anti-Doping Rules and equivalent provision in the WADA.

"The athlete's results have been disqualified from October 11, 2021 onwards."

Karmakar, who shot to fame after finishing fourth in the 2016 Rio Olympics in the vault

event, has been struggling with injuries ever since she underwent a surgery to treat an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury in 2017.

Her last FIG event was the 2019 World Cup in Baku.

The ban on Karmakar flies on her face as well as on the Gymnastic Federation of India officials who have been claiming ignorance after she was put in the "suspended" category by the FIG in February last year.

GFI president Sudhir Mittal had then said that he had not received any communication from the FIG regarding her suspension.

Karmakar herself and her coach Bisheshwar Nandi kept quiet at that time.

Other GFI officials went to the extent of saying that the 'suspended' status could be due to other issues, like ethical or disciplinary, not related to doping violation.

## Chelsea can't buy a goal in Fulham stalemate

AFP ■ LONDON

Chelsea manager Graham Potter pleaded for time to gel his expensive collection of new stars after the Blues were held 0-0 at home by Fulham on Friday.

Enzo Fernandez made his Chelsea debut after becoming the most expensive player in British football history with a £107 million move (\$132 million) from Benfica on transfer deadline day.

Mykhailo Mudryk was also given his Stamford Bridge bow, while Noni Madueke and David Datro Fofana came off the bench for their Premier League debuts.

Chelsea's record investment of over £300 million in the January window took the total spend on players in their first season under new ownership to over half a billion.

Co-owners Todd Boehly and Behdad Eghbali were in attendance, but will not have been impressed as another chance to close on the top four slipped by.

Potter's men sit ninth in the table, still nine points adrift of the Champions League places.

"New players are adapting to a new country and a new league. It's not straightforward. When the price tag is what it is questions will be asked, it's the nature of the business,"

said Potter.

"The decision we took in the window you can see the profile in terms of age. We feel we have a very strong group of players. We have to gel and become a really good team. That's where the work is."

Fulham had secured a first victory in the west London derby since 2006 when the teams met just three weeks ago.

Marco Silva's men sit two points and three places above their local rivals in the table in their first season back in the top flight.

## HAVERTZ'S HAT-TRICK OF MISSES

Fulham were seeking a first ever league double over Chelsea and came close to achieving it as Andreas Pereira forced Kepa Arrizabalaga into a flying save low to his right.

For the enormous sums spent by Chelsea's new owners, their lack of a clinical goalscorer was exposed once more.

Kai Havertz had a hat-trick of big chances to break the deadlock before half-time.

The German international failed to get enough contact on Thiago Silva's brilliant pass to divert the ball beyond Bernd Leno.

Havertz then could not stretch to turn Mason Mount's dangerous



cross on target.

But his best opening came when he hit the post with a lob over Leno from Hakim Ziyech's defence-splitting pass.

Ziyech would have been a Paris Saint-Germain player this week had Chelsea not submitted the wrong paperwork in the minutes before Tuesday's transfer deadline.

The Moroccan is just one of a wealth of wide options now available to Potter and he wasted no time in hooking Mudryk despite his price tag after a disappointing first 45 minutes.

The Ukrainian joined from Shakhtar Donetsk last month for a fee that could rise to 100 million euros (\$110 million).

Madueke was introduced in his place and Potter also threw on Raheem Sterling from the bench on the hour mark in the search for a winner.

Fernandez was inches away from the perfect debut as the Argentine World Cup winner flashed a shot wide from distance 20 minutes from time.

Connor Gallagher came even closer as he hit the side-netting from the edge of the box.

But the best chance fell to Fofana as the Ivorian rounded the stranded Leno, but failed to beat the covering Tim Ream on the line.



# WE'VE PLENTY OF OPTIONS IN SPIN DEPARTMENT: CUMMINS

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Australia captain Pat Cummins on Saturday said his team is not fretting over its spin combination as it has enough options to support veteran off-spinner Nathan Lyon in the high-profile four-match Test series against India beginning in Nagpur on Thursday.

The touring Australians have named Mitchell Swepson along with finger spinner Ashton Agar to team up with Lyon.

"We've got plenty of options here (with) finger spin, wrist spin, left arm (pace) when (Mitchell) Starcy comes back," Cummins told reporters in his first media interaction after arriving in India.

"We'll obviously pick the bowlers that we think are going to take 20 wickets. But how we split that up, we're not 100 per cent sure yet."

Asked if it would be a two-pronged spin attack, he said: "I wouldn't say it's a given. Obviously it's very conditions dependent. Particularly in the first test, once we get to Nagpur we will see that."

The Australians are here for a training camp before heading to

Nagpur on Monday.

"The good thing is someone like Agar was in our last team, Swepson played the last two overseas tour, so a bit of experience."

"Murphy played in the last tour. We feel that we got a lot of support in that department for Lyon."

The 29-year-old Cummins pointed out that middle-order batter Travis Head also offers off-spin option.

"Travis Head also bowls really good offspin. We have to balance things. We have got a plenty of variety there to choose from. We have not locked in any bowling line-up so far."

While there is so much talk about spin bowling, Cummins said his side should not forget about their intimidating pace bowling attack.

"I think sometimes, talking about a couple of spinners, you forget how good a lot of our fast bowlers have been in all conditions."

"Even some of the SCG wickets, there haven't been a lot in them for quick bowlers, but the quick bowlers have found a way," he added.



Cummins has come a long way since he made a Test comeback after six years in Ranchi during the last tour of India in 2017.

An injury-prone Cummins then dished out a hostile spell to dismiss the star Indian trio of KL Rahul, Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane en route to figures of 4/106.

"It was my first test in six years. I just wanted to reaffirm that's where I wanted to be in Test cricket. I really enjoyed that spell, you can't be worried about your body or different things. You just got to go all out. I really enjoyed that."

"Test cricket can be really, really harsh. You have got to accept that it's going to be grinding times, and you got to be out for it and embrace that challenge. Coming here to India when a lot of the talks are around, big spinning wicket, it's not always the case."

"You need to get into the grind at times. That role of the fast bowler, bowling a lot of overs for not a heap of reward but doing your job for your team. I really enjoy that aspect of the last tour. Much to play for this time," he said.

## OZ can win, India more vulnerable at home this time: Greg Chappell

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Batting great Greg Chappell believes Australia can win the upcoming high-profile four-match Test series as India are "vulnerable" this time with injuries to key players like Rishabh Pant and Jasprit Bumrah.

While the swashbuckling keeper-batter Pant is ruled out for most part of the year as he continues to recover from injuries sustained during a horrific car crash, Indian pace ace Bumrah (back injury) does not figure in the Indian squad for the first two Tests.

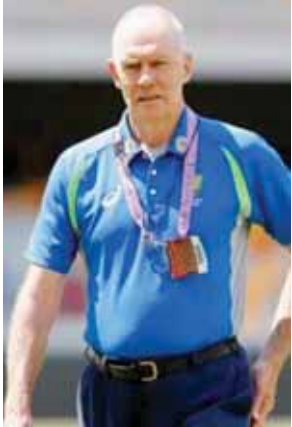
"Australia can win this series. India are more vulnerable at home than they have been for some time due to injuries to key players like Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah. They will rely heavily on Virat Kohli," Chappell wrote in an opinion piece for 'Sydney Morning Herald'.

Premier spin-bowling all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who recovered from a knee injury and made a comeback in the Ranji Trophy last month, is in the Indian squad for the Test series beginning in Nagpur on Thursday.

"Visiting teams are often fooled by a game that seems to be going nowhere but suddenly changes at a frenetic pace. The Indians are used to this, so Australia will need to adapt quickly with mind, bat and ball," said the former India coach.

Finger spinner Ashton Agar, who is Australia's only left-tarm twaker in the squad, should be preferred to partner Nathan Lyon on turning tracks, Chappell said.

"Should the pitches favour spin, which is more likely, I expect Ashton Agar to get the nod because finger spin is con-



sidered to be more accurate," said the 74-year-old Chappell who scored 7110 runs from 87 Tests with an impressive average of 53.86 between 1970 and 1984.

"Anil Kumble who took 619 wickets in Test cricket, rarely strayed off the straight and narrow. His stock in trade were fast, flat leg breaks which were always threatening the stumps. Batters knew if they missed, they were in trouble. Jadeja's stock in trade is similarly unerring."

"Agar has got to emulate their roles. One bowler leaking runs will be the difference in a tight contest."

Recollecting his conversation with Erapalli Prasanna, he wrote the Indian legend would spin the ball hard, try to hit the batter on the pads often, get him thinking about the spinning ball, and then trap him on the crease with a straight one.

"Line, he (Prasanna) said, was optional, length was mandatory. He explained to me that he would lay the seam a bit flatter than for the traditional off spinner and then impart a higher number of rotations on the ball that would make the ball drift like an off spinner but, once it landed on the leather, it would skid on with the arm giving the

impression that it had gone 'the other way'.

"As the leader of the spin attack, Nathan Lyon will need to take pages out of his book and show the way."

Chappell, however, said that Australia will also have issues to iron out.

"David Warner is in patchy form and needs to improve his Test record in India; Usman Khawaja, Alex Carey, Travis Head and Cameron Green will be tested against better quality spin than they encountered in Pakistan and Sri Lanka."

"Marcus Labuschagne will be facing his first big test in the subcontinent; and Steve Smith's recent batting tweaks will be examined more keenly than against the West Indies, South Africa and in the BBL," he wrote.

The series will be like a 'final frontier' for the Pat Cummins-led No. 1 Test side who have been on a roll after the pacer took over from Tim Paine.

Australia have had a fine run recently, winning the Ashes and then the series against Pakistan, West Indies and South Africa. They will be in search of their first series win in India in 19 years.

In their last tour of India in 2017, they began with a big win in the Pune Test but went on to lose the series 1-2. India, on the other hand, have not lost at home for more than a decade and have a record streak of winning 15 series.

"The Australians will have to summon every ounce of their talent and experience during the next month to succeed. India is no longer the mystery it once was. Tours are more regular and the IPL offers valuable exposure."

"Attrition takes a huge toll on touring teams. If India are in the contest on day five, they will win," Chappell said.

## Green might have an 'outside chance' of playing Nagpur Test: McDonald

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Dashing all-rounder Cameron Green is making a quick recovery from his index finger injury and has an "outside chance" of making it to Australia's playing eleven for the opening Test against India starting in Nagpur on February 9.

The 23-year-old seam bowling all-rounder, who is recovering from a surgery on his index finger in his right hand, had a bowl at the nets in Alur.

"We haven't put a clear line through him on the team sheet. So, I wouldn't say he was in discomfort when he was bowling," McDonald told reporters here on the sidelines of their four-day training camp.

However there are still some concerns when he is batting, admitted the head coach.

"I would say one of the deliveries jarred the bottom of the bat and that can create discomfort for anyone, but there is a little bit of awareness around that finger. He has made some significant steps forward in the last couple of days, probably to



my surprise. "So, there is still an outside chance, everything going well, he might be on the team sheet," McDonald kept the options open.

Skipper Pat Cummins had earlier ruled out Green from bowling in the Test should he play, but McDonald said he has made significant progress.

Green's inclusion would provide Australia with an opportunity to include an extra specialist spinner in their bid to win their first Border-Gavaskar Trophy in India since 2004.

McDonald further said their explosive opener David Warner is fully "recharged" and looking forward to make amends for his

poor runs in some of the previous tours in the upcoming Test series.

The 36-year-old, who has a poor record of averaging 24.25 in eight Tests in India, had complained of exhaustion and said he would have preferred the night off from the Cricket Australia awards to recover

from a busy home summer.

"I haven't noticed any fatigue in David Warner since I got here," McDonald said.

"I would probably dispel that as a bit of a myth. He has had a couple of days off... He has been there (at training) for one of the two days, and he is not there today."

"We are managing each individual coming in around their specific preparation and where they have been and there is no doubt it was a demanding summer into BBL, and it creates a challenge back into Test match cricket."

"But we feel the preparation we have him on he will be recharged and ready to go. It has been well documented he hasn't had the series that he would like. It's always challenging."

"I think the way he is applying himself in his downtime to really land on a method to take on the Indian spinners and also the quicks and to have a successful tour, I think you will see him fully invigorated and invested and fully charged for the challenge ahead."

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India batter Suresh Raina is baffled by Australian team's decision to opt for simulation training rather than play warm-up games ahead of the first Border-Gavaskar Test, starting February 9 in Nagpur.

The Australian team are currently training in Bengaluru and are practising on rank turners, having summoned little known Baroda spinner Mahesh Pithiya, whose bowling action resembles Ravichandran Ashwin. But Raina, one of India's finest white ball players, feels that Australia might have missed a trick.

"I have played practice matches (ahead of Tests) and

## Raina surprised with Aus decision to not play warm-up games

they are really important. They (Australia) can understand the quality of pitches in India only if they play on them," Raina told PTI on the sidelines of Mission Olympics Annual Day Meet, organised by Police Families Welfare Society.

Raina is confident that India will do well in the four-Test series and Ravindra Jadeja's comeback will add fine balance to the squad. "I am happy with Jadeja's comeback after a long time," said the southpaw.

"Our spinners R Ashwin,



Axar Patel are doing well. Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have been in good form and I think we will get to watch an interesting series in the coming days."

While visiting teams are always welcomed on rank turners during Test matches in the sub-continent, Raina would like to see a track that would hold on for five days.

He however didn't want to predict the outcome of the series.

"Let it begin first. A Test match should be five-day long.

I will only comment (on performance) after watching the first day and seeing the focus of players." Raina is very happy that there is so much competition for places in the national team across formats.

"It is an achievement (that many are worthy of a place in the Indian team). When there is such a competition we will get the best performance from the players."

He also welcomed BCCI's decision to organise the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL).

"WPL is going to be very beneficial for women cricketers of our country. And it is great that the (women) U-19 team won the World Cup."

## UAE set to host Asia Cup, venue to be finalised in March



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Asian Cricket Council will decide on an alternate venue for the Asia Cup ODI tournament in March after BCCI secretary Jay Shah and PCB chairman Najam Sethi had their first formal meeting in Bahrain on Saturday.

The Asia Cup was initially allotted

to Pakistan and was scheduled in September this year but Shah, who is also the ACC chairman, had announced last October that India will not travel to Pakistan.

It is understood that United Arab Emirates with three venues -- Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah -- are favourites to host the tournament but the decision

has been withheld for the time being.

All heads of ACC member nations attended the emergent meeting which was called at the behest of PCB chairman Sethi after ACC under chairmanship of Shah released the continental body's itinerary where Pakistan wasn't named the hosts. "The ACC affiliates met today and there were a lot of construc-

tive discussions. But the shift of venue has been postponed till March. But be rest assured that with India not going to Pakistan, the tournament will have to be shifted. A tournament without Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharmas and Shubman Gills will have the sponsors back out," a senior BCCI official privy to the development told PTI.

One ACC insider said Sethi has just taken over PCB and if he would have ceded ground on the hosting rights in the first meeting itself, then it would have led to a bad impression at home.

Pakistan is currently going through an economic crisis and inflation has hit the country very hard with the country's currency (PKR) plummeting to Rs 277 against 1 US Dollar. Organising a high profile tournament like Asia Cup, even if ACC pays a grant could burn a hole in PCB coffers. So strategically, if the tournament is held in the UAE, there is every possibility that all the member nations will also get to earn apart from the broadcast revenues.

In another decision, the ACC has decided to increase the annual budget allocated for Afghanistan Cricket Association to 15 percent from six.

The ACC has assured that it will help the Afghanistan board in all possible ways so that women's cricket can be revived in the country. Women are banned from playing sport under Taliban rule.

## Carey reminds OZ of Indian pacers' reverse-swing threat

PTI ■ ALUR

Australia wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey has reminded his team how damaging the Indian pacers could be with their reverse swing even as countering the threat from hosts spinners was the main focus in the build-up to their high profile four-match Test series starting on Thursday.

Australia abandoned the idea of "irrelevant" tour games in India and instead trained with SG balls on specially-prepared spinning pitches in Sydney before coming to India.

"Going to Pakistan it was a lot of spin talk and I found the reverse swinging ball difficult," Carey told reporters here on the sidelines of their four-day training camp.

He recalled their tour game in Bengaluru in 2018 when pacers were equally making impact as the spinners and Mohammed Siraj returned with a match haul of 11 wickets. "I played a four-day game



(for Australia A against India A) in 2018 and a lot of the talk was about spin and probably forget a bit how damaging both team's fast bowlers are with the reverse-swinging ball, with a wicket that might be a bit up and down," said the 31-year-old.

Carey also recalled their drawn Test series in Sri Lanka in July last year where the Australians had to adapt to different pitch conditions.

"We went to Galle for two Tests and they were two different wickets. So be open-minded about what we are going to come up against, what team they put on the park and what scenario I come in at," he said.

"Having the game ebb and flow between spin and fast bowling, dry periods, periods where it will score quickly... Think that's great about this team, the experience we do have."

Carey said the visiting team understands the capability of the Indian side, and will plan accordingly.

"We'll speak to the guys who have played (in India) in the past and we'll have our batters meeting soon. We'll face a lot of different spinners throughout the next few days, our spinners (are) bowling well as well, so for everyone it's getting our feet on the ground."

"We haven't really spoken about the way we are going to play, it's the individual battle. For Travis it might be exploring that (attacking) game a bit, Renner (Matthew Renshaw) is a bit taller and can get to the pitch of the ball — he has been here and succeeded — so it's up to the individual to own their game then we back them in to do that."



“I never thought being famous would be wonderful, but my limited exposure to celebrity has shown me the dark side big-time”  
—Marianne Williamson



# THE CITY OF FLOWERS NOW AN EPICENTER OF VIOLENCE

Peshawar was a peaceful place until the early 1980s when Pakistan’s then-dictator Ziaul Haq decided to become part of Washington’s cold war with Moscow, joining the fight against the 1979 Soviet invasion of neighboring Afghanistan. Write RIAZ KHAN and MUNIR AHMED

Pakistan’s Peshawar was once known as “the city of flowers,” surrounded by orchards of pear, quince and pomegranate trees. It was a trading city, situated at the gates of a key mountain valley connecting South and Central Asia.

But for the past four decades, it has borne the brunt of rising militancy in the region, fueled by the conflicts in neighboring Afghanistan and the geopolitical games of great powers.

On Tuesday, the city with a population of about 2 million was reeling after one of Pakistan’s most devastating militant attacks in years. A day earlier, a suicide bomber unleashed a blast in a mosque inside the city’s main police compound, killing at least 101 people and wounding at least 225, mostly police.

Analysts say the carnage is the legacy of decades of flawed policies by Pakistan and the United States.

“What you sow, so shall you reap,” said Abdullah Khan, a senior security analyst.

Peshawar was a peaceful place, he said, until the early 1980s when Pakistan’s then-dictator Ziaul Haq decided to become part of Washington’s cold war with Moscow, joining the fight against the 1979 Soviet invasion of neighboring Afghanistan.

Peshawar — less than 30 kilometers (20 miles) from the Afghan border — became the center where the American CIA and Pakistani military helped train, arm and fund the Afghan mujahedeen fighting the Soviets. The city was flooded by weapons and fighters, many of them hard-line Islamic militants, as well as with hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees.

Arab militants were also drawn there by the fight against the Soviets, including the scion of a wealthy Saudi family, Osama bin Laden. It was in Peshawar that bin Laden founded al-Qaida in the late 1980s, joining forces with veteran Egyptian militant Ayman al-Zawahiri.

The Soviets finally withdrew in defeat from Afghanistan in 1989. But the legacy of militancy and armed resistance that the U.S. and Pakistan fueled against them remained.

“After the Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1980s, Americans abandoned mujahedeen, Americans even abandoned us, and since then we are paying a price for it,” said Mahmood Shah, a former Pakistani army brigadier and a senior security analyst.

The mujahedeen plunged Afghanistan into civil war in a bloody fight for power. Meanwhile, in Peshawar and another Pakistani city, Quetta, the Afghan Taliban began to organize, with backing from the Pakistani government. Eventually, the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in the late 1990s, ruling until they were ousted by the 2001 American-led invasion following al-Qaida’s 9/11 attacks in the U.S.

During the nearly 20-year U.S. war against the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, militant groups blossomed in the tribal regions of Pakistan along the border and around Peshawar. Like the Taliban, they found root among the ethnic Pashtuns who make up a majority in the region and in the city.

Some groups were encouraged by the Pakistani intelligence agencies. But others turned their guns against the government, angered by heavy security crackdowns and by frequent U.S. airstrikes in the border region targeting al-Qaida and other militants.

Chief among the anti-government groups was the Pakistani Taliban, or Tahreek-e Taliban-Pakistan, or TTP. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, it waged a brutal campaign of violence around the country. Peshawar was scene of one of the bloodiest TTP attacks in 2014, on an army-run public school that killed nearly 150 people, most of them schoolboys.

Peshawar’s location has for centuries made it a key juncture between Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. One of the oldest cities

“DURING THE NEARLY 20-YEAR U.S. WAR AGAINST THE TALIBAN INSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN, MILITANT GROUPS BLOSSOMED IN THE TRIBAL REGIONS OF PAKISTAN ALONG THE BORDER AND AROUND PESHAWAR. LIKE THE TALIBAN, THEY FOUND ROOT AMONG THE ETHNIC PASHTUNS WHO MAKE UP A MAJORITY IN THE REGION AND IN THE CITY. SOME GROUPS WERE ENCOURAGED BY THE PAKISTANI INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES. BUT OTHERS TURNED THEIR GUNS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, ANGERED BY HEAVY SECURITY CRACKDOWNS AND BY FREQUENT U.S. AIRSTRIKES IN THE BORDER REGION TARGETING AL-QAIDA AND OTHER MILITANTS”



in Asia, it stands at the entrance to the Khyber Pass, the main route between the two regions. That was a source of its prosperity in trade and put it on the path of armies going both directions, from Moghul emperors to British imperialists.

A heavy military offensive largely put down the TTP for several years and the government and the militants eventually reached an uneasy truce. Peshawar came under heavy security control, with checkpoints dotting the main roads, and a heavy presence of police and paramilitary troops.

TTP attacks, however, have grown once more since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in Kabul in August 2021 amid the U.S. and NATO withdrawal from that country. The Pakistani Taliban are distinct from but allied to the Afghan group, and Pakistani officials regularly accuse the Afghan Taliban of giving the TTP free rein to operate from Afghan territory.

On Wednesday, several police officers joined a peace march organized by the members of civil society groups in Peshawar, denouncing militant attacks and demanding peace in the country. Police said they made some arrest in connection with Monday’s mosque bombing but did not provide details.

Ahead of Monday’s suicide bombing, Peshawar had seen increasing small-scale attacks targeting police. In another spillover from Afghanistan’s conflict, the regional affiliate of the Islamic State group attacked Peshawar’s main Shiite mosque in March 2022, killing more than 60 people.

Shah, the former officer, warned that more TTP attacks could follow and said that Pakistan needs to engage the Afghan Taliban and pressure them to either evict the TTP or ensure it doesn’t launch attacks from Afghan territory.

“If we are to have peace in Pakistan, we should talk to TTP from the position of strength with help from the Afghan Taliban,” he said. “This is the best and viable solution to avoid more violence.” (AP)

## Pakistan reaches out to Taliban supremo

Pakistan has decided to seek the intervention of Taliban supreme leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada to control the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terror group, according to official sources.

During an Apex Committee meeting in Peshawar, the civil and military leadership held the banned TTP responsible for the carnage in the city this week, and decided to take up the matter with the interim Afghan government at the highest level, with a clear message that Pakistan would no longer tolerate cross-border terrorism, The Express Tribune reported.

Although the TTP has denied its involvement in Monday’s suicide blast at a mosque in the Peshawar Police Lines, a briefing given to the Apex Committee suggested that the banned outfit was indeed the mastermind of the attack.

The meeting at the Governor House in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) capital was held in the wake of a deadly terrorist attack in the Police Lines in which more than 100 people, mostly policemen, were killed.

The meeting was presided over by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The participants of the meeting included Army chief Gen Syed Asim Munir, DG ISI Lt-Gen Nadeem Anjum, Peshawar Corps Commander, DGMO and other military officials as well as senior cabinet members, chief ministers of the four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was invited to the all-impor-



tant meeting but it did not attend.

The marathon meeting discussed how the suicide bomber managed to enter the high security zone, who the perpetrator was and how the government would respond to the renewed threat posed by the TTP.

The meeting was informed that the TTP, indeed, carried out the attack but because of fear of backlash from the Afghan Taliban, it did not own it, publicly.

Insiders told The Express Tribune that Pakistan would seek the intervention of Akhundzada to control the banned terror outfit.

The meeting noted that despite the resurgence of terrorism in the country, terrorists did not hold any specific area, therefore there was no need for a full-scale military operations.

Instead, according to Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, the intelligence-based operations would continue. (IANS)



# NIP CANCER IN THE BUD

Usually, the word cancer is equated with death. However, busting the common myth, health experts say that most cancers may be cured fully if diagnosed early. Late detection is one of the highest reasons behind poor survival rates. On the World Cancer Day on February 4, THE HEALTH PIONEER sheds light on some most common types of cancer in India and the causes behind them.

## TYPES OF CANCERS

**\* Gall Bladder Cancer**  
Bladder cancer risk factors include smoking, genetic mutations, and exposure to certain chemicals. Speaking on the rise in gallbladder-related illness, Dr Sushma Bhatnagar, the head of National Cancer Institute of India said, "Cases of gallbladder cases in women have been on the rise especially in the north-eastern parts of the country and settlements beside rivers."

**\*Cervical Cancer**  
Screening tests and the HPV vaccine can help prevent cervical cancer.

**\*Colorectal Cancer**

If you are 45 years old or older, get screened. Screening tests can help prevent colorectal cancer or find it early, when treatment works best.

**\*Gynecologic Cancers**  
Five main types of cancer affect a woman's reproductive organs: breast, cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar. As a group, they are called gynecologic cancers.

**\*Breast Cancer**  
Regular mammograms are the best tests doctors have to find breast cancer early. Talk to your doctor about when to start and how often to get a screening mammogram.

**\*Ovarian Cancer**  
Ovarian cancer causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system. But when ovarian cancer is found early, treatment works best.

**\*Uterine Cancer**  
Uterine cancer is the most common cancer of the female reproductive system.

**\*Vaginal and Vulvar Cancers**  
Vaginal and vulvar cancers are rare, but all women are at risk for these cancers.



## PREVENTABLE CANCERS

No cancer is 100% preventable. However, managing certain controllable risk factors – such as your diet, physical activity and other lifestyle choices – can lower your chances of developing cancer. This is especially true for 9 specific cancer types, which include:

- \*Breast cancer
- \*Cervical cancer
- \*Colorectal cancer
- \*Head and neck cancer
- \*Lung cancer
- \*Ovarian cancer
- \*Prostate cancer
- \*Skin cancer
- \*Testicular cancer

**\*Lung Cancer**

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States. To lower your risk, quit smoking, avoid secondhand smoke, and get your home tested for radon.

**\*Lymphoma**

Lymphoma is a general term for cancers that start in the lymph system. The two main kinds are Hodgkin lymphoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

**\*Myeloma**

Myeloma is a cancer of the plasma cells. In myeloma, the cells grow too much, forming a mass or tumor in the bone marrow.

**\*Prostate Cancer**

Most prostate cancers grow slowly and don't cause any health problems. Learn more and talk to your doctor before you decide to get tested or treated for prostate cancer.

**\*Skin Cancer**

To lower your skin cancer risk, protect your skin from the sun and avoid indoor tanning.

**\*Thyroid Cancer**

The thyroid gland is located in front of the neck. It sends out hormones that help control many activities in the body.

## MOST COMMON CAUSES FOR CANCER

**TOBACCO**

Tobacco use is a leading cause of cancer and of death from cancer. People who use tobacco products have an increased risk of cancer because tobacco products and secondhand smoke have many chemicals that damage DNA.

Tobacco use causes many types of cancer, including cancer of the lung, larynx (voice box), mouth, esophagus, throat, bladder, kidney, liver, stomach, pancreas, colon and rectum, and cervix, as well as acute myeloid leukemia. People who use smokeless tobacco (snuff or chewing tobacco) have increased risks of cancers of the mouth, esophagus, and pancreas.

Dr SVS Deo, Professor of Surgical Oncology at AIIMS Delhi says, "Smoking and consumption of alcohol account for 30 per cent of total cancer cases. If we can somehow curb the usage of these deadly items, cancer cases will go down."

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION**

Environmental pollutants like arsenic, chromium, nickel, asbestos, dioxins besides tobacco are the major cause for lung cancer and gall bladder in India.

Dr Bhatnagar said, a major chunk of cancer cases are a result of air pollution, water pollution and an unhealthy lifestyle. Air pollution has also led an increase in the cases of cervical cancer. Delhi NCR witnessed 22000 cases of cancer last year of which 50 per cent of cases were treated at the National Cancer Institute, AIIMS."

## Breast cancer Early detection key

Oncologists recommend breast self-examination every month around five days after the periods are over starting from the age of 20. According to them, for postmenopausal women, it can be done on a certain day/date of every month. Annual breast examination by a trained doctor after the age of 20 is also strongly recommended. Finally, regular mammograms after the age of 40-45 is also recommended for early detection of Breast Cancers and timely treatment.

With the emergence of advanced surgeries including oncoplastic breast surgery, oncologists/surgeons are now able to offer breast conservation to most patients with a good cosmetic outcome that boosts confidence and creates a positive impact on the psychological state of the patient. According to the experts, newer techniques like Sentinel lymph node biopsy and Lymphovenous anastomosis help in reducing the lymphedema rates to less than 5 percent. Chemotherapy usually consists of 6-8 cycles administered in daycare at an interval of 15-21 days.

It's not just a woman who has cancer, suffers. It has a devastating impact for the next generation. According to a study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, an estimated 4.4 million women died of cancer in 2020, leaving nearly 1 million children orphaned. At least 25% were due to breast cancer.

### DOCTORSPEAK

**Dr. Bhawana Awasthy**, Chief-Medical & Clinical Oncology, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre

"Cancer that develops in breast glands or ducts is called breast cancer. A lump in the breast, bloody or straw-coloured nipple discharge, recent nipple inversion, ulceration or destruction of the nipple, dimpling of skin and thickening of skin to give an appearance of orange peel are some of the symptoms of breast cancer. While identifying these signs is important, regular mammography picks up cancers even before these symptoms. Meet your doctor for a breast examination and screening advice before the disease becomes apparent. Remember, breast cancer is curable if detected early."

**Dr. Suman Mallik**, Clinical Director - Senior Consultant & HOD Radiation Oncology, Narayana Superspeciality Hospital, Howrah

"Confirmation of diagnosis of breast cancer usually requires a needle biopsy, which can be performed at the



### WHO Roadmap on breast cancer launched recently recommends:

- Countries to focus on breast cancer early-detection programmes so that at least 60% of the breast cancers are diagnosed and treated as early-stage disease.
- Diagnosing breast cancer within 60 days of initial presentation can improve breast cancer outcomes. Treatment should start within three months of the first presentation.
- Managing breast cancer so that at least 80% of patients complete their recommended treatment.

OPD 10-15 minutes after the mammogram is done. We initially go for ultrasound, mammogram and sometimes MRI in special situations to detect early disease. Patients with larger lumps, those having enlarged glands in the armpit or symptoms suggestive of distant organ involvement (bone pain, breathlessness, headache, enlarged liver etc.) need additional tests like PET-CT scan to rule out the spread of disease to other organs."

**Dr. Ronak Vyas**, Surgical Oncologist at Narayana Multi Speciality Hospital, Ahmedabad

"People need to be aware of advanced treatment and facilities available in the country now. For example, our hospital has best-in-class treatment and care for breast cancer patients. It is very disappointing for us that a large number of patients come to us at advanced stages. Early Cancer or Stages I & II are usually treated by surgeries first. Locally advanced stage III requires chemotherapy first followed by surgery and radiation. Hormone and other targeted therapy are needed in the select group of patients who have certain markers present on their tumours. Stage IV (Distant organ spread) is treated either with chemotherapy or hormone therapy or both."

## ... Rural women caught unaware

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Even as breast self-examination (BSE) remains a feasible screening method in resource-poor settings like India, yet diagnosis in advanced stages remains a cause of concern. This is mainly because the majority of women particularly from rural India have poor awareness regarding breast cancer and poor practice of BSE.

This was found by a group of researchers while assessing the awareness of breast cancer and the practice of BSE among women in a rural area of Karnataka in South India. This speaks volumes of the awareness status among rural women across the country.

Published in the Indian Journal of Cancer, the study revealed that less than one in ten women knew that a lump in the breast is a symptom of breast cancer.

Majority 338 (81.2%) were not able to state even a single symptom of breast cancer and 365 (87.7%) not able to state even one risk factor of breast cancer.

Majority 354 (85.1%) of the women in the study had never heard of BSE. None of the women in the study performed monthly BSE. Only 40 (9.6%) of the women actually performed BSE within the last 6 months. Women with higher education and those who reported a history of a lump in the breast in self or family were significantly more likely to state at least one symptom of breast cancer and were more likely to practice BSE, noted the authors of the study led by Avita R, Department of Community Health, St. John's Medical College, Bangalore.

Awareness of at least one symptom of breast cancer was associated with an 18 fold increase in the practice of BSE,

**"Evidence points out that early detection and treatment can improve breast cancer survival rates. For rural Indian women, the lack of a mammogram and breast examination by an experienced clinician makes BSE the only feasible screening method available. The poor awareness and practice of BSE could lead to delayed diagnosis and adversely affect the outcome of breast cancer. However, there are several socio-cultural barriers that continue to exist in Indian society such as negative attitude to BSE, poor health-seeking behaviour and lack of priority to the health of women as they reach the end of their child-bearing years."**

study said, revealing an urgent need to focus on health awareness

regarding breast cancer and BSE among rural women.

## CANCER: Close the care gap

On World Cancer Day, WHO is calling for intensified action across the South-East Asia Region to strengthen health systems to prevent and detect cancers early, to provide prompt treatment referral, to enhance access to palliative care, and to close the gap in access to quality cancer services – the theme of this year's commemoration.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally, accounting for an estimated 9.9 million deaths in 2020. Between 2010 and 2019, global cancer incidence increased by 26%, alongside a 21% increase in cancer deaths. An estimated one third of cancer deaths globally are due to tobacco use, high body mass index, alcohol use, low fruit and vegetable intake, and lack of physical activity.

In the WHO South-East Asia Region, an estimated 2.3 million people developed cancer in 2020, and 1.4 million died of the disease. Cancer is estimated to account for more than 20% of premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the Region, which stand at around 4.7 million deaths every year. In 2020, cancer of the lungs, breast and cervix accounted for 400 000 of the total number of cancer-related deaths in the Region, and almost two-thirds of people

diagnosed with cancer succumbed to the disease, highlighting the urgent need for improved early diagnosis and treatment.

Since 2014, the Region has accelerated action to prevent, detect, treat and control cancer, with increased focus on eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem. Eight countries of the Region now have in place population-based cancer registries (PBCRs), and three countries – Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka – are focus countries for addressing childhood cancer. Ten of the Region's 11 Member States provide tertiary care services for cancer diagnosis and treatment – including surgical and chemotherapy services – and nine also offer radiotherapy services.

WHO continues to support countries of the Region to implement its new Regional Action Plan on Oral Health 2022–2030, including oral cancers, which in 2020 were among the top five most common cancers, accounting for 7.4% of new cancers. Five countries of the Region – Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand – now have in place national cancer control plans, which Maldives and Nepal are in the process of finalizing. The Region is currently on track to achieve the WHO NCD Global Action Plan tar-



DR POONAM KHETRAPPAL SINGH  
WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia

get of a 30% relative reduction in tobacco use prevalence between 2010 and 2025.

On cervical cancer, the Region is achieving rapid, life-saving progress. Five Member States – Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand – have introduced nation-wide HPV vaccination, which Bangladesh, India and Timor-Leste are set to also introduce. Indonesia has introduced HPV vaccination in several provinces, covering tens of millions of girls. New evidence shows that a single dose of HPV vaccine delivers protection comparable to the 2-dose schedule, which alongside additional cost reductions, should enable countries to reach every woman and girl.

To accelerate progress and close the care gap, the Region has several priorities. First, introducing and/or expanding HPV vaccination in routine immunization to prevent cervical cancer, covering at least 90% of adolescent girls. At the same time, the Region must continue to facilitate healthy lifestyles, including by not just legislating but enforcing key tobacco control measures such as health warnings and bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, as well as by raising taxes on tobacco products.

Second, increasing capacity at the primary health care (PHC) level to detect cancers early, with a focus on intensified health workforce training, improved infrastructure and resources, and streamlined referral pathways for prompt initiation of treatment. In all countries, PHC physicians and nurses must be equipped to provide palliative and end-of-life care close to patients' homes and families, within the community.

Third, rapidly – and systematically – advancing the capacity of tertiary care facilities to provide comprehensive diagnostic and treatment services, which is critical to reduce cancer mortality. Interventions should be aimed at

Though the study was conducted in 2016, its observation still holds true keeping in mind no let up in the breast cancer cases.

The authors have called for an urgent need to focus on health awareness regarding breast cancer and BSE among rural women by exploring various mechanisms of community engagement, including involving grassroots-level health workers.

The study tool used was the Breast Cancer Awareness Measure (Breast-CAM), developed by Cancer Research UK, King's College London and University College London in 2009, and it records awareness of symptoms and risk factors of breast cancer and awareness and practice regarding BSE. It was translated into the local language Kannada for use in rural areas for study purposes.

high-burden cancers with high potential for cure. They must be accessible to all. Existing PBCRs should be improved, and where appropriate, new registries established, ensuring that policy makers can access good quality information to plan, monitor and evaluate interventions, and adjust accordingly.

Fourth, including cancer services in risk pooling or pre-payment schemes and health benefit packages. For this, national health budgets should enhance the quality and accessibility of public sector services and strengthen financial protection, with a focus on ending catastrophic health expenditure.

Action cannot and must not wait. In the last two decades, the world has made significant progress in the science of cancer control. However, much more work is needed to close the care gap, improve cancer survival, and accelerate towards the NCD 2025 and Sustainable Development Goal targets 2030. On World Cancer Day, WHO reiterates its commitment to support all countries of the Region to prevent, detect, treat and control cancer, ensuring equitable access to quality cancer services for everyone, everywhere.



DEEPAK BALUTIA



