

**OPINION 6**  
INDIAN AVIATION IS  
BECOMING CHAOTIC

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LANKA COPS INVESTIGATE  
THREATS ON EC

**MONEY 10**  
NSE WORLD'S LARGEST DERIVATIVES  
EXCHANGE FOR 4TH YEAR

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# Odisha Health Min shot dead by policeman

Naba Das who was shot by 'mentally disturbed' ASI succumbed to his injuries in hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha's Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das on Sunday succumbed to bullet injuries inflicted by a police officer.

The incident took place in Brajrajnagar town in Jharsuguda district around 1 PM when the Minister was on his way to attend a public programme.

An Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) of police fired four to five rounds at the Minister when he got out of his car. The ASI was nabbed by local people, who then handed him over to the police. Reports suggested that the accused ASI was suffering from mental illness for the past seven-eight years.

"Das was admitted with gunshot wounds on the left side of his chest. On operating, it was found that a single bullet had entered and exited the body, injuring the heart and left lung, causing massive internal bleed-



Odisha Health Minister Naba Das at a hospital after he was shot at by a policeman near Brajarajnagar in Jharsuguda district on Sunday PTI Photo

ing and injury. The injuries were repaired, and steps were taken to improve the pumping of the heart. He was given urgent ICU care. But despite best efforts, he could not be

revived and succumbed to his injuries," said the statement issued by Apollo Hospital in Bhubaneswar.

According to reports, Das suffered injuries on the left side of

his chest, while another policeman, who was standing guard, was also injured in the firing.

"Assistant Sub-inspector of Police (ASI) Gopal Das opened fire at the Minister, who sustained bullet injuries. The Minister was then rushed to a hospital," Brajrajnagar SDPO Guptaeswar Bhoi told reporters.

An inquiry has been launched to find out what prompted the ASI to open fire, Bhoi said.

In a video footage of the incident, Das is seen bleeding from the chest. Some people lifted the injured Minister, who seemed unconscious, and placed him on the front seat of a car.

Initially, he was taken to the Jharsuguda district headquarters hospital, the SDPO said. Arrangements were then made to airlift him to a Bhubaneswar hospital for "better treatment", he said.

The incident triggered tension in the town as the Minister's supporters pointed fingers to the "security lapses".

Some supporters even claimed that a conspiracy was hatched to target him.

Bhoi said that the ASI was currently being interrogated, and more details will be available after a thorough investigation.

The Government has ordered a Crime Branch probe into the incident.

# Rahul unfurls Tricolour at historic Lal Chowk

75 yrs after Nehru hoisted flag at Lal Chowk, Gandhi hoists Tricolour to mark yatra's end

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday unfurled the Tricolour at the historic clock tower of Lal Chowk in Srinagar to mark the end of the 3,500-km-long Bharat Jodo yatra. After attending the brief ceremony at Lal Chowk Rahul posted a tweet on his timeline, saying, "By hoisting the Tricolour at Lal Chowk, the promise made to India was fulfilled today. Hate will lose, love will always win. There will be a new dawn of hopes in India."

Rahul hoisted the Tricolour at Lal Chowk 75 years after his great-grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru did so for the first time here. Rahul was first scheduled to hoist the Tricolour at the Congress office in Srinagar as earlier the Congress said that hoisting the national flag at Lal Chowk is "part of the RSS' agenda". But the party changed it plan at the last minute after its leaders perhaps realised the significance of the Lal Chowk. To mark the end of the yatra,



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and supporters during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, in Srinagar, on Sunday PTI Photo

the Congress has convened an all-party gathering that will also reflect the extent of Opposition unity Rahul has been able to achieve through the Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir foot march.

Rahul was accompanied by his sister and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and party leaders from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) for the flag hoisting.

The security for the 10-minute event was at its peak as all roads leading to Lal Chowk had been sealed off from Saturday night

and no vehicular movement was allowed. Shops, business establishments, and the weekly flea market were closed as part of the security drill for the flag unfurling by the former Congress president.

Taking a 30-minute break from the Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir foot march at Sonawar, Rahul drove to the Pradesh Congress Committee headquarters on Maulana Azad Road before heading to the clock tower, locally known as 'Ghanta Ghar', to unfurl the Tricolour.

More than a dozen Opposition parties will attend the concluding function on Monday. While the DMK, NCP, RJD, Shiv Sena, CPI(M), CPI, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), Kerala Congress, National Conference, PDP, and JMM have confirmed their participation, the Trinamool Congress, Samajwadi Party, and the TDP will skip the function. A total of 24 parties were invited by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for the final function of the foot march led by Rahul.

# 'Padma Awards echoes in Naxal-hit areas this time'

Those who showed right way to youth were honoured, says PM in talk show

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, in his monthly radio talk 'Mann ki baat', spoke about 'Padma Awards' echoing "even in those areas which used to be Naxal affected" with the awardees recognised for showing the "right path to the misguided youth".

Addressing the people, the Prime Minister took on a range of issues including the environment, wetlands, e-waste, and the importance of millets and yoga in health, and also praised the Republic Day celebrations of this year.

Drawing the attention of listeners to the grand Republic Day parade and Padma awards,



Modi said, "This year the echoes of the Padma Awards are being heard even in those areas which used to be Naxal affected. Due to their efforts, those who show the right path to the misguided youth in Naxalite-affected areas have been honored with Padma Awards."

"For this, Ajay Kumar Mandavi, who does wood carving in Kanker, and Parshuram Komaji Khune, associated with the famous Jharipatti Rangbhoomi of Gadchiroli, have also received this honour."

This time there has been a good representation of the

tribal community and people associated with tribal life among the Padma awardees.

"Tribal life is different from the hustle and bustle of the cities; its challenges are also different. Despite this, tribal societies are always ready to preserve their traditions. Efforts are also made to preserve and research aspects related to tribal communities," said Modi.

"Similarly, many great personalities who have worked on tribal languages like Toto, Ho, Kui, Kuvi and Manda have received Padma Awards. It is a matter of pride for all of us.

# Rain fails to dampen Beating Retreat spirit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Beating the Retreat ceremony to mark the formal ending of Republic Day celebrations was a spectacular affair on Sunday despite the rain and inclement weather.

The lighted mass brass drums and crescendo of martial music by soldiers of the Armed forces dispelled the chill of the cold weather at Vijay Chowk here.

While the performers braved incessant rain to play tunes in their uniforms, the drone show was cancelled due to bad weather.

Foot-tapping music marked the beginning of the ceremony with the arrival of President Droupadi Murmu. She was welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The Prime Minister was drenched as he moved around outside the sheltered area, waving at the audience after the ceremony was over. For the first time, a 3-D anamorphic projection was done on the facade of North Block and South Block.

As many as 29 Indian tunes were played by the music bands



Tri-services bands perform at the Beating Retreat ceremony, at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi, on Sunday.

Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the State Police and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).

Never missing a step despite the wet ground, the bands began playing the "Agniveer" tune followed by the enthralling tunes like "Almora", "Kedar Nath", "Sangam Dur", "Queen of Satpura",

"Bhagirathi" and "Konkan Sundari".

The Air Force's band played "Aprajey Arjun", "Charkha", "Vayu Shakti", "Swadeshi", while fascinating "Ekla Cholo Re", "Hum Taiyyar Hai", and "Jai Bharati" were played by the band of the Navy.

The Army's band played "Shankhnaad", "Sher-e-Jawan",

"Bhupal", "Agranee Bharat", "Young India", "Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja", "Drummers Call", and "Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon". The event came to a close with the ever-popular tune "Sare Jahan se Accha".

In a magnificent sight, the contrast of the bands playing with the lights on their instruments on and then play-

ing "Aye mere watan ke logon", with the same lights switched off, cast an ethereal spell on the Vijay Chowk.

The buglers performed under the leadership of Naib Subedar Santosh Kumar Pandey, and the pipes and drums band was played under the instructions of Subedar Major Baswaraj Vagge.

# Thalaivar's unherioc act to hit small artistes' livelihood

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Hundreds of comedy and mimicry artists across the country are for a shock as South India's superstar Rajinikanth has cracked the whip on them through a public notice.

The artists eking out a living by mimicking and imitating Rajinikanth are banned from doing so, according to the public notice issued by Rajinikanth through his lawyer Subbiah Elambharathi on Saturday.

The superstar, popularly addressed as 'Style Mannan (King of Styles)', 'Thalaivar (leader)', and 'Badshah (emperor)' is one of the leading Indian personalities caricatured by mimicry artists in the country. No comedy shows would be complete without the portrayal of Rajinikanth, and there are artists specialising in mimicking and caricaturing the superstar. "Our client is an actor of



humongous reputation having acted in films across languages for decades. His charisma and nature as an actor and a human being has earned him the title "Superstar" called upon by millions of his fans worldwide. The sheer proportion of his fan base and his respect across the film industry is unmatched and indisputable. Any damage or violation to his reputation or persona would entail great loss to our client having its effect

over many spheres," says the notice. It warns the general public that their client is the only person who has control over the commercial utilization of his personality, name, voice, image, likeness and other characteristics that are uniquely identifiable with their client and no one can utilize or misappropriate or imitate any facets of their client's personality and exploit the same commercially in any manner whatsoever without the

consent and express authorization from him. "It has come to our client's notice that various platforms and mediums and also various product manufacturers are misappropriating our client's name, voice, image, photographs and caricature image, artistic image, computer Artificial Intelligence generated images and other characteristics to create popularity amongst the public and to entice member of the public to purchase their products and to have access their platform and medium. Our client is popularly known as Superstar," the notice continues.

The advocate concluded the notice with the warning that of anyone was found infringing their client's rights, the violator would have to face civil and criminal charges in accordance with the law.

Rajinikanth's dialogue delivery and mannerisms are the most sought-after items in

mimicry shows. There are many artists who caricature the superstar as chief minister and army commander much to the delight of the audience. One of the mobile phone manufacturers had named a signature phone series after a Kochadiyaan a character portrayed by the superstar. In 2015, Rajinikanth patented the mannerism of the character he portrayed in 'Baba', a movie in which he played the lead role. Salim Kumar, who bagged the national award for best actor, said one cannot blame the superstar for his decision to issue a notice like this. "It is his personal decision. What I understand is that some of the comedy artists have spoofed him and it is bound to have hurt him. Mimicking should not end up in spoofing anybody," Salim Kumar, who himself was a leading mimicry artist before entering the film industry told *The Pioneer*.

# Indian women win U-19 T20 WC

PTI ■ POTCHEFSTROOM

India on Sunday won their maiden ICC title in women's cricket as a bunch of sprightly and talented teenagers lifted the inaugural U-19 World Cup with an emphatic seven-wicket victory over England.

The Shafali Verma-led India U-19 squad managed to do what their seniors could not do by clearing the final hurdle in a global event. India first bundled out England for 68 in 17.1 overs and then returned to knock off the paltry target in 14 overs to lift the coveted trophy.

"It is just a proud moment, it's our first world cup," said Trisha with stumps in hand after the memorable win. The win on Sunday also reaffirms India's dominance at the U-19 level with the boys winning the world title in the Caribbean last year. India's bowling attack, led by pacer Titas Sadhu and sup-

ported by leg-spinner Parshavi Chopra, set up the comprehensive win on Sunday as they blew England away with a clinical display at Senwes Park.

While Sadhu showed that Indian women pace bowling is in safe hands following the retirement of Jhulan Goswami with impressive figures of 4-0-6-2, Chopra too continued her dream run as she snapped two for 13. Archana Devi also scalped 2f or 17, while Mannat Kashyap (1/13), Shafali (1/16) and Sonam Yadav (1/3) accounted for one wicket each as England were all at sea after being asked to take first strike.

Following a pep talk from India's Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, India came out with a specific plan and executed it perfectly as England's innings never really took off after being reduced to 16 for three in four overs.

# SEBI may probe recent short selling on bourses

IAANS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator, SEBI is likely to probe short selling in the Indian stock markets in the last few days. Sources said Indian markets have been under onslaught in the last few trading sessions and a probe will ascertain the role of short sellers in bringing the market down.

According to a SEBI discussion paper, 'Short selling — the sale of a security that the seller does not own' — is one of the long-standing market practices, which has often been the subject of considerable debate and divergent views in most of the securities markets across the world. The votaries of short selling consider it as a desirable and an essential feature of a securities market.



# Beneficiaries will get scheme’s benefits from February 5

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Madhya Pradesh has a people's government and I am a public servant. A government exists to change the life of the people. For this, we identified poor people in the entire state under the Mukhya Mantri Janseva Abhiyan who were eligible to take advantage of the schemes. The benefits of the scheme will be given to all these eligible beneficiaries during the Vikas Yatra during its visit to the villages starting from February 5.

Chouhan took part in the divisional level approval letters distribution programme under the Mukhya Mantri Janseva Abhiyan in Amarkantak Anuppur district on Sunday. Chouhan inaugurated the offi-

cial website of Amarkantak Narmada Udgam Mandir, dedicated and laid the foundation stone of development works and distributed benefits to the beneficiaries under various schemes. Food, Civil Supplies Minister Bisahul Singh, In-charge of District and Tribal Affairs, Scheduled Tribes Welfare Minister Meena Singh, MP Smt. Himadri Singh, MLAs, public representatives, saints and a large number of citizens were present. Chouhan inaugurated the programme with kanya puja and lit the lamp. He also honoured the saints.

The Chief Minister said that with the inspiration of Maa Narmada, I have devised a scheme for my sisters on Narmada Jayanti on Saturday. The name of this scheme is Ladli Behena Yojana, which will empower my sisters along

with making them self-reliant. Under the scheme, an amount of Rs one thousand per month will be given to women of all categories, except the women of rich and income tax payee families. In this way, each eligible beneficiary will get Rs 12,000 in a year, by which she will be able to meet her household expenses and her needs. The Chief Minister said that the scheme will be implemented after discussion in the Cabinet. To identify the beneficiary sisters, camps will be organised in every village and forms will be filled. This campaign will run for three months.

Chief Minister Chouhan apprised himself from the concerned collectors about the applications received and accepted under the Mukhya Mantri Janseva Abhiyan in all the three districts of Shahdol

division. He directed that the distribution of approval letters to all the identified beneficiaries should be ensured in the next two days, so that the beneficiaries start getting benefits in the Vikas Yatra initiating from February 5. Chief Minister said that if an eligible person does not receive the letter of approval, then he should register a complaint in the CM Helpline. In the Vikas Yatra, dedication of construction works, foundation laying and process for addition of names of such persons, who despite being eligible, have been deprived of the benefits of the scheme will be conducted. The Chief Minister said that poor homeless families, will be allotted land free of cost under the Mukhya Mantri Awasiya Bhu-Adhikar Yojana.

Chief Minister Chouhan

said that every farmer family will receive Rs 22 thousand every year which includes Rs 6 thousand under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, Rs 4 thousand under Mukhya Mantri Kisan Kalyan Yojana and Rs 12 thousand under Ladli Behna Yojana.

Chouhan said that the PESA rule has been implemented in 89 tribal-dominated development blocks of the state. In these development blocks, the Gram Sabha has been entrusted with the rights of water, land and forest. This rule is not against any class and person and it will harm no one. Under the PESA rule, the Patwari and the beat guard of the forest department will have to produce the details of Khasra, land records etc. in front of the gram sabha every year, to avoid any land misappropriation.



CP Tripathi, Head of the Department Structural Engineering Department, CPKA addresses an Indian Building Congress-2023 Seminar at Kushabhau Thackeray International Convention Center in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

## Govt sponsored screening centres essential: Dr Razack

FAROOQ QURESHI ■ BHOPAL

The Government should open screening centres and bear expenses of screening same as it was done at the time of Corona pandemic, said Dr Mohammad Sayeeduddin Razack who was in the state capital for a private programme.

He is noted Oncologist, earlier worked with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, a cancer research and treatment center located in Buffalo, New York.

He stated that smoking, drinking liquor and having (chewing) tobacco should be strictly restrained as they are the major cancer causing factors.

While talking to 'The Pioneer', he said in India over 75 percent of cancer is head or neck cancer due



to social habits of tobacco & pan and malnutrition.

Dr Razack said that majority of cases in India are of Advance Stages of cancer which are financially and physically hard to manage and even more problematic in a country with better resources of health support system.

Unfortunately in the present scenario in India patients and even doctors

fail to recognize cancer at early stage.

Apart from exceptions early screenings are very helpful in prevention of cancer of advance stages.

Dr Razack is working to fight against cancer for around five decades and at the age of 84, he never looks tired of talking about measures which an individual and institution should take to curb prevalence of cancer.

He has worked for the best of cancer institutes in the globe and concerned about the difficulties and limitations in cancer treatment.

In the latest vaccine for Virus or antigen related with Cancer is under development but at this stage it is not possible to develop, still it is under

process to target all kinds of Cancer.

It is next to impossible to find out specific reason causing cancer and earlier causing factors have been used as reference.

The lack of political will in doing better for cancer treatment is main factor of less equipped cancer treatment in India.

Thirty years ago latest technique witnessed great change as tissue was restored by connecting it with blood supply after cancer (tumour or tissue) was removed.

He says, Howard study on cancer management is positive outlook towards life. Always say half glass full and never say half glass is empty. Support system of family and freinds is important which collapses with different stages of cancer, he added.

## History sheeter Arshad’s house razed

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

History sheeter Arshad's house at Teelajamalpur was razed who was accused of cutting finger after he refused to pay Rs 500 , accused used a sharp edged weapon for comiitting the crime.

The administration broke down the house of habitual criminal Arshad alias Babba, who attacked traders for not paying extortion money.

The administration team, which arrived on Sunday morning, started the process of demolishing his house. Arshad is a clever scoundrel.

He has been booked for 32 serious offenses. Recently he was released from jail in the case of extenrment violation case.

After this, he along with six of his gang mates attacked two businessmen with sharp weapons for not paying extor-

tion money in KQ Qazi Camp, Wafna Colony. A businessman's finger was cut off in the attack. The accused have not been arrested yet.

According to the police, Shadab Khan (22), is a resident of Indra Sahayata Nagar, Tilajmalpur, works at tea shop at Qazi Camp. Arshad Babba, Anas Dana, Wahid Daru, Bada Kallu, Chhota Kallu, Danish and Tanjim came to the shop and drank tea at around 2 pm on the intervening night of Friday-Saturday. After drinking tea, the accused started threatening by showing knife, knife and knife that if they want to run a shop in the area, they will have to pay Rs 500 per day or Rs 5000 per month.

On this Shadab said that the shop belongs to Wasim Bhai that he only handle the counter enraged by this, the miscreants started vandalizing the shop.

The miscreants again came

threatening and started demanding extortion and when Wasim Bhai opposed this, Anas Dana along with Arshad Babba attacked him with a sharp edged weapon due to which Wasim finger was severed. The accused fled from the spot threatening them. Its complainant went to the police station and registered a case.

Police have registered cases against the accused under sections of attempt to murder and extortion. All the accused have criminal record.

Jahangirabad police have nabbed accused in violation of extenrment orders about three months ago. History-sheeter Babba was recently released from jail. After this, he along with the gang started threatening the traders for extortion. The police also takes him to Badar district, but he does not leave the city.

Arshad, works as a driver and is also indulges in gambling.



Madhya Pradesh police band contingents perform during the Beating the Retreat ceremony at Motilal Nehru Police Stadium in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

## ‘Beating the Retreat’ ceremony organised in the chief hospitality of the Governor

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Governor Mangubhai Patel attended the 'Beating the Retreat' ceremony in the camp on Sunday. The ceremony was organised at Moti Lal Nehru Stadium, Bhopal.

On this occasion, bands of 150 police and army personnel presented a march past creating waves of patriotism, stirring tunes of patriotic songs and marching in sync with the beat. The tuneful melodies of the amalgamation of Western and Indian music enthralled the audience.

At the culmination of the 'Beating the Retreat' ceremony, the entire stadium was drenched in rainbow lights. Meanwhile, multicoloured fireworks scattered pleasant colours from the ground to the sky.

Beating the Retreat programme began with paying respect to Governor Shri Mangubhai Patel. Brass Band, Mass Band, Pipe Band and Army Band of Madhya Pradesh Police



gave a captivating group presentation. A mesmerizing march past amidst the performances enthralled everyone. Patriotic, Indian Classical Music, Bharatiya Raga and Western classical music were brought out in the band concert by the Police Brass Band.

In this sequence, melodious musical renditions of songs from Hindi films were given. After this, band-wise group presentations were given by all the bands while marching past.

A musical presentation was made by the Police Brass Band under the leadership of Inspector Sunil Katare. Army Pipe Band of Mahar Regiment Sagar

presented an impressive march past. In the end, the band jointly marched past to the tune of "Saare Jahan Se Achcha".

It is known that the organisation of the "Beating the Retreat" is a long ancient tradition of paramilitary forces. When the troops returned to their camps after the war, there was a programme of entertainment with bands playing to reduce the tension of the war. With this programme, the Republic Day programmes formally end in India. Madhya Pradesh is the only state in the country to organise "Beating the Retreat", where every year on January 29, a programme is organised by the police in the capital Bhopal.

Senior administrative and police officers including Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Additional Chief Secretary Home Rajesh Rajoura, Director General of Police Sudhir Saxena were present in the "Beating the Retreat" ceremony.

## Reserve Police Inspector of Bhopal suffers cardiac arrest playing cricket

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Reserve Inspector of City police suffered cardiac arrest while playing cricket, officers gave CPR and rushed to hospital, his condition is stable.

Deepak Patil, Reserve Inspector of Bhopal Police, suffered a heart attack while playing cricket. Fellow policemen playing together gave CPR and got them admitted to the nearby National Hospital. His condition is out of danger.

It was told that RI Deepak Patil was playing cricket at the Old Campion Ground on Sunday morning when he had a cardiac arrest. The policemen playing together immediately gave CPR on the field itself. After this, he was taken to the hospital. As soon as the information was received, Police Commissioner Makrand Deuskar and other police officers reached the hospital. Deepak's age is 45 years. His height is about 5 feet 10 inches. Currently weighs 78 kg.

Due to overeating and a sedentary lifestyle, Deepak

**It was told that RI Deepak Patil was playing cricket at the Old Campion Ground on Sunday morning when he had a cardiac arrest. The policemen playing together immediately gave CPR on the field itself**

Patil's weight had increased to 109 kg. He was very fond of eating.

Being fond of sweet and salty food, he used to eat a lot of calories. In such a situation, his weight gradually increased to 109 kg. In August 2021, he got the doctor checked.

The doctor gave a workout plan to lose weight. By following it, he lost 31 kgs in a year. He skips a day and goes to the gym. Exercise for 30 minutes. Apart from this, walk daily in the morning.



only 4 teams participate and the players of each team are selected in the form of an auction and the captain of the team has to choose the team of his choice.

Out of total 4 teams, each team plays 2-2 matches among themselves as a league match and the top team play for championship.

The session was played between 4 teams (Super Heroes, Destroyer Bulls, Ball Blaster and Rebel Army) and the final match was between Super Heroes and Destroyer Bulls, in which the Super Heroes team

registered a resounding victory over S.P.L-3 Captured 3 trophies, Uday Singh Rawat, the captain of the winning team, did a brilliant captaincy and registered a one-sided victory by

using all the players of the team at the right time. All matches were monitored from the CricHeroes mobile app, with the third umpire and review system also used throughout the tournament. Gautam and Yogeshdid a great job as umpires.

In the end, the captain who won the tournament Uday Singh Rawat expressed his thanks and gratitude to all the players who participated in the tournament. The fourth season of the tournament will be played in January 2024 next year.



Senior BJP leader Umashankar Gupta during a Fishermen Community's Yuvak Yuvati Parichay Sammelan at Manas Bhawan in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

## Seminar on ‘Neuro-Oncology’ at Jawaharlal Nehru Cancer Hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

High-quality information and special discussion related to brain cancer was successfully organized in the premises of Jawaharlal Nehru Cancer Hospital, Bhopal on Saturday.

In this event, 32 eminent brain cancer experts of the country shared their views and enriched the knowledge of about 200 trainers involved in very informative

discussions on the improvements in the medical practice. Executive Director AIIMS, Bhopal Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh attended the inauguration of neuro-oncology symposium as Chief Guest. Both institutions agreed to work jointly in teaching training and research.

The program was inaugurated by Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director, AIIMS, Bhopal in the dignified presence of Asha Joshi (President, Jawaharlal Nehru Cancer Hospital), Mrs. Divya

Parashar (Chief Executive Officer, Jawaharlal Nehru Cancer Hospital) and Dr Gautam Kumar Sharan, Medical Director.

During the program senior radiation therapy experts guided the audience with their experience and way of life. Apart from this, experts shared their views on the complex problems of brain cancer. In this regard, a long discussion was also held about the progress in chemotherapy, surgery and radiation therapy.



# Efforts for the welfare of farmers and women are commendable

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Tanzanian delegation, which was on a visit to India, called on Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at his residence today. Chief Minister Chouhan informed the guests about the specialties of Madhya Pradesh, implemented public welfare schemes and achievements. Prominent among those who met Chief Minister Chouhan today was Abdul Rehman Kinana, who is leading the 5-member CCM delegation visiting India from 25 to 30 January 2023.

Kinana is the Vice President of CCM, Tanzania's powerful ruling party, which has been in power since independence in 1961. Other members include Parliamentary Committee members Abdullah

Mwini, Masafiri Wilbert, Thaddeo Burton and Salum Bakari Soma. The head of the delegation Kinana said that the work done for the welfare of farmers and women in Madhya Pradesh is commendable. Chief Minister Chouhan presented books and gifts to the members of the delegation.

Welcoming the delegation, Chief Minister Chouhan said that Bhopal is a city of lakes. The arrival of the Tanzania delegation in India and is a good initiative for the whole world. The goodwill between India and Tanzania is old. There are more than 50,000 people of Indian origin living in Tanzania. Special efforts are being made to deepen bilateral relations. Multi-faceted relations are shared by both the countries in various fields.

Chief Minister Chouhan

informed that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emphasis has been laid on research in the new education policy in the country. Many start-ups have begun.

Madhya Pradesh is also moving forward in this field. Khelo India activities are also happening in Madhya Pradesh. It is a matter of pride for India to have the chairmanship of the G-20 under the leadership of the Prime Minister. Work is being done to spread joy. People's participation has been promoted in providing necessary benefits of the schemes and in works like cleanliness. Madhya Pradesh is actively working in various fields as per the Prime Minister's resolve.

Chouhan informed that schemes have been implemented in Madhya Pradesh according to the integrated

human philosophy of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay. Welfare of the poor has been given priority. The arrangements for roads, irrigation, electricity and drinking water have been strengthened.

Along with the Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao campaign, various activities are being conducted by the Anand department to adopt Anganwadis, to plant saplings. The citizens of this place don't believe in stocking instead they provide unused items and clothes etc. to the needy.

In Madhya Pradesh, work has been done to reduce the cost of agriculture by making loans available to the farmers at zero percent interest. Work has been done to provide irrigation and electricity facilities to the farmers, to get them the right price for their produce and to get the benefit of the

minimum support price. Along with this, assistance is also provided on the loss of crops. Gram Sabhas have been empowered in Madhya Pradesh. 14 different parameters have been created. After Ladli Laxmi Yojana, Ladli Bahna Yojana is being implemented, in which work will be done to provide Rs one thousand per month to the women of the family. Beneficiaries of Sambal Yojana receive tuition fee and medical assistance for children. An amount of Rs 16 thousand is provided to pregnant women for delivery in the Sambal Yojana. Assistance is also given for natural and untimely death. Industrialisation is being promoted in the state.

The members of the delegation were very happy with their meeting with Chief Minister Chouhan.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan meets with a delegation from Tanzania at his residence in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo



MP Guest Teachers stage a protest demanding regularisation of jobs at Neelam Park in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

## You are our Shraavan Kumar, say beneficiaries

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Before leaving for Anuppur from Bhopal, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had a virtual interaction with the pilgrims who had returned after visiting various pilgrimage places under the Mukhya Mantri Teerth-Darshan Yojana through video call at the State Hangar.

Giving blessings to Chief Minister Chouhan, many elderly women and men pilgrims said that you are our Shraavan Kumar. You have given many facilities to the pilgrims. The assistants are also travelling with us. We are not having any problems. We are



grateful to you for this. You have implemented this scheme for the people desirous of undertaking pilgrimage.

During the discussions with Chief Minister Chouhan, the pilgrims said that we wish you to be happy and prosperous. CM Chouhan said that after talking with you, I have

also got the virtuous benefit of pilgrimage.

It is notable that other states also tried to implement the Mukhya Mantri Teerth-Darshan Yojana implemented in Madhya Pradesh. Pilgrims of Satna-Rewa and Panna from Madhya Pradesh, after visiting Lord Shri Dwarkadhish and Somnath from January 24 to 29, interacted with the Chief Minister and apprised him about the facilities available during the journey. The elders mentioned about the happy end of their journey by chanting Jai Shri Ram in the train and thanked the Chief Minister Chouhan again and again and expressed gratitude to him.



Artists perform during the final rehearsal on the eve of the opening of Khelo India Youth Games, at IT Nagar Stadium in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

## Kejriwal to inaugurate super site today

**New Delhi:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will on Monday inaugurate a "super site" and a mobile van which will collect pollution data in

realtime and tell its constituents.

Delhi would become the first city in the country to get a realtime source segmentation of air pollution that will help in identifying factors responsible for increase in air pollution at any place in Delhi, Delhi Environment minister Gopal

Rai said on Sunday.

"The super site facility is located at Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya premises near ITO. The project has been initiated by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) in collaboration with IIT Kanpur, IIT Delhi, and TERI," Rai said in a statement.

## Jaju sends notices to AAP leaders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Shyam Jaju has sent notices to AAP leaders, asking them to take down all social media content related to their "corruption" allegations against him and his son, and desist from doing so in future.

The 'cease and desist' notice was sent by Jaju and his son Sandesh Jaju to MLAs Saurabh Bhardwaj, Durgesh Pathak, and Dilip Pandey, as well as party MP Sanjay Singh for accusing the Jajus on January 22 of indulging in corruption.

"The former Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta and in-charge of the Delhi BJP Shyam Jaju got a company (promoted by their sons) registered on the address of the party office... They own 40 to 45 properties in Delhi and neighbouring areas. The Lokayukta has sent them three notices but they have not replied yet," Pathak had alleged in one press conference.

Jaju in a notice sent to the AAP leaders called the allegations false and accused the politicians of defaming him.

"In the said Press Conferences, you falsely accused us of corruption, impropriety and other illegal activities. I unequivocally state that the said allegations are false and clearly defamatory," said the notice by Jaju, a former national vice president of the BJP.

He said his son Sandesh had resigned as director of the said company on December 12, 2018 and did not have its shares after November 19, 2019. It was stated in the notice that the "false and defamatory" statements by the AAP leaders were broadcast live on digital platforms and continue to remain accessible to the public.

## Delhi receives 3 mm rainfall, minimum temp at 6.4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After 110 dry days, the national capital received 3.0 mm rainfall, finally a rainy day on Sunday as the minimum temperature settled at 6.4 degrees Celsius. Delhi usually gets around 17 mm of rain in January. This, however, is the first rainfall of the winter season, which has been among the driest in the past decade. More rain is expected on Monday.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Delhi usually gets around 17 mm of rain in January. The last rainy day was recorded on October 11, 2022. A rainy day is considered when

rainfall is above 2. mm in 24 hour. After touching 10 degrees Celsius last week, morning temperatures in Delhi dipped again, with the minimum temperature on Sunday recorded as 6.4 degrees Celsius, three degrees below normal. Cold winds also swept through the national capital region on Sunday.

The IMD said an intense western disturbance over Afghanistan and the neighbouring area is the reason behind the rain in Delhi. A more intense western disturbance will be active in the area on Monday, bringing more rainfall. After a brief respite from cold wave conditions, parts of north India are set to witness a temperature drop in

the coming days. The city has been staring at a rain deficit of 100% since November last year. No rain activity was recorded in November and December. The city has seen only traces of rain on seven days in January so far. As the western disturbances, which impacted the plains, were feeble, rain eluded Delhi for over three months.

According to IMD's data, Safdarjung has reported a rain deficit of 100% in this month till Saturday as against the normal mark of 16.9mm. In contrast, January 2022 saw an excess rainfall of 306% as the month logged 88.2mm rainfall compared with the month's normal of 21.7mm. Similarly, January

2021 recorded 56.6mm rainfall, making it an excess rainfall of 161%.

The weather system is likely to cause "light/moderate rainfall/snowfall at most places with isolated heavy falls over western Himalayan region during the next two days; light/moderate rainfall at some/may places over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan during the same period. Isolated very light rainfall/drizzle would also occur over Delhi on Sunday and Monday morning," officials said.

On Saturday, the minimum temperature in the national capital settled at 6.1 degrees Celsius and the maximum at 23.8 degrees Celsius.

## Pole Vaulter of the Academy Dev Kumar Meena strong contender

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Dev Kumar Meena, a schoolboy who has covered a journey from agricultural fields in Dewas to Bhopal's athletics academy, is working tirelessly to win medal at the Khelo India Youth Games. Dev Kumar was selected in Madhya Pradesh Athletic Academy in the year 2020 through talent search.

Dev Kumar, a thin schoolboy, was initially selected for the short sprint. But later he became interested in pole vault.

Academy's athletic coach Sanjay Garnik says that during practice we saw that Dev Kumar's jumping ability is good. So he started training him in pole vault instead of sprint race.

Sanjay says that within

**Sanjay says that within six months, Dev Kumar cleared a distance of 4.60 meters in pole vault and won a medal in his age group in the National Athletics Competition**

six months, Dev Kumar cleared a distance of 4.60 meters in pole vault and won a medal in his age group in the National Athletics Competition. He says that Dev Kumar is crossing the height of 5 meters in practice. Dev Kumar will prove to be a

formidable challenger at the "Khelo India Youth Games".

Dev Kumar says the chief athletics coach has prohibited the use of smart phones to keep the youths focused. Use of smart phones is not permitted in the Athletics Academy. Dev Kumar says that nowadays youth spend more time on social media. Concentration is very important to achieve the goal. I have a simple phone to keep in touch with my parents.

Dev Kumar is looking forward to a great start to his season. "I have been training hard for four to five hours a day at the academy," he said. My main focus is to achieve a new height in pole vault. I am crossing 5 meters in training. Now I just need to concentrate and get good results in the

competition.

Dev Kumar says that without the support of the state government, I would not have been able to play sports like pole vault because the equipment is very expensive and beyond the reach of a common farmer like us. The young player had missed the 2022 Asian Youth Athletics Championships held in Kuwait due to an injury. Dev Kumar said, "Before the final selection trials, I could not make it to the national team due to a strain in my hamstring."

The chief athletics coach said that the Khelo India Youth Games in 2023 would be a launching pad for Dev Kumar. "We are planning to start a special training in pole vault from March," he said.

**Office of the Executive Engineer**  
**P.W.D. (Maintenance) Division No. 2 Bhopal**  
NIT 33 of 2022-23 Bhopal, Date 23/01/2023  
**Tender Notice**

Online Tender for mentioned below are being invited. The Tender have been uploaded on the e-Procurement system of Public Works Department on the Portal [www.mptenders.gov.in](http://www.mptenders.gov.in) Tender details are as below:-

S. No	Tender No.	Name of Work	Call No.	Cost of Project (PAC) (Rs. to lack)
1	2	5	6	7
1	2021_PWDRB_247025_1	Strengthening of Lambakheda to Islamnagar Road, Bhopal Length 4.00 K.M.	First	348.24
2	2021_PWDRB_247026_1	Special Repair of Amla amarpur, Samaspura, Samasgarh Road Length 17.00 Km. (Working Length 0.540 Km.) and Tilakhedi, Dehariyakala, Mundla, Jhagariya, Serwar Road Length 10.00 Km. (Working Length 0.550 Km.)	First	131.42
3	2021_PWDRB_247027_1	Construction of Bakaniya to Dhamaniya Missing Link Road Bhopal Length 0.90 Km.	First	83.95

The document can only be purchased online from the above website after making online payment. The last date & time for Purchase and Submission of document on line is 08/02/2023 up to 17:30 PM. Detailed NIT and other details can be viewed on the above mentioned portal. Amendments to NIT, if any, would be published on website only, and not in news paper.

Executive Engineer  
PWD (Maint.) Division No. 2  
Bhopal

G-22228/22

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**E-AUCTION PUBLIC NOTICE OF SALE**  
**E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Property/ies under the Securitisation and Reconstruction and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) / Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.** Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer (details of physical/symbolic is mentioned below), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis on **03.03.2023** at the below mentioned timings for recovery of dues with further interest and cost thereon due to the Karnataka Bank Ltd. The details are as under: Reserve Price and Earnest Money Deposits details are as under and the Earnest Money Deposit shall be deposited on or before **02.03.2023 at 4.00 pm** through online payment to the Account (details of which are mentioned below).

Sl No.	Branch Name	Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Balance O/S in Rs.	Description of the Property/ies	Reserve Price (Rs.) Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Rs.	Date & Time of Auction Incremental Value of the Bid	Details for Remitting EMD Account No. / IFSC Code
1	Bhopal Branch	(1) Mr. Priyank Kumar Jain S/o Late Ashok Kumar Jain; (2) Mrs. Priyanka Jain W/o Mr. Priyank Kumar Jain; Both addressed at: Flat No. HIG-36, Block No.36, 2ndFloor, Board Colony, Baghira Apartment, E-5, Bhopal-462016, Madhya Pradesh	Rs. 5,89,132.59 (Rupees Five Lakhs Eighty Nine Thousand One Hundred Thirty Two and Paise Fifty Nine Only) under PS TL A/c No. 127700180021101 along with future interest from 13.01.2023 plus costs	All part and parcel of Residential Flat No. Jr. HIG 36, admeasuring 1076 sq ft Second Floor, situated at Baghira Apartment, E 5, Avera Colony, Tehsil Huzur, District Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, belonging to Mr. Priyank Kumar Jain. Boundaries of Property: East: Flat No.33 (Dr. V.K. Valechha), West: Open, North: Open, South: Open.	Rs. 47,00,000.00 (Rupees Forty Seven Lakhs Only)  Rs.4,70,000.00 (Rs. Four Lakhs Seventy Thousand Only)	03.03.2023 from 2.00 PM to 2.20 PM  Rs. 10,000/-	RTGS / NEFT / Fund Transfer to the credit of Account Number - 1273500200004101 Karnataka Bank Ltd, Bhopal Branch, IFSC Code-KARB000127

(The borrower's/mortgagor's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured asset)  
For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to link in Karnataka Bank's Website ie. [www.karnatakabank.com](http://www.karnatakabank.com) under the head "Mortgaged Assets for Sale".  
The Auction will be conducted through portal <https://bankauctions.in/> on 03.03.2023 at the above mentioned timings with unlimited extension of 05 minutes. The intending Bidder is required to register their name at <https://bankauctions.in/> and get the user id and password free of cost and get training i.e online training on e-auction (tentatively on 02.03.2023) from M/s 4closure, 605A, 6th Floor, Maitrivanam, Ameerpet, Hyderabad - 500038. Help Line: 040-23736405. Contact Person: Mr. Subbarao. Mob. 091-814200061. E-Mail : [subbarao@bankauctions.in](mailto:subbarao@bankauctions.in)  
Place: Mumbai  
Date: 23.01.2023

Sd/- Chief Manager & Authorised Officer,  
Karnataka Bank Ltd.



# Probe team recovers Mirage black box

## Efforts on to retrieve all parts of SU-30 data recorder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As the IAF has started investigations to ascertain the cause of the air mishap near Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, its teams on Sunday recovered the black box of the ill-fated Mirage-2000 and a part of the flight data recorder of the SU-30 MKI. Efforts were on to retrieve all the parts of the black box or the data recorder of the SU-30 to enable the board of inquiry to find out the reason for the accident.

The data recorder of the Mirage-2000 and the SU-30 were found in the Morena district where both planes went down. Wing Commander Hanumanth Rao Sarathi flying the Mirage was killed while the two pilots of the SU-30 managed to eject before the crash. They were now undergoing medical treatment, officials said here.

As regards the recovery of the data recorder and collecting the wreckage of both the planes, officials said teams of IAF studied and inspected a forested area of Pahargarh where the debris of the two



Relatives and Air Force personnel during the last rites of Wing Commander Hanumanth Rao Sarathi, who was killed in plane crash in Morena, Madhya Pradesh, at Belagavi on Sunday

fighter jets fell on Saturday. The two frontline combat aircraft of the IAF crashed during a training mission in Morena possibly due to mid-air collision when the wings of the two aircraft brushed against

each other while flying at speeds of more than 800kms. A black box, or the flight data recorder, is an electronic recording device placed in an aircraft and helps in the investigation of flight accidents.

Pahargarh area police inspector Dharmendra Gour said the forested area where the wreckage fell has been cordoned off. "Even police are not being allowed in the (cordoned off)

area. Officials of IAF are present there," he said. Media personnel are also not allowed in the area.

Defence experts have said the Russian-designed Sukhoi-30MKI jet and the French Mirage-2000 possibly had a mid-air collision, but there was no official comment on the cause of the crash from the IAF.

Both the jets had taken off from the Gwalior Air Force station. The base has squadrons of both Sukhoi-30MKIs and the Mirage 2000 jets. The crash took place at about 5.30am.

Morena Collector Ankit Asthana on Saturday said the debris of both aircraft fell in the Pahargarh area of the district and also in Rajasthan's Bharatpur, which borders Madhya Pradesh.

A high-level probe has been ordered into the accident, officials earlier said. It was the first Mirage 2000 as well as Sukhoi-30MKI that the IAF lost in a mid-air collision.

The SU-30MKI is a twin-seater combat jet, while the Mirage 2000, manufactured by French aerospace major Dassault Aviation, is a single-seater aircraft.

# CPI demands probe into all Adani group business deals

## Attacks Centre for allowing monopoly to company in the ports and airports

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Sunday demanded a thorough probe into all deals of the Adani group. The party's national secretariat in a statement blamed Modi Government for patronage given to industrialist Gautam Adani by allowing monopoly in the ports, and airports sector and backing of LIC in share markets.

"The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India has repeatedly pointed out that the pro-corporate and pro-big business policies adopted by the RSS-BJP combine government led by Narendra Modi are resulting in the loot of national and natural assets by Adani and others. The Modi government has asked the public sector enterprises including LIC to invest in Adani companies' shares. "The Adani group is now having control over seaports,



airports and profit-making public-sector enterprises. The sudden growth of Adani group after Modi came to power is proof of the patronage received from the government. The investors including the average Indian investor and the public sector units are already under heavy loss due to alleged manipulations by the Adani

group," said CPI. The CPI demanded a thorough probe into all the deals of the Adani group by competent authorities so that further loss can be averted. "Party also demands exemplary punishment to all those responsible for the loot of the national and natural assets," said CPI.

# Bihar students in lurch over JEE dates clash

## NTA assures JEE aspirants, new date to be announced today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/PATNA

The schedule of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main 2023 examinations has left the Bihar students jittery as it coincided with the Class 12 mathematics exam to be conducted by the Bihar Intermediate board on February 1.

Sources in the Ministry of Education said a late evening meeting conducted on Sunday has decided to hold a discussion with the Bihar Education Department to adjust the conflicting exam dates either way.

A senior official of the National Testing Agency (NTA) has assured that Bihar students desiring to take the JEE will not face any problems and a new decision to tweak the



date and timing shall be announced positively by Monday morning.

Students taking the Bihar Board (BSEB) exam in 2023 have took to social media to express their concerns and urged either of the organizers

to adjust or reschedule the exam dates. National Testing Agency (NTA) which conducts

the JEE for admissions towards IITs and engineering colleges across the country recently revised JEE Main 2023 exam dates, as of which, the JEE Main 2023 Exams will be conducted on January 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31 and February 1.

Interestingly the JEE 2023 exam had to be rescheduled since a date of testing of one

batch of aspirants/applicants fell on January 27 earlier which had to be withdrawn because of the Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) 2023 was scheduled on January 27 in which lakhs of students, teachers parents and other stakeholders participated.

The Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) will conduct the mathematics exam of the class 12th board exam for 2023 on February 1, from 9.30 am to 12.45 pm. While the JEE Main 2023 will take place from 9am to 12pm.

Candidates who has to mandatory take the Class 12 board exams and those who have intended to take JEE

Main schedule for same day on February 1 have requested the Bihar government to amend necessary changes which is significant for their career.

# Man booked for impersonating as secretary of PMO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has booked Ankit Kumar Singh for impersonating as Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in a case for personating a government servant.

"It has been learnt by this office that a man Ankit Kumar Singh is moving around claiming himself to be Dinesh Rao, an IAS officer of 1997 batch of Bihar cadre and posted as a Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, and looking after Varanasi district.

His mobile number is 9454008098 and he is learnt to have contacted Prabhu Narayan Singh, District Magistrate, Agra, Uttar Pradesh seeking favours for his constituency.



stituency.

Prima facie, it appears to be a case of impersonation as PMO official as no official by the given name is posted in this office. Accordingly, CBI is requested to lodge a complaint for initiating investigation into the matter, as per law," Assistant Director, PMO, said in a complaint dated September 24, 2021.

The case was registered following notifications from the Department of Personnel and Training under which the CBI functions and the Home Department of the Uttar Pradesh Government for investigating the case.

While the UP Government accorded consent to the CBI to investigate the case under its jurisdiction across the State on August 24, 2022 and subsequently the DoPT notified the agency to probe the matter in a notification dated November 14 last year.

The suspect has been booked under Section 170 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for personating a government servant.

# Rollout of HPV vax against cervical cancer: Govt likely to float global tender in April

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Health Ministry intends to roll out HPV vaccine against cervical cancer in the national immunisation programme for girls aged nine to 14 years in June for which a global tender is likely to be floated in April, official sources have said.

Serum Institute's made-in-India HPV vaccine "CER-VAVAC" was launched by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on January 24, in presence of the Pune-based firm's CEO Adar Poonawalla and Prakash Kumar Singh, its Director-Government and Regulatory Affairs.

"The ministry is likely to float in April a global tender for 16.02 crore doses of HPV vaccine, which will be supplied by 2026. Apart from domestic manufacturer Serum Institute of India, global vaccine manufacturer Merck is also likely to participate in the tender," an official source said.

In July last year, India's drug regulator granted market authorization to Serum Institute of India's indigenously developed HPV vaccine.

It has also been cleared by government advisory panel National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) for use in the public health programme.

Prakash Kumar Singh, on the sidelines of a South Asia meet on HPV last month, had said that the price of CER-VAVAC will be affordable compared to the international HPV vaccine available in India.

India, at present, is fully dependent on foreign manufacturers for HPV vaccines.

Globally, three foreign firms manufacture HPV vaccines out of which two sell their doses in India.

Each dose of the vaccine available in the market costs more than ₹4,000, sources said. In September 2022, Poonawalla had said that each dose of its "CERVAVAC" vaccine would cost ₹200 to ₹400.

# Cattle runover on tracks: Rly starts fencing Mumbai-Ahmedabad route

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

To curb incidents of cattle runover in the busy Mumbai - Ahmedabad section, Indian Railways has initiated the work of construction of cattle barrier fencing.

To begin with, the Western Railway has initiated the work of construction of Metal Beam fencing on Mumbai - Ahmedabad section. The metal barrier fencing will cover a length of about 622 km, between Mumbai to Ahmedabad and will be undertaken at an approximate cost of ₹245.26 crore.

"All the 8 tenders have been awarded and work is progressing in full swing. The work is expected to be completed by end of May 2023. The fencing will be of guard rails made of metal. The fencing is very robust as it consists of two W-beams. A W-beam type stands for wide flanges, which are thicker, that aid in resisting bend stress," said a senior railway official.



highways & expressways, especially at accident prone areas to provide protection to vehicles as well as pedestrians.

At the same time Western Railway appealed to the cattle owners/cattle grazers to not let their cattle come near the railway land/tracks.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had announced that barriers or concrete bollards

will be constructed along the fast moving train sections to secure the rail infrastructure and at the same time safety of the passengers on board.

In yet another initiative, Railways have already put on the service of its security personnel to man and then simultaneously create awareness along the residents of tracks.

# Put conversion matter before 5-judge bench, urges fresh plea in SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A fresh application has been moved before the Supreme Court urging that the matters related to alleged forcible religious conversions be taken up by a larger bench of five judges as they involve the interpretation of the Constitution.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud is scheduled to hear the batch of pleas on Monday against anti-conversion laws of several states regulating religious conversion due to interfaith marriages and on matters related to alleged forcible conversions.

The fresh application is filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, who is among the petitioners. He has asked the court to refer the petitions to a larger bench saying there are several questions of laws involved which require the interpretation of the Constitution.

He raised questions like whether the previous judgments of this Court interpreting Article 25(1) of the Constitution are grossly erro-



neous in so far as they upheld the word "propagate" would include entitlement to convert.

"Whether the word 'propagate' needs to be construed in a manner which is not detrimental to fraternity, unity, dignity and national integration..." Upadhyay's fresh plea said.

It should also not lead to communal conflagration on account of religious communities trying to convert the weaker section of other religious communities and "attempting to make demographic changes as witnessed in the nine states/UTs (Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh) and around 200 districts of India", the application said.

# PIL filed in SC challenging Centre's decision to ban BBC documentary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court against the Centre's decision to "ban" a BBC documentary on the 2002 Gujarat riots in the country, alleging it was "malafide, arbitrary and unconstitutional".

The PIL filed by advocate ML Sharma also urged the apex court to call and examine the BBC documentary - both parts I and II - and sought action against persons who were responsible and were involved directly and indirectly with the 2002 Gujarat riots.

Sharma said that in his PIL he has raised a constitutional question and the top court has to decide whether citizens have the right under Article 19 (1) (2) to see news, facts and reports on the 2002 Gujarat

riots.

He has sought direction to quash the order dated January 21, 2023 of the Ministry of the Information and Broadcasting, terming it as illegal, malafide, arbitrary and unconstitutional.

His plea said whether the central government can curtail freedom of press which is a fundamental right as guaranteed under Article 19 (1) (2) of the Constitution.

"Whether without having an Emergency declared under Article 352 of the Constitution of India by the president, Emergency provisions can be invoked by the central government?" the PIL said.

It claimed the BBC documentary has "recorded facts" which are also "evidence" and can be used to further the cause of justice for the victims.

# Leprosy cases declining not due to non-transmission, but due to non-detection: WHO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Sunday reminded the member nations not to be complacent in view of declining new leprosy cases, which it asserted were not due to decrease in transmission of the disease, but because of cases remaining undetected amid covid-related disruptions.

Against this backdrop, it has asked the countries to urgently address gaps in leprosy services which were affected

due to Covid-19 pandemic. "Act Now. End Leprosy," is this year's theme for World Leprosy Day being observed on Sunday.

"Leprosy is 100% curable when detected early. Yet, today, in addition to covid-19 related challenges, stigma and discrimination - both institutionalized and informal, continue to impede prompt diagnosis and treatment and facilitate onward spread of leprosy. This has to change," said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, regional director, WHO South-East Asia.

She pointed out that over

the past decade, strong progress was achieved in several key areas of leprosy prevention, treatment, and control globally, with new cases among children reduced by 27% between 2010 and 2019, visible deformities at time of diagnosis reduced by 23% between 2014 and 2019 and the rate of new cases among children reduced to 7.6 per million children as opposed to 9.8 in 2014.

However, in 2021, 140,000 new leprosy cases were reported, with 95 per cent of new cases coming from the 23 global priority countries. Of these,



6 per cent were diagnosed with visible deformities or grade-2 disabilities (G2D). Over 6 per cent of new cases were children under the age of 15, with 368 being diagnosed with grade-2 disabilities, she said.

Even as a 10 per cent increase in new cases was reported in 2021 against 2020, the reported cases were still 30% lower than in 2019. Reportedly, this is not because of a decrease in transmission, but due to cases remaining undetected amid covid-related disruptions.

"Countries must continue

to urgently restore leprosy services, with a focus on expanding single dose rifampicin chemoprophylaxis, intensifying active case finding, and ensuring prompt diagnosis and treatment with multidrug therapy," added Dr Khetrapal Singh.

The global health official also stressed on ensuring increased access for persons affected by leprosy and their families to mental health care as up to 50% of those affected face psychiatric morbidities such as depression, anxiety disorders and suicide attempts.



# Air crash: Wing Commander Rao cremated in Belagavi

PTI ■ BELAGAVI (K'TAKA)

Wing Commander Hanumanth Rao Sarathi, who was killed in a plane crash between Sukhoi-30MKI and Mirage-2000 aircraft in Madhya Pradesh, was cremated with full military honours. The two frontline combat aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) crashed during a training mission in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district on Saturday, resulting in the death of Wing Commander Sarathi while two other pilots ejected safely. Wrapped in tricolour, the coffin carrying the body of the pilot was brought from Morena to Belagavi for the last rites by a special IAF plane. It was then taken to Sarathi's home in Ganeshpur.

Various people, including former chief minister B S Yediyurappa and Congress MLA Laxmi Hebbalkar, paid homage to the departed soul by garlanding the body. Later in the evening, the



Relatives and Air Force personnel during the last rites of Wing Commander Hanumanth Rao Sarathi at Belagavi, on Sunday, a day after he was killed in a plane crash in Madhya Pradesh's Morena

PTI Photo

mortal remains were consigned to flames with full military honours. A pall of gloom descended at the residence of Wing Commander Sarathi, an instructor at Tactics and Air Combat Development

Establishment (TAC-DE) in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior. The family members and relatives were inconsolable with his untimely demise. The 35-year-old pilot is survived by his wife, a three-year-old daughter and

a one-year-old son. The IAF officer comes from a defence background. Sarathi's father Revansiddappa Sarathi is a retired honorary captain and brother Praveen Sarathi is a serving Group Captain.

# WB Govt staffers protest over non-payment of DA

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

As though the 600-days-Along sit-in demonstration by the victims of recruitment scam was not enough, a joint forum of 8 lakh strong State Government employees unions too have begun a continuous dharna in support of 38 per cent hike in dearness allowances.

The government employees including the retired staff have been protesting for months alleging that the Government had not paid them the revised dearness allowance after the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations were implemented by various governments. This, despite the Calcutta High directing the State to do so.

According to the joint forum leaders while they were eligible for a approved 34 per cent DA of the basic pay the government has so far given 3 per cent DA, which was not only less than the central government standards but also lesser than the DA given by the other States like Kerala, Bihar,

Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and even Uttar Pradesh. The employees association which promptly got support from the protestors of teachers' recruitment scam said they would continue the movement, till their demands were made.

"We have called for a 2-hour cease work on Wednesday ... if the Government continues to pay no heed to our demand then we will go for a bigger movement," one of their senior leaders said, even as the ruling Trinamool Congress blamed the Opposition BJP and the Left for fomenting problem.

"It is the CPI(M) and BJP which are inciting the government workers to derive political mileage from it ... still the people will once again vote for the Trinamool Congress in the panchayat and general elections" TMC MP Shantanu Sen said.

Supporting the cause of the State employees, Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari said, his party would raise the issue inside the Assembly and take the move-

ment to its logical end. "We will raise this issue in the Assembly ... because this Government does not even listen to the High Court which has directed them repeatedly to clear the DA," he said. The State government has moved the Supreme Court after the High Court order directing the government to clear the DA arrears of the employees.

CPI(M) MP and senior counsel Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya said "there is no rule of law in Bengal which is proved by the way they get the audacity to defy the High Court ... this is sheer arrogance that has come with power..."

However TMC MP Sen advised the opposition to consider the large-scale welfare works undertaken by the Chief Minister.

"Mamata Banerjee has introduced a whole range of projects from Kanyashree, Yuvashree, Sabooj Saathi, Sikshashree, Swasthya Saathi to Lakshmir Bhandar ... on the other hand the Centre is not releasing more than Rs 1 lakh crore due to the State

# AMU students raising religious slogans should be sent to Pak: Min



PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGHARH

The controversy over raising religious slogans in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh Muslim University is not taking its name to stop. Actually, slogans of Allah Hu Akbar were raised by a student wearing NCC uniform on Republic Day whose video became quite viral on social media.

However, action is being taken on the matter by the AMU administration. But the statement of Minister of State of Uttar Pradesh Government Raghuraj Singh has given rise to the matter again.

In fact, regarding the whole matter, Minister of State of Uttar Pradesh Government, Raghuraj Singh says that "the students raising controversial slogans should be sent to Pakistan".

Those who raise such slogans have no right to live in India. Not only this, Minister of State Raghuraj Singh says that a sedition case should be filed against such people".

He furiously said that send the terrorists to Pakistan, I will pay the fare. He further said that "slogans of 'Allah Hu Akbar' should be raised in the mosque, it is okay, it is not a problem, but when it is a national festival of 26 January, if such words are used under the flag on this day, then you are a terrorist".

After the statement of the Minister of State, there is panic in AMU, on the other hand, the accused student has been identified in the case of raising religious slogans. The student is studying in BA 1st year and his name is Wahiduzma.

He is a resident of West Bengal. However, the university administration has suspended the student. Along with this, a three-member inquiry committee has been constituted, which will prepare and submit the inquiry report very soon.

# Guj junior clerk recruitment exam cancelled after question paper leak

## ATS arrests 16 after leak

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The competitive examination for the recruitment of Gujarat government's junior clerks scheduled on Sunday was postponed soon after it came to light that its question paper had been leaked, following which 16 persons were arrested, officials said.

The Gujarat Panchayat Service Selection Board (GPSSB) announced postponement of the examination early Sunday morning, hours before it was scheduled to start across 2,995 centres at 11 am. As many as 9.5 lakh candidates had applied for 1,181 posts. The Gujarat Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) said it arrested 16 persons in this connection and recovered the copy of the question paper from their possession.

GPSSB's in-charge chairman Sandeep Kumar later announced that the examination will be conducted within 100 days and a new date will be announced in the next few days.

Addressing a press conference, Superintendent of Police (SP) of Gujarat ATS Sunil Joshi said 16 persons have been arrested so far in this case,



Representational image

including 15 from Vadodara and one from Hyderabad. Seven out of the 16 accused are part of a gang from Bihar.

"The state ATS nabbed 15 accused from a computer exam centre named Stackwise Technology in Vadodara around 1.30 am on Sunday when they had gathered there with the copy of the question paper.

The question paper recovered from them matched with that of the original paper, prompting the government to immediately decide on postponing the exam," he said. Working on a tip-off that a man from Odisha, identified as Pradip Nayak, was going to deliver the question paper to Ketan Barot and Bhaskar Chaudhary in Vadodara city, the ATS formed a special team involving personnel from the Surat crime branch and Vadodara Special Operations

Group (SOG) and arrested 15 persons from the exam centre along with the copy of the photo and copy of the question paper, Joshi said. "When we contacted the GPSSB, it confirmed that the copies matched with that of the original question paper. It was immediately decided to postpone the examination," he said.

Further investigation revealed that Nayak was given the copy of the paper by one Jeet Nayat, who worked at K.L. Hitech Press in Hyderabad where the paper was printed. A team rushed to Hyderabad and arrested Nayak who was being brought to Gujarat, he said.

Barot and Chaudhary were arrested in the past in cases investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), he said. Chaudhary is a native of Bihar and lives in Vadodara, and Mohanty hails from Odisha and resides in Surat, Joshi said.

"The accused from Odisha contacted Chaudhary and Barot through the gang from Bihar. Chaudhary and Barot then contacted the accused in Gujarat, and they all decided to gather at Chaudhary's exam centre in Vadodara," Joshi said.

He said that most of the accused are involved in education consultancy business. "The accused persons were booked under sections 406 and 409 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating) and 120(B) (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the case will be investigated by the ATS," he said.

Further probe will reveal the extent of exchange of money and the involvement of students in this connection.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives for the Beating Retreat ceremony, at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi, on Sunday

PTI Photo

# 2,300 hectares land retrieved during anti-encroachment drive in J-K's Kishtwar

PTI ■ JAMMU

Over 2,300 hectares of state and 'kahcharai' land were retrieved during the ongoing anti-encroachment drive in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, an official said on Sunday.

The anti-encroachment drive is going on in full swing in all tehsils under the direct supervision of Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar, Revenue, Kishtwar, Varunjeet Singh Charak and all tehsildars to chalk out a comprehensive plan and intensify the eviction and demolition drives in collaboration with police and other concerned in the coming days so that the rest of encroached land is retrieved in stipulated time.

Meanwhile, officials said more than 35 kanals of encroached land was retrieved from illegal occupants in different parts of Kathua district on Saturday. The retrieved land included over three kanals and six marlas from former minister Prem Sagar Aziz and nine kanals and 15 marlas from District Development Council, Chairman, Kathua, Col (retd) Mahan Singh from Plahi village, they said. The officials said the land freed from the encroachers also includes a high-value land worth Rs 2.41 crore in Basohli sub-division.

The Jammu district administration has retrieved prime government land, measuring 20 kanals and five marla, from Machallian-Nagbani village in the Domana area on the outskirts of the city, they said.

Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, Avny Lavasa appreciated the efforts of revenue officers and asked them to leave no stone unturned to retrieve the state land from encroachers.



# Jaipur Foot maker begins limb fitment camp in Lebanon



PTI ■ JAIPUR

The Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti - makers of the famous Jaipur Foot -- has started an artificial limb fitment camp in Beirut, Lebanon. The camp is sponsored by the Union Ministry of External Affairs under the 'India for Humanity' programme.

"The Jaipur Foot artificial limb fitment camp was inaugurated at the Rafik Hariri University Hospital, Beirut, on India's 74th Republic Day (Thursday)," the organisation said in a release on Sunday.

Representatives from the Foreign Affairs and Public Health ministries and the Lebanese Armed Forces as

well as Rafik Hariri University Hospital Chairman Dr Jihad Saadeh were present on the occasion.

DR Mehta, founder and chief patron of Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, said over 10,000 people with disabilities in over 40 countries in Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands had been rehabilitated under the 'India for Humanity' programme, launched to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 2018.

The Samiti conducted four similar camps in the country between 2006 and 2008 with support from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. During these camps, 381 limbs were fitted, according to the release.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

At least six persons were killed and 15 injured when a speeding truck ran over bystanders in Lakhimpur Kheri on late Saturday night, police said.

The accident happened when the killer truck ploughed into bystanders, mostly villagers, who gathered at the roadside following a car-scooty collision near Pangri village on the Kheri-Bahraich highway.

The deceased were identified as Rizwan (20), Karan (14), Paras Nishad (84), Karunesh Verma (30), Virendra Verma and Jang Bahadur (17), all from Pangri Khurd village in Lakhimpur Kheri. Superintendent of Police



Ganesh Prasad Saha along with other police officials rushed to the spot and monitored the operations to rescue the victims.

According to police officials, a car going towards Bahraich on Pilibhit Basti road near Pangri Khurd village hit a scooty coming from the opposite direction at around 7:30 pm in which the scooty rider sustained injuries. After this, a crowd gathered on the spot, most of whom were residents

of the village. The speeding truck coming from Bahraich ran over the crowd and fell into a ditch. The injured were rushed to the district hospital for treatment. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the loss of lives, and directed officials to ensure proper treatment of the injured persons, the chief medical officer said in a tweet in Hindi.

District Magistrate Mahendra Bahadur Singh, Chief Development Officer Anil Kumar Singh and Superintendent of Police Ganesh Prasad Saha took cognisance of the accident. Identification of the injured was underway. The Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party expressed condolences and

urged the UP government to give compensation to the families of the victims.

Meanwhile, a motorcycle-borne man and his son were hit by a truck while going to distribute wedding cards in Kannauj district. They died on the spot. After the accident, the driver fled with the truck. Komal, daughter of farmer Awadhesh Dubey (50) of Nadiapurva village of Tirwa Kotwali area is to be married on February 15.

Aditya Dubey (26), the family's only son working in a furniture factory in Bareilly, came home on January 28. Awadhesh Dubey had left the house to distribute the wedding card with his son Aditya on Sunday morning. A speeding

truck hit their bike on the bypass near Pal crossing in Sadar Kotwali, killing Awadhesh and Aditya on the spot. Kotwali in-charge Rajkumar Singh said that both the bodies were sent for autopsy and efforts were on to nab the truck driver.

Meanwhile, Vedprakash (50) and his wife Shakuntala Devi (48) of Bari village under Pilibhit police station Newriya, were killed in a collision between a Bolero and an unknown vehicle near Lauhangapur forest on the Khutar Purnapur state highway in Shahjahanpur at around one o'clock on Saturday night. Ved Prakash had left for Ayodhya on Saturday night with family members and relatives. His

Bolero collided with a vehicle due to fog in Lauhangapur forest. Vedprakash and Shakuntala Devi died on the spot. After this, the driver of the other vehicle fled along with the vehicle.

On getting information about the accident, the police reached the spot and sent the injured to the community health centre where the doctor pronounced Vedprakash and Shakuntala Devi dead.

Seriously injured Ram Singh, his wife Anita Devi, son Aryan, Ashok Kumar, his wife Sarita Devi, Anand Swaroop were referred to government medical college. Vedprakash's son Kamal Kumar filed a complaint against the unknown driver.

# 10 killed in separate road accidents in UP





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Easy choice

Renaming of Mughal Gardens as Amrit Udyan is a convenient way of making a nationalist statement

Renaming of Mughal Gardens at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi as Amrit Udyan has resulted in reactions from various quarters on expected lines. The new name has been given by President Draupadi Murmu as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav festivities to mark 75 years of India’s independence. Deputy Press Secretary to the President Navika Gupta told reporters on Saturday. Typically, the Bharatiya Janata Party has lauded the move, with spokesman Sambit Patra calling it a “historic decision” of the Narendra Modi government that was needed to “come out of ‘slavery mentality’.” Law minister Kiren Rijiju saw the rise of New India in it. The Opposition, also expectedly, slammed the renaming of Mughal Gardens. Who knows, they might now want to rename the Eden Gardens and call it Modi Gardens, Trinamool Congress’ Parliamentary party leader in the Rajya Sabha Derek O’Brien told a news agency. CPI general secretary D Raja saw “the RSS’ agenda... to rewrite Indian history and redefine nationhood” in the decision.



There is no doubt that the BJP Govts at the Centre and in states are in overdrive in changing the names of places, buildings, etc., in their bid to present themselves as true and staunch nationalists, to instill pride in people about the glorious past. Besides, renaming is the easiest exercise; a government need not do any real work for the benefit of the people to rename a town or garden. Sometimes, renaming is

also done to score political points and needle the Opposition. For instance, the names Gandhi and Nehru have been removed from several government schemes and places. It should, however, not be forgotten that the BJP, though the most active player of the game of symbolism, is not the only one. The Congress actually began the game. In 1995, the Congress government, at the behest of its MP Mani Shankar Aiyar, changed the name of the iconic Connaught Place (CP) to Rajiv Chowk and Connaught Circus to Indira Chowk. In 2004, in his capacity as petroleum minister, Aiyar got a plaque on RSS ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in the Cellular Jail premises in Andaman and Nicobar Islands removed. For Aiyar, as for the BJP, such decisions are ideological and political rather than rational. But then reason is increasingly playing a smaller role in politics; concomitantly, irrationality is growing by the day. When the BJP is in power, it removes the names of Gandhi and Nehru from schemes and places; when the Congress comes to office, it humbles Hindutva heroes. Such puerility cannot be allowed to continue. It is time political leaders across party lines considered the possibility of a comprehensive policy. The objective should be to make nomenclature apolitical and sensible. It is not good for the nation if a name changing exercise is criticised as being biased against Muslims, but this is exactly what has been happening. The Govt must ensure that it doesn’t face such accusations in the future.

### PICTALK



Spectators watch the "Van Gogh 360" digital immersive experience exhibition in Mumbai

PTI

## Prioritise healthcare

The Finance Minister would do well to increase the budget allocation for the public health

It is unfortunate that even after seven decades of independence fatalities due to diseases in the country are high and infant mortality rate is a cause of concern. Many people suffer from life threatening diseases such as TB,Cancer, heart ailments but are unable to get the treatment due to high cost of treatment. People suffer from disabilities such as blindness which seriously impact their life. The reason they do not have access to affordable healthcare. The government health infrastructure falls way short of the desirable levels. The gaps in public health are filled by private hospitals and doctors; that are way too expensive and do not have a footprint in far-off areas especially tribal areas and remote villages. Public health is a state subject and so primarily the state’s responsibility. There is a strong case to shift it to a concurrent list of the Constitution which would allow the center to directly address health issues. As many states struggle with funds, public health takes the beating. Public health is directly correlated to national productivity and hence it is a good investment to make for the health of the nation too. India ranks lower than many countries, like, Brazil, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand when it comes to life expectancy at birth.



The reason is not difficult to fathom. In 2019, India’s government health expenditure per capita (in purchasing power parity, or PPP, terms) was \$69 as against \$154 in the Philippines, \$175 in Indonesia, \$492 in China, \$524 in Thailand, and \$610 in Brazil.

That greater investments in health will positively impact India’s GDP by increasing productivity over the long term. It was also acknowledged in the National Health Policy 2017, which suggested increasing public health spending. The finance minister has a shot in the present budget to increase the budget outlay for health. If the Union Budget 2023-24 can lower this gap by stepping up the budget outlay it would be a great service to the people. Budgetary allocations in the financial year 2020-21 were only 1.8 percent, well short of the expenditure on health of the stipulated target of 2.5 percent of the GDP by 2025 as suggested by NK Singh, chairman of the 15th Finance Commission. He had also advised the Developmental Finance Institution (DFI) dedicated to healthcare investments to channel the funds for health in a better way. But a decent allocation in the budget for health can be a good start.

# Indian aviation is becoming chaotic

The civil aviation authorities should focus on providing better facilities at the airports, not on bragging about the scale of their operations

The Indian aviation industry is now a farce. The recent disgraceful alleged incident involving an “unruly” passenger on Air India, an airline leaving behind a busload of passengers and flying off, the systematic chaos at Delhi International Airport (DIAL), and the frequent and unreported incidents at other airports all raise one question. What direction is the industry taking? What exactly does a passenger receive from these airports in exchange for paying the passenger terminal fee? How do airlines handle their obligations? What is being done to make travel safer and less stressful? Airports and airlines in India clearly do not provide the level of service that is expected of them. The stress of the journey begins and continues as a result of how airports handle ground situations.

Who needs the lofty titles and laurels of being the world’s “busiest” or “best” airport? Passengers would prefer a more “efficient” airport! The “busiest” airport benefits only the operator and not the customer.

Consider our opulent airports, which appear to have heralded, albeit in reverse, a revolution. Despite the grandiose nature of many modern airports, inefficiency seems to be widespread. Aviation was created to change the way people travel by allowing them to travel long distances in a fraction of the time it would take by other means. Airports appear to put a dent in this theory.

They waste most of the passengers’ valuable time and energy. Even for domestic travel, airlines and airports have set a reporting time of 2-3 hours. It is an unacceptable step back. Isn’t it strange that in that amount of time, one can land on a foreign shore? The scales established by airlines and airport operators are only self-serving, without putting the customer at the center.

Ironically and equally fascinating are how technology has advanced to the point where it can detect if one’s heart valves



need to be repaired, while airport x-ray machines still can’t see through the bags and force us to go through the rather antiquated process of removing articles from cabin baggage as well as our jackets, belts, boots, and socks. Such mindless checks are an insult to any civilized process. It is a form of public humiliation that we have all come to accept as necessary.

Are we saying that the deployed man and machine are so skeptical of each other that they want to double-check that the passenger isn’t a criminal on a mission? It calls into question both men’s and machines’ capabilities. Handlers at x-ray machines are unfamiliar with the objects or electronics that must be handled properly.

Many of us have seen the airport’s general atmosphere deteriorate in recent years. The serpentine lines and cramped quarters give you a headache, but the lack of air circulation exacerbates the situation. In the dead of win-



WHO NEEDS THE LOFTY TITLES AND LAURELS OF BEING THE WORLD’S “BUSIEST” OR “BEST” AIRPORT? PASSENGERS WOULD PREFER A MORE “EFFICIENT” AIRPORT!

ter in Delhi, one can easily sweat in one’s jacket while navigating the lines. What advantages does this have for passengers?

Practical solutions, such as displaying the estimated time it will take to clear passengers or the crowd size inside the check-in and security areas, can be beneficial. Passengers’ stress levels will be reduced if they are cleared in the order in which the airline or destination departs in real-time.

The passenger is entirely on his own until the end of the boarding. Rather, it should be the responsibility of the airline and airport operators to own the customer once he is inside the airport and make his journey safe, secure, and hassle-free in exchange for the cost of the ticket and taxes he has paid. That’s the bare minimum any service provider is expected to do.

Why should a passenger be made to suffer because he or she is flying a specific airline and bunched like sar-

dines with other airlines that have peak capacity at that hour? Essentially, why should every airline passenger pass through the same rabbit hole? These are systems designed for a different era with the sole purpose of saving money. It is time to review the procedures that create friction and stress and eliminate them.

We don’t want silent airports; we want upbeat airports. airports that are conscious of customer needs and that are practical. We want airports that deliver speed, efficiency, and care from the moment the passenger enters the terminal until they depart.

Alas, the airport operators and airlines are not catering to these issues. Negligence and air rage are direct and indirect results of the broken, negligent, and hands-off attitude of the airport, airlines, and stakeholders.

*(The writer is a communications specialist based in New Delhi, a travel writer, and an aviation geek. The views expressed are personal)*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### PENDING VACANCIES IN THE JUDICIARY

Sir — The noted former Supreme court Judge R F Nariman has made a very valid observation that the government could not keep pending the postings of new Judges as recommended by the Collegium for an indefinite period in view of crores of pending cases hanging indifferent courts at different levels.

The law minister should answer whether he is not concerned with the real problem of pendency of cases and if so whether he wants to cling to the same old reasoning that they are not responsible for this pendency as they have inherited them from earlier governments. As suggested by Mr. Nariman too, the government at least should tentatively form a committee of say 5 judges or so from different states who should be advised to give their opinions regarding new judges’ postings say within around a month or so and the government should clear such names subject to having no ‘objectionable comments’ on the suggested names. Both the central government and the law minister seem to have no scant concern about delivering speedy justice to the innocents’ litigations in the courts whatsoever which is the most atrocious attitude of the central government.

**Katuru Durga Prasad Rao | Hyderabad**

### TROUBLE FOR ADANI

Sir — The shares of several companies owned by billionaire Gautam Adani collapsed due to heavy losses on Friday (January 27) after a report by a US investment firm accused the Adani Group of being involved in committing “brazen” corporate fraud. The report raised questions over the financial stability of Adani Group in the coming days and concerns are now raised over the savings of millions of Indians in big financial institutions like the State Bank of India (SBI) and Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).

The Congress party demanded that a thorough probe should be launched into Hindenburg Research’s allegations adding that it may have exposed the financial system of the country to systemic risks “through the liberal investments in the

## Iconic Telugu Actress Jamuna



The death of a Legendary actor of the yesterday years of the Telugu film industry’s golden era - Jamuna -marks an end of an era of those great actors. She acted with other legendary actors of the era such as N T Rama Rao, Akkinnein Nageswara Rao, Savitry and S V Ranga Rao and others.

Her claim to fame came with the release of Missamma(1955) Telugu-language romantic comedy film directed by L. V. Prasad, arguably Missamma is one of the greatest movies of all times in the history of Tollywood, in which NT Rama Rao, with his indomitable nuances and

style, have his stamp of authentic life in, with this film Jamuna metamorphosed into an unabashedly artistic.

While she predominantly acted in Telugu films, she was a multilingual actress who had acted in about 200 films in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Hindi. She was the most glamorous actress of her era, playing a wide variety of roles such as Sathyabhama, wife of Lord Krishna, in “Sri Krishna Tulabharam” and Kaikeyi, wife of King Dasaratha in “Sampoorna Ramayanam.

Jamuna also acted in a few Hindi films including Sunil Dutt-starrer box office hit film “Milan (1967)”, her superb performance in this film won her the Film fare award. Jamunaa also had an inning in politics and was a Member of Parliament in the 9th Lok Sabha from Rajahmundry (AP). She has left behind an indelible mark in the heart of her fans with several memorable films Gundamma Kanth, Missamma, and many more. RIP Jamuna

**Ramesh G Jethwani | Bangalore**

Adani Group made by strategic state entities like LIC, SBI and other public sector banks”.

“These institutions have liberally financed the Adani Group even as their private sector counterparts have chosen to avoid investing because of concerns over corporate governance and indebtedness. As much as 8 percent of LIC’s equity assets under management, amounting to a gigantic sum of 74,000 crores, is in Adani companies and comprise its second-largest holding. If proven correct it will “destroy lives of crores of Indians who park lifelong savings in LIC & SBI” With this US investment firms have exposed the Adani groups.

**Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai**

### STOP THE FREE USE OF ARMS

Sir — The police are the body to ensure citizen safety and security, not doing brutality to the citizens by taking the law into their hands. It is a tragic reality for American police right now. The protest of #Blacklifematters seems to be the ever-

green protest in American history. Every single year, global outrage has been created to churn the seriousness of Black people’s rights issues. Unfortunately, this year too, Tyre Nichols was beaten to death in Memphis city by American police officers. This reminded the story of George Floyd who had been murdered by Minneapolis Police by choking his neck. This is ridiculous for any developed country to do such barbaric and racist acts with the minorities they have.

The arms too are frequently misused by Americans also. In fact, their kids too had been shot in their classroom due to racist mentality towards those, they share their class. This kind of misuse of arms and police brutality only left citizens angry. America must change laws of stringent freedom, and there is an urgent need to change the free use of arms, by making the lives of citizens happier.

**Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur**

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

## SOUNDBITE

Thousands of people - men, women, children, elderly, and every section of society - stood on the roads and welcomed the Yatra and Gandhi heartily.

**Congress general secretary**

— Jairam Ramesh



**Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, USA**

— Colin Kahl

For all those who have high hopes, please note that Pathaan might be a film, but the country will still roar with Jai Shri Ram



**Actor**

— Kangana Ranaut



Najam Sethi has the experience, and it’s no concept that only cricketers should be PCB chairman. You need to be a good administrator, and you need to be a good repo with other boards. People can disagree for all I care.

**Former Pakistan cricketer**

— Wasim Akram

We are taking legal action against the husbands forcing minor girls to become a mother. I would suggest women become mothers before 30.



**Assam chief minister**

— Himanta Biswa Sarma

FIRST COLUMN

EXAM ANXIETY IS BIG ISSUE FOR STUDENTS

A sound mental health depends upon multiple factors



DR JYOTI **KAPOOR**

Anxiety is one of the major mental health issues that students face just before their board and competitive examinations. Anxiety stems from the unrealistic expectations of family members and parents. In India, success is often measured in terms of outstanding grades.

A student often goes through anxiety, stress and in extreme cases depression. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his bestselling book 'Exam Warriors' talked about examinations and has outlined a refreshing approach, urging everyone to celebrate the tests like a festival with enthusiasm. Mental health experts across India have opined that every year before and after examination sessions, they have been getting a lot of youngsters suffering from anxiety and stress. Most of them have been victims of burnout due to long preparation hours and uncertainty about the future. They need counselling and medicines to deal with stress post their examinations.

The stress becomes all the more over-powering when the student appears for competitive exams, which are highly competitive, rigorous, and target-oriented. A recent study showed that among those preparing for medical entrance exams, 72.2 per cent experienced high levels of stress interfering with their day-to-day functioning.



The most common complaints of such students are poor concentration level and lack of focus. Fear of failure keeps it going. In most of the cases, students hardly consult a mental health expert or talk about their issues with peers/parents. No recreation, continuous study for most of the day, parental pressure and fear of failure aggravate their condition. Such preparations are time-consuming and tedious, and students frequently sacrifice other aspects of their lives to focus on one test. One should not forget the fact that our brain needs to break. It cannot function 24/7. The scenario becomes worse when results for competitive exams or board exams are not according to their expectations.

A sound mental health depends upon multiple factors and the most important one is emotional support. If somebody has that, it ensures a healthy growth of mind, body and soul. Many students stay away from their parents (in a different city to prepare for exams) or if at all they are staying with their parents, they hardly interact with them due to their busy schedule. At times, dealing with such a stressed environment with no emotional support, students start to feel lonely. They get addicted to unhealthy practices, including excessive alcohol consumption, gambling, overeating, participating compulsively in sex, shopping or internet browsing, smoking and substance abuse.

Unfortunately, our education system doesn't prepare us for failure. Nobody tells us that if plan A fails then what would be plan B. That's the reason when a student experiences failure, they feel that it's the end of the world for them. They get exposed to enormous stress both physically and mentally. In many cases, a student might not want to appear for a competitive course and he/she is just doing it because of certain family and societal pressure. These young children have known their entire lives that this one exam will determine how long they live. They have no time for extracurricular activities, socialising, or sports, which prevents their personalities from developing.

The coping mechanism is incumbent upon creating a schedule that enhances the performance of body and mind, while refreshing with short breaks. Consuming wholesome foods and at least eight hours of sound sleep each night also help. Long study sessions reduce the amount of time available for exercise and the body becomes lethargic, and the mind begins to react negatively, which calls for taking time out for physical activity. Discovering a calming exercise is also important. Speaking to loved ones frequently for emotional support also helps along with staying away from unrealistic expectations.

*(The author is Founder and Senior Psychiatrist, Manasthali)*

# Some modest Budget expectations from FM



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

The tax slabs can be suitably adjusted for inflation to alleviate the economic hardships of the common man

In a few days' time, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will be presenting her fifth budget, the last full budget before the 2024 elections. Despite pressure for increasing populist expenditure, one hopes that she will stick to the pragmatism that marked her earlier budgets and focus instead on consolidating the fiscal path further.

Given the present state of the economy with seven per cent growth looking achievable, revenues showing healthy growth, the GST stabilising at around Rs 1.5 lakh crore a month and the continuing bull run in the stock markets, the factors are favourable for the government for projecting a fiscal deficit target less than the last year's budget estimate of 6.4 per cent.

However, there are some aberrations in our taxation structure which must be corrected. These were flagged after the last year's budget and it is time the government acts. Chief among these is the complex structure of our capital gains taxation that is arbitrary, ad-hoc and distorts the market, and this must be rationalised for efficient allocation of resources.

There is not only a multiplicity of rates and holding periods for different types of investments, but some have benefits for inflation indexation which others do not have. Capital gains tax is levied on profits made on capital investments on real estate, gold, stocks, mutual funds, and various other financial and non-financial assets. It can be either a long-term capital gains tax (LTCG) or short-term capital gains tax (STCG) depending on the holding period of the investments.

Unlike income tax, for the LTCG, the tax rate does not change in a progressive manner. Thus, the same rate of tax applies for all capital gains whether in lakh or crore rupees. There is also a separate set of exemptions that apply to LTCG, and they come with arbitrary conditions. For example, one can get exemption for buying a house after selling another, provided the new house is bought within two years or constructed within three years of the sale. On LTCG on stocks and equity mutual funds, there is an exemption limit of Rs 1 lakh.

On others, the benefit of indexation is available.

The last time the government tinkered with the capital gains tax regime was in the Budget for FY19, when the LTCG was reintroduced on listed shares. The surge in capital market transactions combined with the booming stock market since then has led to healthy growth in collections, and these can be further streamlined and increased by rationalising and simplifying the structure of capital gains taxation.

There should be one uniform rate for LTCG and all LTCGs should be given the benefits of indexation. There is no ratio-



OVER 100 MILLION DEMAT ACCOUNT WERE OPENED IN INDIA DURING THE PANDEMIC YEARS (MARCH 2020 TO DEC 2022), HUGEY EXPANDING THE BASE OF RETAIL INVESTORS IN THE STOCK MARKET WHO ARE WILLING TO TAKE ADDITIONAL RISKS TO GENERATE WEALTH

*(The author is a former Director General at the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India)*



nale for treating listed and unlisted stocks differently and applying different rates in respect of them. Different tax rates in respect of tax assets move resources from one to another, and the same happens with different holding periods.

Real estate sector is the biggest absorber of black money, which is why its prices are way above its intrinsic value. If we want to cleanse the system, special incentives for investing in real estate or holding onto it must be removed and the sector must be brought under the GST regime.

Over 100 million demat accounts were opened in India during the pandemic years (March 2020 to Dec 2022), hugely expanding the base of retail investors in the stock market who are willing to take additional risks to generate wealth. Given an estimated 10-fold increase in our direct tax collections from the increased stock market activity and the future potential for further increases, rationalisation of the capital gains structure is urgently called for. The threshold limit for LTCG also needs to be raised substantially from the present limit of Rs 1 lakh to encourage more retail participation in equity investing.

This can only increase the direct tax collections further. Even if all these changes cannot be introduced in this budget, the FM must make her intent of rationalising the structure of capital gains taxation absolutely clear with a

specific roadmap.

Secondly, there is also an urgent need to rationalise the centrally sponsored schemes to increase the allocative efficiency in the budget. But there are many schemes which have inherent populist biases and are economically inefficient; they consume scarce resources that have an opportunity cost.

These schemes also tend to proliferate. There is an urgent need to take a hard look at some of these schemes and rationalise them, not through bundling together under some umbrella schemes as the government had done in the past, but through convergence and merger, and substantial reduction of redundancies.

The previous finance commissions have all red-flagged this issue and the latest, the 15th Finance Commission has said, "We have noted the proliferation of centrally sponsored schemes and central sector schemes and the tendency to continue with them without an evaluation of their outcomes. It is our expectation that the Union Government will utilise the year 2020-21 to complete the review of such schemes and thereafter prune and rationalise the list to focus on certain key sectors and interventions with nation-wide externalities. The objective in our view should be to ensure that there is a minimum level of expenditure on certain desired sectors to improve human development and

infrastructure. This will also reduce pressure on the revenue account of the Union to enable higher capital expenditure within the available fiscal space." Government is yet to review and rationalise these schemes which will release lot of taxpayer funds for capital purposes and curtail unproductive expenditure.

Lastly, the dual system of income tax assessment that was introduced in the FY20 budget under section 115BAC of the Income Tax Act is making no sense. For one thing, it is again too complex with six rates — 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 per cent - without exemptions, as against three in the pre-existing tax regime with exemptions. With or without exemptions, there should be only a single tax regime. The alternate tax regime has failed to enthuse people, and if the FM is serious about it, she should simplify it to the extent that a taxpayer can prepare and file her tax return under the new regime without the help of chartered accountants.

The alternative is to raise the existing exemptions suitably keeping in mind the fact that high inflation which has become the new permanent normal now will not slow anytime soon, especially with the Russia-Ukraine War showing no sign of ending.

The tax slabs can be suitably adjusted for inflation to alleviate the economic hardships of the common man.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT


SWAMI PRASAD MAURYA IS CONTINUOUSLY ATTACKING 'HINDU DHARMA', 'HINDU AASTHA' AND RAMCHARITMANAS. — BJP LEADER SIDHARTH NATH SINGH




IF MAHANTS ARE TALKING ABOUT BEHEADING ME AND CHOPPING OFF MY TONGUE, ARE THEY NOT TERRORISTS AND BUTCHERS? — SAMAJWADI PARTY LEADER SWAMI PRASAD MAURYA

# Focus on rural consumption to revive the economy


Rural consumption is facing headwinds in the wake of double-digit price increases and dim prospects of income



ANAND **RAMANATHAN**



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SOUMYA **BOSE**

(Anand Ramanathan is Partner, Deloitte India; Rounak Baheti is Director, Deloitte India; and Soumya Bose is Manager, Deloitte India)

Rural consumption is currently facing headwinds in the wake of double-digit price increases and lower visibility of future income among rural households. However, in the long term, rural markets possess immense growth potential, and the upcoming budget is expected to provide adequate focus on job generation, capability development and infrastructure related initiatives which can have a multiplier effect towards driving growth in rural consumption.

The Indian agriculture sector is still dependent on the timely arrival of monsoon, as a result there is a need to protect farmers from vagaries of weather conditions. The Government needs to focus on enhancing benefits and coverage of crop insurance schemes

and focus on increasing coverage under micro-irrigation (like drip, sprinklers, etc.) which has proved more efficient than traditional techniques.

India is one of the countries with significant post-harvest losses. There are 8,000 cold storages having 35 million metric tons capacity across India, but 59 per cent of this capacity is concentrated in only four states — Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

In addition to encouraging private sector to develop such facilities through foreign direct investment (FDI) and tax incentives, the Government can also incentivize Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs) to develop low capac-

ity warehouses and micro cold storages for reducing wastages of small farmers. An average agricultural household in India has 60 per cent of their annual income in debt. The Government can increase outlay towards initiatives/schemes aimed at financial inclusion and generate greater awareness on existing schemes which extends credit guarantees to MSMEs/ FPO/SHGs for working capital financing and term lending with interest subvention.

Additional outlay under NABARD Fund can be committed towards providing credits to processing units even outside designated food parks for modernization/ upgradation. According to the NSS, the annual income of a farm household was Rs 1.23 lakh,

whereas average debt was Rs 74,100 from July, 2018 to June, 2019. With increasing internet and smartphone penetration in rural markets, the Government can focus on improving access to information for farmers through online trainings, advisory services on agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and other allied sectors.

Expediting 5G rollout, with network availability, will also help speed up implementation and adoption of Agri-tech in generating more opportunities and employment in Rural India. Market linkages can facilitate better price realizations for farmers. The Government can look at accelerating adoption and integration of National Agriculture Market (eNAM) with the

Agri-markets across the country through policy levers like synchronization of quality standards in agricultural produces, standardization of sorting/grading systems and systematic and accelerated registration of farmers, traders, and other ecosystem players in the portal.

Rural reach has been a challenge with higher cost of logistics driven by less-than-truckloads. Government impetus in fast-tracking National Logistics Policy implementation, coupled with integrated information platforms, will reduce inefficiencies in movement of goods, increasing access and opportunities for rural India.

Micro-clusters through setting up rural entrepreneurship hubs in districts under

'One District One Product' initiative is an excellent opportunity to promote the rural economy. Interventions include support through training, better exposure to markets and setting up of facilities for value addition. This can promote entrepreneurship opportunities for rural youth.

In addition, the Government can also consider providing a separate allocation to create a dedicated Venture Capital (VC) fund for new age startups focused on servicing the rural economy. With global recession looming in the horizon, the upcoming Budget presents the Government a timely opportunity to unlock the levers for harnessing the growth and employment potential of the rural economy.



# Ukraine: Talks underway for missiles, planes

AP ■ KIVY

Ukraine and its Western allies are engaged in "fast-track" talks on the possibility of equipping the invaded country with long-range missiles and military aircraft, a top Ukrainian presidential aide said on Saturday.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said Ukraine's supporters in the West "understand how the war is developing" and the need to supply planes capable of providing cover for the armoured fighting vehicles that the United States and Germany pledged at the beginning of the month.

However, in remarks to online video channel Freedom, Podolyak said that some of Ukraine's Western partners maintain a "conservative" attitude to arms deliveries, "due to fear of changes in the international architecture".

Russia and North Korea have accused the West of prolonging and taking a direct role in the war by sending Kyiv increasingly sophisticated weapons.

"We need to work with this. We must show (our partners) the real picture of this

war," Podolyak said, without naming specific countries.

"We must speak reasonably and tell them, for example, This and this will reduce fatalities, this will reduce the burden on infrastructure. This will reduce security threats to the European continent, this will keep the war localized.' And we are doing it."

The US and Germany agreed on Wednesday to share advanced tanks with Ukraine along with the Bradley and Marder vehicles promised earlier, a decision that led to criticism not only from the Kremlin but from the prime minister of NATO and European Union member Hungary.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban asserted Friday that Western countries providing weapons and money to assist Ukraine in its war with Russia have "drifted" into becoming active participants in the conflict.

Orban has refused to send weapons to neighbouring Ukraine and sought to block EU funds earmarked for military aid.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said it would summon Hungary's ambassador to complain about Orban's

remarks. A ministry spokesperson, Oleg Nikolenko, said Orban told reporters that Ukraine was "a no-man's land" and compared it to Afghanistan.

"Such statements are completely unacceptable. Budapest continues on its course to deliberately destroy Ukrainian-Hungarian relations," Nikolenko said in a Facebook post.

President Joe Biden's announcement that the US would send 31 M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine reversed months of arguments by Washington that they were too difficult for Ukrainian troops to operate and maintain.

The US decision persuaded German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who had expressed concern about a unilateral action drawing Russia's wrath, to agree to send 14 Leopard 2 tanks from Germany's stocks and to allow European countries with tanks to send some of theirs.

Western weapons have proven essential to Ukraine's defence while stoking ever-higher tensions with Moscow.

Russia's Defence Ministry said on Saturday that Ukrainian forces used US-made HIMARS rockets to

strike a hospital in the eastern Ukrainian town of Novoaidar, killing 14 people.

Novoaidar is located in Luhansk province, which is almost entirely under the control of Russian forces or Russian-backed separatists. The Russian Defence Ministry alleged the hospital was deliberately targeted. Its claim of a strike in Novoaidar could not be immediately verified.

"A deliberate missile attack on a known operating civilian medical institution is an unconditional grave war crime of the Kyiv regime," the ministry said, according to Russian news agencies.

Amid the news of the Western pledges of heavy tanks, Russia bombarded Ukraine with missiles, exploding drones and artillery shells this week. The attacks continued on Saturday, when Russian missiles struck the city of Kostyantynivka in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk province.

The missiles fell in a residential area, killing three civilians, wounding 14 and damaging four high-rise apartment buildings, a hotel and garages, Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

"Kostyantynivka is a city relatively far from the front line, but still, it constantly suffers

from enemy attacks. Everyone who remains in the city exposes themselves to mortal danger," Kyrylenko said. "The Russians target civilians because they are not able to fight the Ukrainian army."

In a separate Telegram post earlier on Saturday, Kyrylenko reported that Russian attacks in the province killed four civilians in all and wounded seven others in 24 hours.

Russian rockets hit a residential area the Donetsk town of Chasiv Yar on Friday night, killing of two people and wounding five more, the governor said. Photos attached to Kyrylenko's post showed a three-story school building on fire.

Donetsk province, where the territory is roughly split between Russian and Ukrainian control, has become the battle epicenter of the war as Moscow tries to jump-start a monthslong, grinding offensive to capture the city of Bakhmut.

Chasiv Yar lies on a hill strategically located for the defense of Bakhmut, and has come under intensified Russian shelling. Capturing Bakhmut would allow Russian troops to disrupt Ukrainian supply lines and potentially



pave the way for them to threaten Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, the largest remaining Ukrainian-held cities in the country's east.

Russian forces continued ground attacks around Bakhmut and Avdiivka, another Donetsk city to the south, while Ukrainian troops were on the offensive in southern and northeast Ukraine, the Ukrainian military said in a Saturday morning update.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces said

that Russian troops "are defending themselves" near Lyman in Luhansk and Kharkiv provinces north of Donetsk, as well in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia provinces in the south.

The fighting has largely been deadlocked over the past months, with winter conditions slowing down ground operations and neither side reporting significant progress.

In the same update, the military reported that Russian forces launched 10 missile

strikes, 26 air strikes and 81 shelling attacks on Ukrainian territory between Friday and Saturday mornings. The shelling killed two civilians in Kherson, another province that is partly Russian-occupied.

Podolyak, the presidential adviser, said Ukraine needs supplies of Western long-range missiles "to drastically curtail the key tool of the Russian army" by destroying the warehouses where it stores cannon artillery used on the front line.

## Russians gone from Ukraine village, fear and hardship remain

AP ■ KALYNIWSKE

When night falls in Tatiana Trofimenko's village in southern Ukraine, she pours sunflower oil that aid groups gave her into a jar and seals it with a wick-fitted lid. A flick of a match, and the make-do candle is lit.

"This is our electricity," Trofimenko, 68, says.

It has been over 11 weeks since Ukrainian forces wrested back her village, Kalynivske, in Kherson province, from Russian occupation. But liberation has not diminished the hardship for residents, both those returning home and the ones who never left.

In the peak of winter, the remote area not far from an active front line has no power or water. The sounds of war are never far.

Russian forces withdrew from the western side of the Dnieper River, which bisects the province, but remain in control of the eastern side. A near constant barrage of fire from only a few kilometers away, and the danger of leftover mines leaving many Ukrainians too scared to venture out, has rendered normalcy an elusive dream and cast a pall over their military's strategic victory.

Still, residents have slowly trickled back to Kalynivske, preferring to live without basic services, dependent on humanitarian aid and under the constant threat of bombardment than as displaced people elsewhere in their country.

Staying is an act of defiance against the relentless Russian

attacks intended to make the area unlivable, they say.

"This territory is liberated. I feel it," Trofimenko says. "Before, there were no people on the streets. They were empty. Some people evacuated, some people hid in their houses."

"When you go out on the street now, you see happy people walking around," she says.

The Associated Press followed a United Nations humanitarian aid convoy into the village on Saturday, when blankets, solar lamps, jerrycans, bed linens and warm clothes were delivered to the local warehouse of a distribution centre.

Russian forces captured Kherson province in the early days of the war. The majority of the nearly 1,000 residents in Kalynivske remained in their homes throughout the occupation. Most were too fragile or ill to leave, others did not have the means to escape.

Gennadiy Shaposhnikov lies on the sofa in a dark room, plates piled up beside him.

The 83-year-old's advanced cancer is so painful it is hard for him to speak. When a mortar destroyed the back of his house, neighbours rushed to his rescue and patched it up with tarps. They still come by every day, to make sure he is fed and taken care of.

"Visit again, soon," is all he can muster to say to them.

Oleksandra Hryhorina, 75, moved in with a neighbour when the missiles devastated her small house near the village centre. Her frail figure steps

over the spent shells and shrapnel that cover her front yard. She struggles up the pile of bricks, what remains of the stairs, leading to her front door.

She came to the aid distribution centre pulling her bicycle and left with a bag full of tinned food, her main source of sustenance these days.

But it's the lack of electricity that is the major problem, Hryhorina explains. "We are using handmade candles with oil and survive that way," she says.

The main road that leads to her home is littered with the remnants of the war, an eerie museum of what was and what everyone here hopes will never return. Destroyed Russian tanks rust away in the fields. Cylindrical anti-tank missiles gleam, embedded in grassy patches. Occasionally, there is the tail end of a cluster munition lodged into the earth.

Bright red signs emblazoned with a skull warn passersby not to get too close.

The Russians left empty ammunition boxes, trenches and tarp-covered tents during their rapid retreat. A jacket and, some kilometers away, men's underwear hangs on the bare branches. And with the Russians waging ongoing attacks to win back the lost ground in Kherson, it is sometimes hard for terrorized residents to feel as if the occupying forces ever left.

"I'm very afraid," says Trofimenko. "Even sometimes I'm screaming. I'm very, very scared. And I'm worried about



us getting shelled again and for (the fighting) to start again. This is the most terrible thing that exists."

The deprivation suffered in the village is mirrored all over Kherson, from the provincial capital of the same name to the constellation of villages divided by tracts of farmland that surround it. Ukrainian troops reclaimed the territory west of the Dnieper River in November after a major counteroffensive led to a Russian troop withdrawal, hailed as one of the greatest Ukrainian victories of the 11-month war.

The UN ramped up assistance, supporting 133,000 individuals in Kherson with cash assistance, and 150,000 with food. Many villagers in Kalynivske say the food aid is the only reason they have something to eat.

"One of the biggest challenges is that the people who are there are the most vulner-

able. It's mainly the elderly, many who have a certain kind of disability, people who could not leave the area, and are really reliant on aid organisations and local authorities who are working around the clock," says Saviano Abreu, a spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The shelling is constant.

Ukraine's Defence Ministry reports near daily incidents of shelling in Kherson city and surrounding villages, including rocket, artillery and mortar attacks. Most fall closer to the river banks nearer to the front line, but, that doesn't mean those living further away feel any safer. On Friday, a missile fell in the village of Kochubeivka, north of Kalynivske, killing one person.

"Kherson managed to resume most of the essential services, but the problem is the hostilities keep creating chal-

lenges to ensure they are sustained," Abreu says. "Since December, it's getting worse and worse. The number of attacks and hostilities there is only increasing."

Without electricity, there is no means to pump piped drinking water. Many line up to fetch well water, but a lot is needed to perform daily functions, residents complain.

To keep warm, many forage around the village for firewood. This is also not without danger.

"Before we could easily get wood from the forest, but now there are mines everywhere," says Oleksandr Zheihin, 47.

Everyone in Kalynivske knows the story of Nina Zvarech. The woman went looking for firewood in the forest and was killed when she stepped on a mine.

Her body lay there for over a month, her relatives too afraid to go and find her.

## Friends remember volunteer killed trying to help civilians



AP ■ KIVY

Friends and volunteers gathered in Kyiv's St Sophia's Cathedral on Sunday to say goodbye to volunteer Andrew Bagshaw who was killed with his colleague Christopher Parry while they were evacuating people from a front-line Ukrainian town.

Bagshaw, 48, a New Zealand-British joint national, and Briton Parry, 28, went missing earlier this month while heading to the town of Soledar, in the eastern Donetsk region, where heavy fighting was taking place.

Volunteers spoke of their memories of Bagshaw and read out tributes from his family.

Nikolletta Stoyanova, a friend of Bagshaw's, spoke afterwards of his bravery.

"Even if no one wanted to go to Soledar, they can't do it. Because if he understood that someone needs help, they need to do this help for these peo-

ple," Stoyanova said.

Bagshaw's father, Phil, told reporters in New Zealand that his son wanted to do something to help.

"He was a very intelligent man, and a very independent thinker," he said.

"And he thought a long time about the situation in Ukraine, and he believed it to be immoral. He felt the only thing he could do of a constructive nature was to go there and help people."

Ukrainian police said on January 9 that they had lost contact with Bagshaw and Parry after they headed for Soledar.

Their bodies were later recovered.

In a statement released earlier this week, Parry's family said he had been "drawn to Ukraine in March in its darkest hour." It added that he'd "helped those most in need, saving over 400 lives plus many abandoned animals."

## Turkey issues travel warning to Europe following protests

AP ■ ISTANBUL



Turkey issued a travel warning late on Saturday for its citizens living in or planning on going to European countries, citing Islamophobia and anti-Turkish demonstrations.

The warning comes after last weekend's protests in Sweden where an anti-Islam activist burned the Quran and pro-Kurdish groups protested against Turkey.

The Turkish foreign ministry urged its citizens to take precautions and stay away from demonstration areas. It also said they should go to local authorities if they face xenophobic or racist attacks.

Turkey strongly condemned far-right activist Rasmus Paludan's burning of the Quran in Stockholm, which he repeated in Copenhagen Friday. Ankara also summoned the Dutch ambassador after another far-right activist tore pages of the Quran in the Hague.

The Turkish government also said there was an increase in anti-Turkish protests by "groups with links to terror groups" - a reference to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has waged a decades-long insurgency

against Turkey.

Pro-Kurdish groups have been demonstrating in Sweden, waving the flags of the PKK and its affiliates. The protests are a response to Sweden and Finland's promise to prevent the PKK's activities in their countries in order to gain Turkey's approval for their NATO bids.

Following the protests, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned Sweden not to expect support for its membership bid for the military alliance. Turkey also indefinitely postponed a key meeting in Brussels that would have discussed Sweden and Finland's NATO membership.

Earlier Saturday, before Turkey had issued its travel

## UN Security Council does not reflect today's realities, paralysed: UNGA president

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

The UN Security Council does not reflect today's realities, is paralysed and unable to discharge its basic function of maintaining international peace and security when one of its permanent members has attacked its neighbour, UN General Assembly President Csaba Korosi has said.

Russia, a veto-wielding permanent member of the UN, attacked Ukraine in February 2022. Russia has vetoed UNSC resolutions on Ukraine while it has voted against a resolution in the UN General Assembly which calls on countries not to recognise the four regions of Ukraine that Russia has claimed.

Korosi, a Hungarian diplomat currently serving as President of the 77th United Nations General Assembly, said that there is a push from a growing number of member nations to reform the powerful UN organ.

"The Security Council which has been created back then" and given the primary responsibility of maintaining "international peace and security and preventing wars now is paralysed," he told PTI ahead of his visit to India.

Korosi will arrive in India on Sunday on a three-day visit at the invitation of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. It is his first bilateral visit to any country since he assumed his role as President of the UN General Assembly in September 2022.

"The Security Council cannot discharge its basic function for a very simple reason. One of the permanent members of the Security Council attacked its neighbour. The Security Council should be the body to take action against the aggression. But because of the veto power, the Security Council cannot act," he said, in a reference to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Korosi said this was a "very serious lesson learnt" for the future when talking about how to improve functioning of global organisations.

He said that the issue of UNSC reform is both "burning" and "compelling" since the composition of the Security Council reflects "the outcome of the Second World War".

India has been at the forefront of the years-long efforts to reform the Security Council, saying it rightly deserved a place as a permanent member in the United Nations.

Currently, the UNSC has

five permanent members - China, France, Russia, the UK and the US. Only a permanent member has the power to veto any substantive resolution.

In the 77-year-old history of the UN, the composition of the Security Council has been altered only once - in 1963 when the General Assembly decided to expand the Council from 11 to 15 members, with the addition of four non-permanent seats. "Since then, the world has changed. The geopolitical relations in the world altered, the economic responsibilities in the world in some countries, including in India, including some other very strongly developing countries, actually changed," Korosi said.

"So, the composition of the Security Council does not reflect today's realities," he said adding that not to mention "a whole continent with 50 plus countries, Africa," is not in (the Council) in terms of permanent members.

In response to a question on whether he has hope for any forward movement in the long-pending UNSC reform, Korosi replied in the affirmative.

"Yes, I do have hope," he said, noting that reform of the United Nations entails several areas and Security Council is "a very important" part of it.



Korosi stressed the reason for hope of the UNSC reforms is that the issue has been on the agenda for decades and negotiations have been going on for several years.

"But this particular issue, the urgency and concrete steps to be achieved in the reform of Security Council" has been mentioned and urged for by over 70 leaders of the world during the high-level UN General Assembly session last September.

"More than one-third of the UN membership directly addressed this question. So, there's very clearly a push (from) the membership. I do have hopes," he said.

Korosi has previously noted that during the high-level week in September 2022, one-third of world leaders underscored the urgent need to

reform the Council - more than double the number in 2021.

Korosi has appointed Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations Michal Mlynar and Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait Tareq M A M Albana'i as co-chairs of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on UNSC reform.

He said he has asked them to do their best to try and convince the UN membership that it is their responsibility and a membership-driven process to achieve UNSC reforms.

"But if they really want to achieve results, they may think in little bit different terms, in terms of whether or not they could make compromises, negotiations. If they don't do that, the chances will be very small. But I do have hopes," he said.



# Sri Lanka police investigates threats on election commission

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan police have launched an investigation into alleged telephone threats received by the members of the independent elections commission, an official said on Sunday.

Police spokesman Nihal Thaldudu said court orders to analyse telephone records had been obtained.

On 19 January, two members S.B. Divaratne and K.P. Pathirana had lodged complaints over telephonic threats to resign. Later M.M. Mohamed, another member, had received similar threats.

Fourth member P.S.M. Charles had reportedly offered her resignation from the membership.

The opposition charged that it was the government which was keen to postpone

the local election scheduled for March 9.

The opposition pointed to statements made by ruling SLPP members that the current economic collapse environment was not the best to hold an election when the entire focus must be to restore the economy derailed by the shortage of foreign reserves in the country.

The opposition claims that resignation of election commission members would lead to the postponement of the election.

However, the chair of the Commission SG Punchihewa said the election could only be postponed by a court order or an act of parliament.

The ruling SLPP controls a larger majority of the 340 local councils having won them in 2018.

However, with their



bungling in the economy which led to the worst economic crisis ever, the opposition said the ruling party faced the prospect of being routed and therefore wanted to postpone the election.

Sri Lanka is yet to clinch the anticipated bail out from the IMF as negotiations for

debt restructuring had slowed down the process since September.

Many reforms such as tax hikes and utility tariff raises are being opposed by the trade unions further complicating the electoral prospects for the ruling party at the March 9 election.

# Trump says beating of Nichols ‘never should have happened’

AP ■ COLUMBIA

Former president Donald Trump on Saturday said the footage of the brutal beating of Tyre Nichols by five Memphis police officers is "horrible" and that the attack "never should have happened".

"I thought it was terrible. He was in such trouble. He was just being pummelled. Now that should never have happened," Trump said in an interview with The Associated Press on Saturday, a day after authorities released footage of the attack on the 29-year-old Black man after a traffic stop. Nichols died three days later.

The comments were notable for Trump, who is running for the White House again and has a history of encouraging rough treatment of people in police custody.

He was president during the racial justice protests that

emerged in the summer of 2020 following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. At the time, he signed an executive order encouraging better police practices but was criticised for failing to acknowledge systemic racial bias.

Trump ultimately centred his 2020 reelection bid around a "law and order" message that emphasized support for law enforcement.

The newly released violent video in Memphis shows police holding down and beating Nichols for three minutes with their fists, boots and batons. The footage shows police screaming profanities at him while Nichols screams for his mother. Trump said Nichols calling out for his mother was "a very sad moment".

"That was really the point that got me the most, to be honest with you," he said.



Trump did not address the video in his campaign speeches in New Hampshire or South Carolina, the first stops of his 2024 presidential campaign.

The five former Memphis Police Department officers, who are also Black, have been fired and charged with murder and other crimes. The legal team for Nichols' family has likened it to the infamous 1991 police beating of Los Angeles

motorist Rodney King.

Trump said Memphis Police were taking a "strong step" by disbanding the police unit involved in the attack, which was created to target violent offenders in areas beset by high crime.

"Look, the tape was perhaps not totally conclusive but, to me, it was pretty conclusive and it was vicious and violent and hard to believe - over a traffic violation," he said.

# Israeli police seal off home of Jerusalem synagogue attacker

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli police on Sunday sealed up the east Jerusalem home of a Palestinian attacker who killed seven people and wounded three outside a synagogue, one of several punitive measures approved by Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet overnight.

The move came following a deadly weekend in which seven people were killed and five others wounded in two separate shootings in Jerusalem, in one of the bloodiest months in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem in several years.

The measures threatened to further raise tensions and cast a cloud over a visit next week by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The weekend shootings followed a deadly Israeli raid in the West Bank on Thursday that killed nine Palestinians, most of them militants.

In response, Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a barrage of rockets into Israel, triggering a series of Israeli airstrikes in response. In all, 32 Palestinians have been killed in fighting this month.

Addressing the Cabinet on Sunday morning, Netanyahu said that "we sealed the home of the terrorist who carried out the horrendous attack in Jerusalem, and his home will be demolished".

"We are not seeking an escalation, but we are prepared for any scenario. Our answer to terrorism is a heavy hand and a strong, swift and precise response," he said.

The police on Sunday released footage of Israeli army engineers welding metal plates over the windows and welding the front door shut as part of the operation in response to Friday night's deadly shooting.

Police said the attacker, identified as a 21-year-old east Jerusalem resident, was

killed in a shootout with officers after fleeing the scene in the predominantly ultra-Orthodox east Jerusalem settlement of Neve Yaakov.

On Saturday, a 13-year-old Palestinian boy opened fire elsewhere in east Jerusalem, wounding two Israeli men, paramedics said. The attacker was shot and hospitalised.

Funerals for the victims in Friday's shooting, the deadliest attack on Israelis since 2008, were scheduled to take place Sunday.

Netanyahu's Cabinet also said it plans a series of other punitive measures, including cancelling social security benefits for the families of attackers, and would take steps to "strengthen the settlements" this week as part of the government's response to the weekend's attacks.

Netanyahu said that strengthening settlements in the occupied West Bank was aimed at "sending a message to



the terrorists that seek to uproot us from our land that we are here to stay".

Israel captured the West Bank, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. It has built dozens of settlements, now home to more than 500,000 Jewish settlers, in the decades since.

Most of the international community considers the settlements an obstacle to peace with the Palestinians, who

seek the West Bank as the heartland of a future independent state.

In Cairo, Blinken opened his Mideast tour on Sunday and was to speak with students at the American University in the city before holding talks with Egyptian officials on Monday.

He was then scheduled to travel to Israel for the most critical leg of the visit for talks with Israeli and Palestinian officials.

# 2 Palestinians killed by Israeli security personnel in West Bank

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Two Palestinian men died on Sunday from gunshot wounds from Israeli security personnel in separate incidents, the Palestinian Health Ministry said, as Israeli forces sealed off the home of an east Jerusalem man who killed seven people outside a synagogue on Friday.

They were the latest Palestinian casualties in one of the bloodiest months in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem in recent years, and followed two Palestinian attacks targeting Israelis in Jerusalem. The escalating violence threatened to further raise tensions and cast a cloud over a visit next week by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The ministry said an 18-year-old Palestinian man who was shot by a security guard next to the West Bank settlement of Kedumim died

Sunday.

The Israeli military said that a settlement security guard had identified a man armed with a pistol outside the settlement and shot him.

The ministry also confirmed the death of a 24-year-old Palestinian man who was wounded in an Israeli army raid in Jenin on Thursday that killed nine other Palestinians. There was no immediate claim of his affiliation with a militant group.

Earlier on Sunday, Israeli police sealed up the east Jerusalem home of a Palestinian attacker who killed seven people and wounded three outside a synagogue, one of several punitive measures approved by Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet overnight.

The Ukrainian Embassy in Israel said Saturday that one of the seven people was a Ukrainian national.

Israeli media reported that Irina Korlova, a healthcare worker, was killed along with six Israelis in the shooting.

The weekend shootings followed a deadly Israeli raid in the West Bank on Thursday that killed 10 Palestinians, most of them militants. In response, Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a barrage of rockets into Israel, triggering a series of Israeli airstrikes in response. In all, 34 Palestinians have been killed in fighting this month.

Addressing the Cabinet on Sunday morning, Netanyahu said that "we sealed the home of the terrorist who carried out the horrendous attack in Jerusalem, and his home will be demolished."

"We are not seeking an escalation, but we are prepared for any scenario. Our answer to terrorism is a heavy hand and a strong, swift and precise response," he said.

# Peru's protest 'deactivators' run toward tear gas to stop it

AP ■ LIMA (PERU)

When police fire tear gas at protesters demanding the resignation of Peruvian President Dina Boluarte, most run away.

A few, though, run toward the gas canisters as quickly as possible — to neutralize them.

These are the "deactivators." Donning gas masks, safety goggles and thick gloves, these volunteers grab the hot canisters and toss them inside large plastic bottles filled with a mixture of water, baking soda and vinegar.

The deactivators made their debut in Peru street protests in 2020, inspired by protesters in Hong Kong who in 2019 unveiled new strategies to counteract the eye-stinging, breath-stealing effects of tear gas. With protesters in Lima facing a nearly daily fusillade of tear gas, more people have joined the ranks of deactivators

trying to shield them and keep the demonstrations going.

Peruvians have been protesting since early December, when former President Pedro Castillo was impeached after a failed attempt to dissolve Congress. His vice president, Boluarte, immediately took over — and has faced strong opposition ever since.

Fifty-eight people have died in connection with the unrest, including one police officer. Forty-six of the deaths occurred during direct clashes between protesters and police.

The protests have exposed deep divisions in the country between the urban elites and the rural poor. Demonstrations were first largely concentrated in the south, a long-neglected region of Peru that felt a particular kinship to Castillo's humble background as a rural teacher from the Andean highlands.

# UK PM sacks Tory party chief over tax penalty row

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Sunday sacked one of his Cabinet ministers and Conservative Party chairman, Nadhim Zahawi, after he was found to have been in serious breach of the Ministerial Code.

Zahawi, who was a minister without portfolio as the chief of the governing Tory party, had faced fierce pressure in recent days to quit over questions about his finances after it emerged that he had agreed a penalty settlement with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) department.

Sunak had ordered an independent investigation into the Iraqi-born former Chancellor's tax affairs amid growing Opposition demands

for him to sack Zahawi. His independent ethics adviser, Sir Laurie Magnus, submitted his assessment on whether the HMRC settlement amounted to a breach of the ministerial code.

"When I became Prime Minister last year, I pledged that the government I lead would have integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level," writes Sunak in his letter to Zahawi, released by Downing Street.

"Following the completion of the independent adviser's investigation — the findings of which he has shared with us both — it is clear that there has been a serious breach of the Ministerial Code. As a result, I have informed you of my decision to remove you from your position in His Majesty's government," he said.

He added that Zahawi should be "extremely proud" of his "wide-ranging achievements in government over the last five years", particularly crediting his "successful oversight of the COVID-19 vaccine procurement and deployment programme".

In the correspondence to Sunak, also released by Downing Street, Magnus said his overall judgement was that "Mr Zahawi's conduct as a minister has fallen below the high standards that, as Prime Minister, you rightly expect from those who serve in your government". Earlier this week, Zahawi said he welcomed the investigation and looked forward to "explaining the facts of this issue" to Magnus — the UK Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests..

# Iran says drone attack targets defense facility in Isfahan

AP ■ DUBAI

Bomb-carrying drones targeted an Iranian defence factory in the central city of Isfahan overnight, authorities said early Sunday, causing some damage at the plant amid heightened regional and international tensions engulfing the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian Defence Ministry offered no information on who it suspected carried out the attack, which came as a refinery fire separately broke out in the country's northwest and a 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck nearby, killing three people.

However, Tehran has been targeted in suspected Israeli drone strikes amid a shadow war with its Mideast rival as its nuclear deal with world powers collapsed. Meanwhile, tensions also remain high with neighbouring Azerbaijan after a gunman attacked that coun-

try's embassy in Tehran, killing its security chief and wounding two others.

Details on the Isfahan attack, which happened around 11:30 pm Saturday, remained scarce. A Defense Ministry statement described three drones being launched at the facility, with two of them successfully shot down. A third apparently made it through to strike the building, causing "minor damage" to its roof and wounding no one, the ministry said. Iranian state television's English-language arm, Press TV, aired mobile phone video apparently showing the moment that drone struck along the busy Imam Khomeini Expressway that heads northwest out of Isfahan, one of several ways for drivers to go to the holy city of Qom and Tehran, Iran's capital. A small crowd stood gathered, drawn by anti-aircraft fire, watching as an explosion and

sparks struck a dark building. "Oh my God! That was a drone, wasn't it?" the man filming shouts. "Yeah, it was a drone."

Those there fled after the strike.

That footage of the strike, as well as footage of the aftermath analysed by The Associated Press, corresponded to a site on Minoo Street in northwestern Isfahan that's near a shopping centre that includes a carpet and an electronics store.

Iranian defence and nuclear sites increasingly find themselves surrounded by commercial properties and residential neighbourhoods as the country's cities sprawl ever outward. Some locations as well remain incredibly opaque about what they produce, with only a sign bearing a Defense Ministry or paramilitary Revolutionary Guard logo.

The Defense Ministry only



called the site a "workshop," without elaborating on what it made. Isfahan, some 350 kilometres (215 miles) south of Tehran, is home to both a large air base built for its fleet of American-made F-14 fighter jets and its Nuclear Fuel Research and Production Center.

The attack comes after Iran's Intelligence Ministry in July claimed to have broken up a plot to target sensitive sites around Isfahan. A segment

aired on Iranian state TV in October included purported confessions by alleged members of Komala, a Kurdish opposition party that is exiled from Iran and now lives in Iraq, that they planned to target a military aerospace facility in Isfahan after being trained by Israel's Mossad intelligence service.

Activists say Iranian state TV has aired hundreds of coerced confessions over the last decade. Israeli officials

declined to comment on the attack.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

My client Mr. Devender Nautiyal and Gayatri Devi intends to purchase Freehold DDA Flat No. 275-A, Ground Floor, Pocket-J&K, Dilshad Garden, New Delhi from Mrs. Heena Aggarwal who is daughter of Late Smt. Anita Arora (registered owner of Flat by virtue of Conveyance Deed dated 28.01.2015) and said Smt. Anita Arora died 17.10.2020, her husband Mr. Subhash Arora died on 01.07.2021 and her son Mr. Chandan Arora (unmarried) died on 25.04.2022 and now except Mrs. Heena Aggarwal (being 1st class legal heirs of Late Smt. Anita Arora) there are no other legal heirs remains of Late Smt. Anita Arora, Late Shri Subhash Arora, Late Shri Chander Arora. and my clients is mortgaging the same to LIC HFL, if anybody including Bank, Financial Institutions, persons, relative has any claim, right, interest whatsoever in the said property shall inform within 7 days to the undersigned with documentary evidence. In the event of no response to this notice, then our client shall presume that title of the said property is unencumbered and clear.

**Karnail Singh, Advocate,**  
K-8, Basement, Jungpura Extension  
New Delhi  
Contact No. 9811163363 & 9953683363

**DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS KATHUA**  
*E-mail: sspkathua@jkpolice.gov.in Fax/Phone No.: 01922-234010*  
**Hue And Cry Notice**  
**Rule No. 712/191**  

SHO P/S Hiranagar has intimated that the accused namely Manohar Lal S/O Bishan Dass R/O Village Gurah Sarkari Hiranagar District Kathua is evading his arrest in Case FIR No. 149/2022 U/S 447/307/147/148 IPC, 4/25 Arms Act of P/S Hiranagar, since the commission of crime.

During the investigation of said case, best efforts are made by concerned I/O to locate/arrest said accused person which has yielded no result and accused person is still at large.

As such, description roll/photograph of wanted accused is being circulated with the appeal that anybody having information about his whereabouts may inform us on below given Phone Numbers/E-mail ID. The identity of the informer will be kept secret and he will also be rewarded suitably. Anybody found providing shelter to the accused person or concealing his presence will also be booked.

DESCRIPTION ROLL		PHOTOGRAPH
> Name	Manohar Lal	
> Parentage	Bishan Dass	
> Address	Village Gurah Sarkari Hiranagar District Kathua Hiranagar	
> Tehsil	Kathua	
> District	52/54 years	
> Age	05 Feet 09 Inches	
> Height	Wheatish	
> Complexion		

1. DPO Kathua- 01922-234010 (Phone/Fax)  
2. dpokathua@jkpolice.gov.in ( Mail ID)  
3. PCR Kathua- 01922-234311(Phone/Fax)  
4. SHO P/S Hiranagar- 01922274222

**DIP/J-14784/22** **Sr. Superintendent of Police, Kathua.**



# NSE world's largest derivatives exchange for 4th straight year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has again emerged as the world's largest derivatives exchange in 2022, in terms of the number of contracts traded, according to the Futures Industry Association (FIA). This is the fourth consecutive year when the exchange earned the top spot, the NSE said in a statement on Sunday. In addition, the exchange was ranked third in the equity segment by the number of trades (electronic order book) in 2022, an advancement from the previous year when it was in the fourth position, as per statistics maintained by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

The calendar year witnessed the benchmark equity index - the Nifty 50 touching lifetime high of 18,887.60. Further, significant strengthening in liquidity was seen in sev-



eral product categories, including equity, equity derivatives and currency derivatives.

In the equity segment, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) daily-average turnover stood at Rs 470 crore in CY 2022, an increase of 51 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

Sovereign Gold Bond's daily average turnover in the

secondary market was Rs 7 crore in CY 2022, a jump of 59 per cent YoY.

Government securities, which have been made available in the equity segment of NSE, are also seeing significant growth, although on a lower base, with volumes touching a daily average turnover of Rs 3 crore last month.

"The achievement of being ranked 3rd in equity segment and largest exchange in derivatives is a culmination of the collaborative effort of all the stakeholders," Sriram Krishnan, Head of Business Development, NSE noted.

NSE said it is expected to soon begin the Social Stock Exchange as a segment subject to regulatory approvals.

This would enable 'Social Enterprises', particularly non-profit organisations to showcase their work to a wider audience and mobilise funds through the issuance of instruments, such as Zero Coupon Zero Principal Bonds and bring efficiency and transparency to the overall ecosystem.

On the derivatives side, NSE said it is working on new products in currency, an interest rate segment and the commodity derivatives segment, and will soon announce the launch. This is subject to regulatory approvals.

# Indian electronics manufacturing to cross ₹1.28 lakh crore next fiscal: MoS IT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Electronics manufacturing in the country is expected to cross Rs 1.28 lakh crore in the next financial year, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar has said.

The minister, in an interview with PTI, said the government is now going to broaden and widen the electronics manufacturing ecosystem with a new production-linked incentive scheme for hearable-wearable, IT hardware and component makers.

"Electronics manufacturing as a whole, we see next year that we will at least do Rs 1.28 lakh crore. I have already said that we will see mobile phone production reaching Rs 1 lakh crore in 2023-24," Chandrasekhar said.

There has been a focus on mobile phones because it is the fastest-growing segment in electronics across the world, he added.

"Value addition in manu-



facturing is a function of scale. First, you need to hit the scale. The component industry is the one which does value addition. Components will not come if the scale of manufacturing is not there. The next stage of our PLI is to get components PLI, hearable-wearable PLI and the IT server PLI," the minister said.

The government will do 100 per cent hand-holding of component players to boost the

local ecosystem, he noted.

Electronics components makers body ELCINA has requested the government to allocate USD 10 billion (about Rs 80,000 crore) for 8 years to boost the manufacturing of electronic components and key modules other than semiconductors.

It has sought a four-year extension to the Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and

Semiconductors (SPECS), with an increased outlay of Rs 16,000 crore in the Union Budget for 2023-24.

According to ELCINA, the upgraded PLI will facilitate investments of around Rs 64,000 crore with a targeted output of USD 24 billion (about Rs 1.95 lakh crore) for all components other than semiconductors.

The industry body has also sought reinstatement of income tax relief for the investment made in research and development. It has also asked for a PLI scheme with a focus on domestic electronics manufacturing services companies.

India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA) has requested the government to convert the PLI scheme into a design-led manufacturing scheme and impose an import duty of 10 per cent on any imported electronics equipment and assembled printed circuit board (PCB) to boost local manufacturing.

# In a first, IOC begins export of aviation gas

PTI ■ MUMBAI

In a first, national oil marketer Indian Oil Corporation has started exports of aviation gasoline, the fuel that fires unmanned aerial vehicles and small planes -- turning a chapter in the nation's fuel history from being a net importer to an exporter.

The first consignment of 80 barrels of aviation gas (AV gas), each consisting of 16 kilolitres, was shipped from the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) to Papua New Guinea over the weekend. This is the first-ever instance of India exporting this fuel, produced at IOC's Vadodara refinery, marking its entry into an estimated USD 2.7-billion global market, the company said in a statement.

Aviation gasoline powers unmanned aerial vehicles and piston-engine aircraft used by flying schools. It is a higher-octane aviation fuel meeting



the product specifications with superior performance, and quality standards and is cheaper compared to imported grades. The fuel that fires the engines of large commercial jets is called aviation turbine fuel (ATF).

"The indigenous production of the gas named AV gas 100 LL will not only help save foreign exchange but will also make training in domestic flying schools economical for budding pilots," IOC chairman SM Vaidya was quoted as

saying in the company statement.

The development also has military implications as it can reduce the operating costs of UAVs that are increasingly being deployed by the defence forces as force multipliers.

There is a high demand for fuel in South America, Asia Pacific, West Asia, Africa and Europe. IndianOil aims to tap into this market after addressing the domestic demand, he added.

IOC is the sole domestic

manufacturer of the fuel, having begun production last September at its Vadodara facility, which has an annual capacity of 5,000 tonne. Till then the country was shipping in fuel from European refiners.

According to Vaidya, the global AV gas market is projected to grow at 5 per cent CAGR (compounded annual growth rate), while the country's aviation traffic is also likely to grow at 7 per cent CAGR. With superior performance, quality standards and competitive prices, IndianOil is aiming to secure a significant market share.

The principal grade of AV gas is designed for use in piston engine aircraft, mainly used by flying institutes and defence forces for training pilots. The gas has been tested and certified by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. There are over 35 flying schools in the country and the product will benefit them.

# G20 International Financial Architecture Working Group meeting to begin today

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The first G20 International Financial Architecture Working Group meeting will start on Monday, where participants will discuss ways to enhance stability and cohesion of the global financial architecture and how to make it fit to address the global challenges of the 21st century.

The meeting will also focus on exploring ways to provide maximum support to poor and vulnerable countries, Anu P Mathai, economic advisor, department of Economic Affairs, told the media here on Sunday. Around 100 delegates from the G20 countries, invitee countries and international organisations will be participating in the two-day meeting.

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar and Minister of Food



Processing Industries Pashupati Kumar Paras will inaugurate it, she said.

Discussions during the meeting will be jointly steered by the ministry of finance and the Reserve Bank of India along with France and Korea who are the co-chairs of the International Financial Architecture Working Group.

"The meeting will discuss ways to enhance the stability and cohesion of the international financial architecture and how to make it fit for addressing the global chal-

lenges of the 21st century," she said.

On the sidelines of the meeting on Monday, a G20 side event titled 'Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs): Opportunities and Challenges' will also be held.

The event is aimed at sharing countries' experiences and developing a deeper understanding of the macro prudential implications of CBDCs, she said. India assumed the G20 presidency for one year on December 1, 2022. The G20, or Group of 20, is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies.

It comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US and the European Union (EU).

# Cyber security Hackathon 4.0 organised jointly by APTS, APIS, VIT-AP University

AMARAVATI / GUNTUR / VIJAYAWADA: Andhra Pradesh Technology Services Ltd (APTS) in partnership with AP Innovation Society (APIS) & VIT-AP University organised Cyber Security Hackathon 4.0 to select a pool of talented final year students, graduates and post-graduates and professionals interested in cyber security. The internship is designed to provide exposure to a variety of security tasks, including vulnerability assessment and penetration testing on various networks, web and mobile applications using various commercial and open source tools. Total 128 students were selected from 623 applications frothe finale which was held on Jan 25 at VIT-AP University Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence. PNS

# Demand for non-tech jobs grew during December 2022: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Amid reports on layoffs by multinational technology companies, a report has revealed that there has been an increase in demand for talents in non-tech sectors in India, including healthcare, food services, construction and education in December 2022.

Global job site Indeed's monthly jobs insights showed that healthcare allied fields such as dental and nursing have the highest job postings on its platform at 30.8 per cent in December 2022.

This was followed by food services (8.8 per cent), construction (8.3 per cent), architecture (7.2 per cent), education (7.1 per cent), therapy 6.3 per cent, and marketing (6.1), among others, the report added. The report noted that the relative resurgence of business normalcy in a post pandemic world has brought buoyancy back in sectors like construction and civil engineering.

Even sectors like marketing, which was one of the earliest to see layoffs during the pandemic, has picked up steam, it said, adding that last year, brands have realised the need for marketing for enhanced customer experience as well as business and sales leading to the increase in demand. The report is based on job postings data on Indeed platform from December 2021 till December 2022.

The report further revealed that Bengaluru tops the list of cities in job postings, occupying 16.5 per cent of the total share. Bengaluru is closely followed by Mumbai at 8.23 per cent, Pune at 6.33 per cent and Chennai at 6.1 per cent, it stated. Tier II cities like Ahmedabad, Coimbatore, Kochi, Jaipur and Mohali contribute around 6.9 per cent, showcasing the rising demand for talent in smaller cities.

# Govt should hike assistance under PM-KISAN, give tax sops for agritech startups: Industry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government should in this year's Budget enhance cash assistance given to farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme from the current Rs 6,000 per year for purchase of crop inputs, provide tax incentives to agritech startups and cut import duties on agrochemicals, according to industry experts.

There is also need to announce some incentives to farmers as well as agritech startups for faster adoption of technologies, like artificial intelligence, precision farming and drones, in Indian agriculture sector, they added.

Edible oil industry body SEA has demanded that a national mission should be launched to increase oilseeds production and reduce imports of cooking oils.

"There is urgent need to launch the 'National Mission on Edible Oils' with adequate



financial support to boost the oilseeds production," Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) President Ajay Jhunjhunwala said. Currently, India is importing about 140 lakh tonnes of edible oils annually. The mission needs to be implemented with an outlay of Rs 25,000 crore annually for the next five years to sizably reduce our dependence on imported edible oils to 30-40 per cent of consumption by 2026 from the current level of 65 per cent, he said.

Agrochemical firm Dhanuka Group Chairman R G Agarwal said farmers should

be given more amount under the PM-KISAN programme so that they can buy adequate quantity of crop inputs like seeds, fertilisers and pesticides.

Under the PM-KISAN, the Centre pays Rs 6,000 per year in three equal instalments. The scheme, launched in February 2019, was made applicable from December 2018.

Agarwal also demanded some incentives for promoting R&D activities and extension services in the farm sector.

K C Ravi, Chief Sustainability Officer, Syngenta India, said the input cost in the farm sector has risen.

"An enhanced outlay for PM-KISAN will also ensure farmers get more liquidity to buy inputs," he added. Deepak Bhardwaj, co-founder and director of agri-drone maker IoTechWorld Aviation, said the government should set aside some fund from the Rs 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund for the purchase of drones.

# Qatar replaces Russian company in Lebanon gas exploration

AP ■ BEIRUT

Lebanon, two international oil giants and state-owned oil and gas company Qatar Energy signed an agreement Sunday that the Qatari firm will join a consortium that will search for gas in the Mediterranean Sea off Lebanon's coast.

The deal inked in Beirut brings Qatar into Lebanon's gas exploration market three months after Lebanon and Israel signed a US-mediated maritime border agreement ending a years-long dispute. Qatar Energy is replacing a Russian company that withdrew from the Lebanese market in September.

In 2017, Lebanon approved licenses for an international consortium including France's TotalEnergies, Italy's ENI and Russia's Novatek to move forward with offshore oil and gas development for two of 10 blocks in the Mediterranean. The borders of one of the two blocks were disputed by neigh-



boring Israel until a maritime border deal was reached last year. The companies did not find viable amounts of oil or gas in block No. 4 north of Beirut, and drilling in block No. 9 in the south has been repeatedly postponed because of the dispute with Israel.

Lebanon and Israel have been formally at war since Israel's creation in 1948.

The agreement was signed by Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, Qatar's Energy Minister; his Lebanese counterpart Walid Fayad; Claudio Descalzi, the CEO of Italy's state-run ener-

gy company, ENI, and TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanné. The signing ceremony was attended by Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati.

"Our concentration will be on block number nine," al-Kaabi said, adding that this could be a first step for Qatar Energy to play a bigger role in future explorations.

Back in 2017, Total and ENI each got 40% stakes in the blocs while Novatek got 20%. Under the deal signed Sunday, Qatar Energy will take the 20% stake of Novatek in addi-

tion to 5% each from ENI and Total leaving the Arab company with a stake of 30%. Total and ENI will have 35% stakes each.

Lebanese media reported that exploration in block No. 9 could begin before the end of November. "We are committed to execute this first well as soon as possible," TotalEnergies Pouyanné said. The company said two months ago it would soon launch exploration activities in search of gas off Lebanon's coast.

Cash-strapped Lebanon hopes that future gas discoveries will help the small Mideast nation pull itself out of the worst economic and financial crisis in the country's modern history.

Since the crisis erupted in October 2019, the Lebanese pound has lost more than 90% of its value. Tens of thousands have become jobless and three quarters of the population of 6 million, including 1 million Syrian refugees, now lives in poverty.

# US to start receiving H1B visa applications from March 1

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The highly anticipated H1B visa filing season for fiscal 2023-24 will officially begin on March 1 when the US immigration agency will start accepting applications for skilled foreign workers visas, the most sought-after by Indian IT professionals.

The H1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023, it will accept applications between March 1 and March 17 petitions for H-1B visas that allow them

to work and live in the US for up to six years in specialised fields such as technology, engineering, and medicine.

After six years, it opens up pathways to permanent residency or Green Card.

"If we receive enough registrations by March 17, we will randomly select registrations and send selection notifications via users' myUSCIS online accounts. If we do not receive enough registrations, all registrations that were properly submitted in the initial registration period will be selected," the USCIS said.

"We intend to notify account holders by March 31," a media release said. The USCIS said it would release additional information in the coming weeks.

The H1B visa allocations are capped at 85,000 visas per year, with 20,000 of those set aside for workers holding advanced degrees



from US institutions.

The remaining 65,000 visas are awarded through a lottery system, making the competition for H1B visas fierce.

The high demand for H1B visas has led to calls for reforms to the programme, with many advocating for

an increase in the number of visas available and a simplification of the application process.

Proponents argue that the H-1B programme is crucial for maintaining the United States' position as a global leader in technology and innovation, while also supporting the

country's economy.

Go First to get Rs 210 crore under govt's credit line guarantee scheme: CEOMumbai, Jan 29 (PTI) Wadia group-owned Go First expects to receive Rs 210 crore under the government's credit line guarantee scheme next month as the budget airline seeks to boost its financial position and expand operations.

The airline, which received Rs 210 crore from the promoters last month, aims to have 53 operational aircraft in its fleet by the start of April this year, its CEO Kaushik Khona told PTI.

The airline currently has 37 aircraft in operation.

Apart from the coronavirus pandemic headwinds and intense competition, the no-frills airline is grappling with the Pratt & Whitney engine issues that have forced it to ground many planes due to a shortage of spare engines.

Under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), which has come as a relief for many pandemic-hit sectors, Go First has so far availed Rs 600 crore.

With promoters' infusing Rs 210 crore, the airline will be able to get an equal amount under the ECLGS next month, Khona said.

In an interview, Khona said the engine issues are "gradually" getting resolved, and 20 new engines from Pratt & Whitney are expected to come by April.

Twenty engines can help Go First operationalise 10 aircraft. One plane has two engines.

According to him, seven new Airbus A320 neo planes will be inducted by April first week. Of this, the airline inducted one such plane last week.

Of the remaining six, two will come in February, three in March and one in April, he added.



# KING OF MELBOURNE

## Djokovic wins his record-extending 10th Australian Open title to equal Nadal's 22 Slam titles

AP ■ MELBOURNE

An emotional Novak Djokovic called it "the biggest victory in my life" after sweeping past Stefanos Tsitsipas to win a 10th Australian Open title and equal Rafael Nadal's 22 Grand Slam crowns on Sunday.

The Serb will return to world number one as he overcame a hamstring injury and off-court drama to defeat the Greek third seed 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5) on Rod Laver Arena.

The 35-year-old climbed to his player's box afterwards to embrace his mother and broke down in uncontrollable tears, collapsing to the ground sobbing.

His father Srdjan was again missing after he sparked controversy by posing with a fan carrying a Russian flag featuring Vladimir Putin's face following his son's quarter-final win.

The emphatic victory over Tsitsipas capped a remarkable return for Djokovic to Melbourne Park, having missed last year's tournament when he was deported over his Covid vaccination stance.

"I have to say this has been one of the most challenging tournaments I've ever played considering the circumstances, not playing last year, coming back this year," he said, wearing a jacket with 22 emblazoned on it.

"I want to thank all the people that made me feel welcome, comfortable, to be in Melbourne.

"I try to pinch myself and really live through these moments, it's a long journey," added Djokovic, who was more emotional than usual.

"Only my team and family know what we have been through in the last four or five weeks and this is why I'd probably say this is the biggest victory in my life considering the circumstances."

### 'NOT GOING ANYWHERE'

There had been an air of inevitability about Djokovic triumphing once more.

After his three-year ban from Australia was lifted, he won the lead-up Adelaide International before reinforcing his status as an all-time great in Melbourne.

His dominant win drew him level



with Nadal on a record 22 Slams, two clear of now-retired Roger Federer.

The Spanish great made a second-round exit with a hip injury, one of a series of shocks which upended the men's and women's draws during the first major of the year.

"I guess we always find the A-game on the Slams," Djokovic said of equalling his old rival Nadal. "This is what I feel both Nadal and myself probably still fight for.

"It is still what motivates us the most, winning the biggest titles in our sport and trying to keep up with the young guns.

"Tennis is in good hands," he added. "But we're still not going anywhere."

Nadal and Djokovic have won 16 of the last 19 Slams.

The 36-year-old Spaniard though

## Tsitsipas 'couldn't be more excited'

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Stefanos Tsitsipas said he was excited about the future and took confidence from his exploits at the Australian Open, despite losing Sunday's final to Novak Djokovic.

"There are definitely things that I can improve and get better at, given the circumstances today. But I don't think there's any reason for me to be affected by today's loss," said the 24-year-old.

"It is a step forward. I'm looking forward to scoring more points

during this season, making bigger results, fighting for bigger trophies.

"I very much enjoy the way I play, my attitude on the court, my mental stability, my concentration levels.

"There's still a little bit more to add to the whole structure of my game. I couldn't be more excited to be heading towards that path."

Tsitsipas, who has talked about a new-found maturity this year, will move up to world number three when the new rankings come out on Monday.

While he lost to 10-time Australian champion Djokovic, he showed resolve throughout the tournament when he was tested.

Against Jannik Sinner in round four he kept calm and dug deep to win a brutal five-setter, and quickly regrouped when Karen Khachanov took their semi-final to a fourth set.

But in the Serbian 22-time Grand Slam winner Djokovic he admitted he met his match.

"There's nothing that I could have extracted more for today. I did everything possible," he said.



## Krejčíková-Siniakova defend AO women's doubles title

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Czech top seeds Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova successfully defended their Australian Open women's doubles crown on Sunday to extend their dominant Grand Slam streak. The pair outgunned Japan's 10th-seeded Shuko Aoyama and Ena Shibahara 6-4, 6-3 to post their 24th straight win at a major after triumphing last year at the Australian Open, Wimbledon and US Open.

"A big thanks to my partner

Barbora," said Siniakova. "I'm so happy we did it again, it was a nice journey. Thank you for playing with me."

It was their seventh Slam title to make them only the fifth women's team in the Open-era to claim so many. Martina Navratilova and Pam Shriver hold the record with 20.

They broke Shibahara's opening service game to immediately put the Japanese pair on the back foot and never let up, repeating the feat in the second set to cruise home in 1hr 29mins.

is set to slide down the rankings when they are released on Monday, in contrast to Djokovic.

The Serb will dethrone Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz and return to the top for the first time since June. Tsitsipas will climb one place to three.

### TSITSIPAS 'STEP FORWARD'

Both men were back on a court that helped them rise to stardom.

Djokovic won his first Grand Slam in 2008 on Rod Laver Arena while Tsitsipas burst on the scene in 2019 when he stunned defending champion Federer in the last 16.

Moving freely with only minimal strapping on his troublesome left hamstring, Djokovic opened with a comfortable hold after being greeted by huge cheers.

He worked two break points on

Tsitsipas's opening serve, to no avail, but kept probing and the Greek handed him a break for 3-1 with a careless double fault.

Tsitsipas, 24, in only his second Grand Slam final to Djokovic's 33rd, appeared nervous, losing the first set.

But he battled back into contention in a much closer second set as his confidence grew, earning his first break point -- and set point -- when Djokovic blasted a backhand wide.

But the Serb clung on to keep the set on serve and it went to a tiebreak, where his greater experience roared to the fore.

Against the odds, Tsitsipas broke for the first time on Djokovic's opening serve in set three, only to relinquish the advantage immediately after a gripping rally.

# Germany win Men's Hockey WC title

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Germany ended Belgium's dominance in global hockey in the last five years as they made yet another stunning comeback from two-goal deficit to beat the defending champions in penalty shootout to win the FIH Hockey Men's World Cup for a third time here on Sunday.

The two sides were locked 3-3 at the end of regulation time of the thrilling final before Germany eventually won 5-4 in sudden death in front of a packed Kalinga Stadium.

Niklas Wellen (29th), Gonzalo Peillat (41st) and captain Mats Grambusch (48th) scored for Germany in the regulation time while Florent van Aubel Florent (10th), Tanguy Cosyns (11th) and Tom Boon (59th) found the target for Belgium.

This was the third time in the tournament that Germany had won after trailing 0-2 and their mental strength and never-say-die attitude came to the fore again as they denied the Belgians to defend their title.

The earlier two matches were against England in the quarterfinals and Australia in the semifinals.

Germany joined Australia and



Netherlands to have clinched the World Cup title three times. Their earlier triumphs had come in 2002 and 2006. Only Pakistan have won the event four times.

A day before the summit clash, head coach Andre Henning had said that Germany have given massive

focus on their defence but a two-minute Belgium blitzkrieg left them in daze.

Van Aubel gave Belgium the lead in the 10th minute. The ball got a deflection and went up inside the German 'D'. Aubel leapt in the air and smashed it down into the German goal.

## Netherlands beat Australia 3-1 to clinch Bronze

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Captain Thierry Brinkman struck twice as Netherlands dished out a superb show of attacking hockey to beat world No.1 Australia 3-1 and clinch the bronze medal in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here on Sunday.

Brinkman struck in the 35th and 40th minutes while penalty corner expert Jip Janssen scored the other goal for Netherlands in the 33rd minute.

Australia's lone goal came from their penalty corner expert Jeremy Hayward in the 13th minute.

The bronze meant that

Netherlands finished on the podium for the fourth time in succession and they are also equal with Australia on the maximum number of medals won in the showpiece event.

Both Netherlands and Australia have now won 10 medals each in the 15 editions of the World Cup.

The Dutch finished third in 2010 and runners-up in 2014 and 2018. They have won the title in 1973, 1990 and 1998.

For three-time champions Australia, this was the first time they are returning home without a medal after they finished fourth in the 1998 edition. They had won a bronze in the last edition here.

Even before the packed crowd barely settled down after the first goal, Cosyns made it 2-0 as he got down on his knees and tapped in a

Antoine Kina cross from the left.

Germany took a referral for a back stick but the video umpire ruled against them.



## AC Milan's title defence in tatters

AP ■ MILAN

AC Milan's season went even further off the rails on Sunday after a humiliating 5-2 home defeat at the hands of Sassuolo left them at risk of dropping out of the Champions League places.

Everything that could go wrong for troubled Milan did at a gloriously sunny San Siro, with two goals ruled out for offside and a shocking defensive display condemning the champions to a second straight heavy loss after being hammered 4-0 at Lazio on Tuesday.

Stefano Pioli's side dropped down to fourth and will find themselves a whopping 15 points off the Scudetto pace if league leaders Napoli beat fierce rivals Roma in Sunday's late match.

Milan's title defence lays in tatters and they will also drop out of Serie A's top four if either Roma or Lazio, who host Fiorentina later in the day, avoid defeat.

Domenico Berardi was the star man for Sassuolo, who are 16th after winning for the first time since late October, the Italian having a hand in Gregoire Defrel and Davide Frattesi's goals which put his team two ahead after just 20 minutes.

Olivier Giroud, who had a fine early finish disallowed, then headed Milan back into the game but Berardi reestablished Sassuolo's two-goal lead with a

header of his own from a 30th-minute corner.

Pioli brought on Rafael Leao at half-time after leaving his star attacker out of the starting line-up but Milan were three goals down seconds after the restart, Armand Lauriente smashing home a penalty after being brought down by Davide Calabria.

And an awful afternoon turned into a nightmare when Matheus Henrique drilled in the fifth with 11 minutes remaining, leaving Divock Origi to curl home a beautiful but entirely irrelevant consolation goal for the hosts.

Later Paul Pogba could make his first Juventus appearance since returning from Manchester United last summer after being named among the substitutes for their clash with surprise package Monza.

France midfielder Pogba injured the meniscus in his right knee in July and missed out on the World Cup.

He initially elected not to go under the knife in a bid to make the Qatar tournament but despite later changing his mind he didn't recover in time to play for Les Bleus.

Juventus sit 11th in Serie A after being docked 15 points for illicit transfer activity and will be overtaken by promoted Monza should the Turin giants lose to the club owned by Silvio Berlusconi as they did in September.

# Bayern held at home to Frankfurt

AP ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich saw their lead in the Bundesliga cut to just one point on Saturday after Randal Kolo Muani's equaliser held the German champions to a 1-1 draw with Eintracht Frankfurt.

The result was Bayern's third consecutive 1-1 draw, with the Bavarians still looking for their first win of 2023.

Union Berlin's 2-0 derby win over city rivals Hertha earlier on Saturday meant Bayern's three-point cushion on top of the table had been erased by kick-off.

"We had three or four big chances that we might have actually made the most of before Christmas," Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann told Sky.

Bayern lacked fluency early in a testy opening half, which saw both centre-back Matthijs



de Ligt and goalkeeper Yann Sommer pick up yellow cards.

With 34 minutes gone, former Man City forward Leroy Sane settled his team's nerves by hammering a cross from veteran forward Thomas

Mueller past the outstretched hand of Frankfurt 'keeper Kevin Trapp.

After the goal, Bayern rekindled their early season form and produced their best spell of the match, with France

defender Dayot Upamecano going close to doubling their lead just three minutes later.

Bayern continued to push for a second goal after the break but Frankfurt, who had only lost once in their previous 11 games in all competitions dating back to early October, looked dangerous on the break.

Eintracht coach Oliver Glasner brought on Japan international Daichi Kamada just past the hour and the change had an almost immediate impact, Kamada exchanging passes with Kolo Muani before the latter struck the ball past Sommer and into the net.

"We have a great group and if I can help the team, then I'm very satisfied," said Kolo Muani, who now has seven goals and 10 assists in the league this term.

"It was an intense game for us. We came here to get a point and we did it."



## Christie, An win Indonesia titles

AP ■ JAKARTA

Badminton world number three and home hero Jonatan Christie secured his first Indonesia Masters title on Sunday, as South Korean star An Se-young roared back to win her second women's championship in Jakarta.

Christie calmly dispatched unseeded compatriot Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo 21-15,

21-13 in the 44-minute final in front of a roaring hometown crowd.

It was an impressive victory for Christie, who last won a major singles title at the 2018 Asian Games.

In the women's singles final, world number two An made a stunning comeback to beat Spain's three-time world champion Carolina Marin 18-21, 21-18, 21-13.





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Prime Minister

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