

**BADRINATH TO REOPEN
FOR DEVOTEES ON APR 27**
NEW TEHR: Amid uncertainty
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announced. The Badrinath
temple will be reopened to the
public on April 27 at 7.10 am,
authorities said.

TISS CANCELS BBC DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

Mumbai: Amid protests by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) activists, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)'s student union Progressive Students Forum (PSF) cancelled the scheduled screening of the controversial BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question", on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday evening.

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Badrinath Dham to reopen for devotees on April 27

PNS ■ NEW TEHRI

Amidst uncertainty resulting from the land subsidence in Joshimath- the gateway to Badrinath, the date for reopening of this major shrine to lord Vishnu has been announced.

The Badrinath temple will be reopened to the public on April 27 at 7:10 AM.

The reopening date was arrived at in a ritual ceremony held at the erstwhile Tehri royal family's palace in Narendranagar on the occasion of Vasant Panchami on Thursday.

The date and timing for the opening the temple gates were announced by the priests of the erstwhile Tehri king Manujendra Shah.

The date for the opening of the temple gates is decided on the basis of the erstwhile Tehri king's horoscope as per traditions.

The 'Gadu Ghada' (oil pot) Yatra will begin on April 12. It is worth mentioning here that Badrinath is one of the Char Dham shrines established



across India and the Char Dham shrines in Uttarakhand which registers the maximum footfalls of visitors among all the Char Dham shrines in Uttarakhand.

It will be recalled that though some have questions at the manner in which the pil-

grimage will be conducted considering the disaster being experienced in Joshimath due to land subsidence, the authorities have maintained that the pilgrimage may be regulated but will not be affected majorly by the situation in Joshimath.

Opp unity against BJP should pivot on Cong, reiterates party

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ SRINAGAR

The Congress party on Saturday reiterated that any opposition unity against the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) should pivot around the Congress and must be based on a positive agenda. The grand old party also maintained that the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra should not be seen as an exercise aimed at building a coalition or fighting elections 'unitedly'.

Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi resumed his yatra from Chersoo at Awantipora in South Kashmir's Pulwama district under tight security arrangements. He was joined by the Peoples Democratic Party Chief Mehbooba Mufti along with her daughter. A large number of Congress workers and local residents converged near the highway to catch a glimpse and welcome the yatra. The Congress workers were seen carrying tricolor and party flags during the yatra.

Elaborate security arrangements were made along the



PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti joins Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra, at Chursu, Awantipora in Pulwama district on Saturday PTI

entire yatra route on Saturday. Strict vigil was kept on the interior roads connected with the National Highway by the various area domination patrol parties of the Indian army and the Central Paramilitary forces. The Congress party also acknowledged that the security arrangements were very strong on Saturday.

Along the yatra route Rahul paid floral tributes to the 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans who had sacrificed their lives in the 2019

Pulwama suicide car bomb blast attack. PDP Chief, wearing a contrasting black dress, walked along with Rahul Gandhi till Lethpora, a few kilometres short of the yatra's final destination for Saturday. At Lethpora, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also joined the yatra. Mehbooba Mufti termed the yatra as a breath of fresh air in Kashmir. "Rahul Gandhi's yatra comes like a breath of fresh air in Kashmir," Mufti tweeted after the yatra.

TISS cancels BBC docu screening

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid protests by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) activists, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)'s student union Progressive Students Forum (PSF) cancelled the scheduled screening of the controversial BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question", on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday evening.

Informed sources in the PSF attributed the cancellation of the controversial documentary's screening to the intense pressure from the Mumbai police and the TISS management, and also the organisers' failure to take the film print and projector to the screening venue owing to the protests by the BJYM.

However, the sources said that after cancelling the scheduled screening, some students circulated among the fellow students at the TISS the video



of the film through mobile, laptops and tablets for viewing.

The TISS management had on Thursday issued an advisory to the students warning them of strict action if they held screening of the controversial documents.

Despite the warning, the PSF was planning to go ahead and hold the screening of the documentary as a "symbolic protest" in view of the Government's decision to order YouTube to take down copies of the documentary and asked Twitter to remove the posts related to the film.

Having taken cognisance of the development, the local police had also warned the students against screening the controversial documentary on the TISS premises.

AMU student suspended for raising religious slogan at varsity Republic Day function

PNS ■ ALIGARH

Controversy erupted in Aligarh Muslim University for raising slogans of Allah-hu-Akbar after Republic Day celebrations.

The student Wahiduzzma, a student of BA first year, an NCC cadet accused of raising slogans like Allah-hu-akbar after Republic Day celebrations was then suspended by the AMU administration and a case was also registered.

After the incident, the police entered SS North hall where the student used to reside on Friday night. The students protested this act and created a ruckus by locking the proctor's office after the entrance of police in SS North Hall without any information.

The students also raised slogans against the police. Proctor Prof. M. Wasim Ali was engaged in convincing the students from two o'clock in the night.

At six in the morning the students opened the lock of the office. On Saturday afternoon, the students have also announced to take out a protest march in AMU against this.

The administration swung into action after a video of the sloganeering was circulated on the internet media. In another video, NCC cadets are raising slogans of Bharat Mata Ki Jai and Vande Mataram.

The administration has constituted a three-member committee to investigate the entire matter. Which will submit the report in five days.



Tourists visit the Solang Valley in Manali on Saturday PTI

Kerala fallen into debt trap, will take years to recover, says Chacko George

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

In what is seen as a double whammy for the CPI(M)-led Kerala Government, Plathottathil Chacko George, who served as member of the legislative Assembly for 33 years, said on Saturday that the State has fallen into a debt trap from which it would take years to recover.

"Though the Finance Minister of Kerala K N Balagopalan claims that the State has debt of only Rs 3.97 lakh crores, my studies and investigation has found that debt is more than Rs 4.97 lakh crore. The administration has failed in all rounds," George, a specialist in the agriculture and industrial economy, told The Pioneer.



He said quoting official data that not a single industrial enterprises have opened shop in Kerala since 2016. "More than that many entrepreneurs who had set up factories that employed thousands have left Kerala for good and moved to other States like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana," said George.

George, the law maker with an impeccable track record, pointed out that the Kerala Government instead of focus-

ing its attention on urgent issues was more bothered about controversial missions like the 511 km long semi high speed silver line rail and Angamaly-Sabari rail projects. "Both these projects are of no use in resolving the infrastructural bottlenecks troubling the State. Deaths due to food poisoning caused by restaurants and eateries have made Kerala a dangerous place," he said. Interestingly, the observations by George come at a time when Balagopalan is getting ready to present the State budget on February 3.

The opposition UDF led by the Congress too portrayed a gloomy picture of the State's economy in the white paper which it released on Saturday.

Govt working...

From Page 1

Many attempts were made to break India ideologically but no power has succeeded, he said, adding, "India is not just a landmass, but an expression of our civilisation, culture, harmony, and potential."

"People should stay away from any thing which is against the unity of the nation," he added.

For the last eight-nine years, the country has been trying to empower every section of society that has been neglected and deprived, Modi said. "We are moving with the mantra of giving preference to the underprivileged."

He said social power has played a huge role in India's journey of thousands of years. "Let us take pride in our heritage, get out of the slavery

mindset and remember our duties towards the country," the prime minister added.

Lord Devnarayan always gave priority to social service and public welfare, and put all his energy towards the welfare of the people, he said.

Highlighting the schemes and programmes of the central government, the prime minister said, "Earlier, the poor used to worry about rations but today, they get full and free rations. Ayushman Bharat has removed the worries of medical treatment."

"Facilities of banking transactions were available to limited people in the past, but today, the doors of the banks have opened for all, water through pipes is reaching more than 11 crore households and farmers are being benefited with PM Kisan Samman Nidhi," Modi added.

In Rajasthan, assistance of more than Rs 15,000 crore has been given to farmers under the PM Kisan Kisan Samman Nidhi and welfare of livestock and cattle rearers is also being done, he said.

BJP considers me 'Shudra': Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Escalating the controversy over remarks Eby Swami Prasad Maurya's on Ramcharitmanas, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the BJP considers him a "low-caste 'Shudra'". He also alleged that the BJP sent its goons to prevent him from attending religious ceremony 'Mahayagya', organized on the banks of the Gomti river on Saturday.

"For the BJP, we are 'Shudras'. They are indulging in discrimination. The BJP may face a similar situation when they will be

voted out of power. Even today, some people want to deprive others of their right to enter temples. It's a fact that whoever prevents anybody from entering temples is a 'vidharmi' for creating obstacles in the path of 'dharma'," Akhilesh said here on Saturday. He had gone to Daliganj to attend the '108th Mahayagya' on the banks of the Gomti river on Saturday.

"My security was scaled down and national security guards commandos were withdrawn. Today, I have realised the reason behind the withdrawal of my security cover," said Akhilesh.

Maurya meets SP chief, refuses to say sorry for Ramcharitmanas barb

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party MLC Swami Prasad Maurya met party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday amidst row over his remarks on Ramcharitmanas. Refusing to apologise for his remarks on the holy book, Maurya said the party is seeking justice for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes.

IAF jets...

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"We saw two parachutes coming down and we waited for 15-20 minutes for the duo to land. However, they fell into the thicket and sustained injuries. We took them out from the bushes and laid them on the ground. While we were talking to the two pilots in uniform, an IAF helicopter arrived and flew them to Gwalior," said Shakya.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in a tweet said, "The news of the crash of Sukhoi-30 and Mirage-2000 aircraft of the Air Force near Kolaras in Morena is very sad."

"I have instructed the local administration to cooperate with the Air Force in quick rescue and relief work. I pray to God that the pilots of the planes are safe," he said.

The IAF said in a statement, "Two fighter aircraft of IAF were involved in an accident near Gwalior today morning." The two aircrafts were on a routine operational flying training mission.

"One of the three pilots sustained fatal injuries. An inquiry has been ordered to determine the cause of the accident," the IAF said.

While details of the mishap

were yet to come out, sources said there was a mid-air collision and the Mirage 2000 crashed immediately after.

The two Sukhoi pilots managed to keep their aircraft in the air despite one of the two engines catching fire. However, they could not regain full control for a safe landing and ejected.

The SU-30MKI is a twin-seater while the Mirage 2000 is a single-seater aircraft. The SU-30MKIs are developed by Russia's JSC Sukhoi company and built under license by India's Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The Mirage 2000s are manufactured by French defence conglomerate Dassault Aviation.

Eyewitnesses to the crash recounted hearing a deafening sound and sighting balls of fire descending to the ground followed by two persons in uniform parachuting into the thicket nearby. PTI reports from Morena said.

The debris of the two aircraft fell in Pahargarh area here, 75 kilometres from the district headquarters, while some parts also fell in Bharatpur, just across the border in neighbouring Rajasthan.

Delhi's Mughal...

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"Rashtrapati Bhavan is home to a rich variety of gardens. Originally, they included East Lawn, Central Lawn, Long Garden, and Circular Garden.

"During the term of former Presidents Dr A P J Abdul Kalam and Ram Nath Kovind,

more gardens were developed, namely Herbal-I, Herbal-II, Tactile Garden, Bonsai Garden, and Arogya Vanam," the statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan on said.

In this year's Udayan Utsav, among several other attractions, visitors will be able to see

specially cultivated tulips of 12 unique varieties. The gardens will open for the general public on January 31, 2023, and will remain open till March 26, 2023, except on Mondays which are maintenance days and on March 8 on account of Holi.

BJP names 2 Muslims in Tripura...

From Page 1

The BJP ended the Left's 25-year rule in 2018 and went on to form the Government in Tripura, picking Biplob Deb as the Chief Minister. However, the party removed Deb and appointed Manik Saha as CM in May last year.

Deputy CM Jishnu Debbarma will contest from the Charilam constituency and state BJP chief Rajib Bhattacharjee from Banamalipur. The party will announce the name for the rest twelve seats later which also include tribal seats.

Crash timeline...

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It is a multirole, fourth-generation jet fighter and has several variants which are used by many countries including India, UAE, Qatar, Brazil, Taiwan, Greece, Peru, and Egypt. The Mirages are based in Gwalior. Nearly all of them have undergone a mid-life upgrade. Incidentally, Dassault, which manufactured the Mirages, has now delivered 36 Rafale medium multi-role combat aircraft to IAF.

Mirages played a key role in destroying enemy bunkers in the mountains during the 1999 Kargil war. More recently, nearly 12 Mirages carried out surgical strikes in 2019 in

Balakot in Pakistan against terrorist hideouts.

As for the Sukhoi Su-30 MKI, it is rated one of the safest aircraft with the IAF. The last known crash of the Sukhoi Su-30 MKI was reported in August 2019 in Assam.

The Sukhoi Su-30MKI is a multi-role combat fighter aircraft jointly developed by the Sukhoi Design Bureau and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Indian Air Force. Sukhoi Su-30 is called "Air Dominance" fighter by IAF. After the arrival of the Sukhoi in the IAF Fleet, there was a decisive tilt of the balance of power in favour of the IAF in the region. Its supermaneuverability, its armory of advanced beyond visual range missiles, and its extraordinary range of 3000 km (extendable to 8000 km with aerial refueling) are aspects that make it the "Wolf of the Skies".

City's 1,400 km of roads under PWD to get facelift

Govt to introduce 1,500 e-scooters for last-mile connectivity

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced a slew of projects to be taken up by the Delhi Government in the upcoming months, which include refurbishment of 1,400 km of roads under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department and introduction of 1,500 e-scoot-

ers for self driving to connect last-mile connectivity.

"The PWD will begin the refurbishment project in April and try to complete it within six months. About 4,500 crore rupees will be spent in the first year and then 2,000 crore rupees will be spent every year on the project.

"In the next 10 days, all the proposals will be approved by the cabinet and all the work will start from April 1," the Chief Minister said.

The CM had chaired a high level meeting to review the road transformation project where senior officials including Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, and department officials were present.

Announcing the project, Kejriwal said, "broken pavements, central verges, manholes, slabs, signage, electric poles, railings, lights and FOBs will be repaired along with maintenance of broken roads and potholes under the project.

"Agency will be given a 10-year contract for maintenance & upkeep, which will be responsible for repairing any damage within 24 hours. Every road will be resurfaced twice in 10 years and road markings, zebra crossing and footpaths will be repainted every three to six months. Roads, footpaths, trees and plants will be washed three days a week with mechanical sweeping, deep scrubbing & litter picking every day," the



Chief Minister said.

According to the Chief Minister, mechanical sweeping and washing of roads would be done once in three days and posters and banners put up on streets would be removed on a daily basis.

Sharing more details on the project, Kejriwal said over 100 mechanical sweepers will be hired; 250 smog-guns-cum-sprinklers — one for each ward — will also be hired for sanitation purposes. Vehicles mounted with cameras would ply across the city and monitor such activities."

Treated water from sewage treatment plants of Delhi Jal Board will be used to wash the roads. Third party monitoring will be systemised with vehicles fitted with cameras, if any shortcoming is found, the contractor will be fined heavily.

"There will be a centralised complaint system, where any person can complain if he sees any dirt, mud or potholes on

the road," he said

A massive plantation drive will be carried out on the central verges of the streets as well as empty spaces along side roads.

Kejriwal said, We are transforming a total of 1,400 kms of roads that come under the jurisdiction of the Delhi PWD. The PWD has jurisdiction only upon roads wider than 18m (45ft) across the national capital, and we will leave no stone unturned to transform them."

He added, all the footpaths and central verges along the roads will be repaired on an as & when necessary basis.

This means that in contrast to the usual practice of replacing footpaths on the entire

stretch as adopted by governments who want to spend away all public funds, in this project, we will take up spot-repairs.

If one stone is missing, it will be replaced. If two are damaged, they will be repaired. We will not misuse public funds. Damaged manholes, street furniture, railings, precast slabs, signages, electrical poles, lighting will be repaired.

"In all the city subways, the railings and light fittings will be repaired, as will the foot over bridges. Beyond these civil and electrical repairs, all potholes and cracks on roads will be repaired."

"The project aims to redefine the maintenance standards of the urban roads across

the city and set a new benchmark of world class maintenance for urban roads across the country.

"This road repair and maintenance project will be a major benefit for the citizens of Delhi," he added,

After meeting with transport department to improve infrastructure, Kejriwal added that the Delhi Government is planning to introduce 1500 e-scooters, a pilot project around which will be launched in Dwarka.

The e-scooters will come with helmets, can be hired by anyone and will be operational for 60 km with one charge, the CM said. It will be available at 250 sites within the area.

Nightclub raided, 288 detained in Gurugram, drugs recovered

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

A popular nightclub 'Casa Danza' was raided by multiple teams, including the Gurugram Police and the health department team, on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday with a number of drugs, including heroin, cocaine, charas, marijuana and MDMA from the premises found and confiscated in the Udyog Vihar Phase-3 area.

According to police, 288 people including women were detained and their blood samples were taken for allegedly consuming drugs and sent to the forensic science laboratory for testing and further probe.

Police said no arrest has been made so far in the case. "The narcotics recovered were not in anyone's possession, but were from the club premises. We have taken CCTV footage



into our custody and we will examine it to ascertain if someone had personally disposed of the narcotics at the premises or they were being supplied at the club," said police.

The club owner was identified as Arvind Yadav, Abhishek Rana, and Kuknark Sikka and the managers were Veer and Devsh. An FIR has been registered against three club owners, three managers and other staff members at Udyog Vihar police station.

The police seized 10.67

grams of charas, 6.30 grams of heroin, 6.30 grams of cocaine, 3.67 grams of MDMA, 2.20 grams of Marijuana, 3 tablets (orange), 3 tablets (pink) and 3 tablets (green) from the spot. The narcotics recovered will be sent to the FSL.

According to police, a 'secret input' was received that contraband drugs were allegedly being consumed and distributed at a rave party at the club on Friday night, following which teams under ACP crime, ACP Udyog Vihar, ACP east,

four crime branch teams and a scene of crime team carried out a raid around 2 am along with assistance from teams of the chief medical officer's office. "The raid was conducted at around 2 am on Saturday at Casa Danza club, located in Udyog Vihar phase-3 by a joint police team. Police said

"During the search of these 288 persons no contraband was recovered from their possession. After vacating the club an intensive search was carried out by the crime scene team," Udyog

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Manoj Kumar said. Fourteen sachets of drugs were also seized by police.

"A further probe is underway. We will send the blood samples to the forensic science laboratory (FSL)," he said. "After getting the blood sample reports action will be taken as per the law," the ACP added.

Another scooterist dragged to death by car with 5 drunk students on board

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In yet another hit and drag case reported from Delhi, a car collided head-on with a scooter in Delhi's Keshav Puram and drove on, dragging along one of its two riders, whose head got stuck between its mangled bonnet and the windshield. Both the riders died of injuries.

The incident took place around 3 am on Friday when the victims were returning home on the two-wheeler after watching a movie. According to the police, the incident occurred when five students, all aged between 19 and 21 were returning from a marriage function in an inebriated condition and speeding away on the road of Delhi in a Tata Zest car.

This comes weeks after a 20-year-old woman was killed in the early hours of the New Year after her scooter was hit by

a car, which dragged her for 12 km from Sultanpuri to Kanjhawala in the national capital.

It was around 3 am at night on Friday when the said car rammed into a Honda Activa scooter at Perna Chowk in Delhi's Kanhaiya Nagar area. The men riding the cooter were identified as Kailash Bhatnagar (41) and Sumit Khari (21) of Loni in Ghaziabad.

After being hit by the car, Kailash who was driving the scooter jumped in the air and got stuck between the car's windshield and the bonnet which had opened as a result of the collision and the scooter under its bumper was intercepted by police around 350 metres from the spot of the accident as it accelerated towards Inderlok in a bid to flee, the officials said.

Bhatnagar was declared brought dead at the hospital,



while Khari died during treatment, police said. The victims used to work at a jeans manufacturing unit.

Two of the car's five occupants were held, while the rest managed to flee but were apprehended later, a senior police official said.

They said the impact of the collision had flung the pillion rider of the scooter to the roof of the car and then he fell on the road.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (northwest) Usha

Rangnani said a police control room (PCR) van saw the incident and chased the offending vehicle down. It was intercepted at a distance of about 350 metres from the spot within 11 seconds and its driver Parveen Nagar alias Silli (20) of Trinagar and Diviansh Puri (20) of Shalimar Bagh were apprehended.

The other occupants of the car, Om Bhardwaj (19), Harsh Mudgal (19), and Devansh (19), were nabbed later, police said.

DU forms 7-member panel to investigate ruckus over BBC's Modi docu screening

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University on Saturday formed a seven-member committee to investigate the ruckus outside the Arts Faculty building over the screening of a BBC documentary on the 2002 Gujarat riots.

The committee, headed by DU Proctor Rajini Abbi, has been asked to submit its report to Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh by 5 pm on January 30.

In a notification, the university said the vice-chancellor has constituted the committee to enforce discipline and maintain law and order on the cam-



pus.

The other members of the committee are Professor Ajay Kumar Singh of the Department of Commerce, Professor Manoj Kumar Singh, Joint Proctor, Professor Sanjoy Roy of the Department of Social Work, Professor Rama,

Principal of Hansraj College, Professor Dinesh Khattar, Principal of Kirorimal College, and Gaje Singh, Chief Security Officer, it added.

"The Committee may specifically look into the incident of the 27th of January, 2023 which occurred outside the Faculty of Arts and opposite gate No. 4, University of Delhi," the notification said.

A commotion erupted at the Delhi University on Friday as students attempted to screen the controversial BBC documentary, even as police and the university administration intervened to scuttle the move.

Batla House encounter convict dies at AIIMS

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Mujahideen operative Ishaq Ahmad has died during treatment at AIIMS in New Delhi on Saturday. He was convicted in the 2008 Batla House encounter case for murdering Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma and assaulting other officers.

A resident of Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh, Shehzad Ahmed alias Pappu (33) was shifted to Tihar Jail on February 6, 2010. He was transferred to central jail number 15 in Mandoli on July 7, 2022, from central jail number 8/9 in Tihar, they said. He was serving life sentence in

the 2008.

He was held of guilty causing the death of Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma and attempting to cause death of Head Constables Balwant Singh and Rajbir Singh by firing at them. Inspector Sharma was leading the police team during the Batla House encounter when he was shot and killed during the encounter. Shahzad was also found guilty of assaulting police officers and obstructing them from doing their duty. Shahzad was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in the Batla House encounter case of September 19, 2008.

Teen held for Jan 7 Sadar Bazar firecracker explosion that killed 1

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old youth was arrested in connection with the January 7 explosion in north Delhi's Sadar Bazar area in which a person was killed and four others were injured. According to police, the accused, identified as Mohammad Faiz, had given a bag of firecracker explosives to Gulab Madar to dispose them of. When Madar was carrying the bag, the explosion occurred, they said.

Five persons were injured in the incident and Madar succumbed during treatment.



Faiz is a resident of Hapur in Uttar Pradesh, they said.

On January 7, the police received information regarding a wall collapse at a building on Qutub Road, Sadar Bazar. After reaching the spot, it was found that the staircase and a

side wall had fallen due to a blast, a senior police officer said. Later, a case under various sections of the IPC and the Explosive Act was registered at the Sadar Bazar police station and an investigation was initiated.

Delhi BJP Executive Committee targets Kejriwal Govt, vows to expose 'graft'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

On the second day of the Delhi BJP executive committee's meeting, the party targeted the Arvind Kejriwal-led Government over multiple issues and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the installation of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's statue at the India Gate and other Centred-led projects.

Delhi BJP in its executive meeting on Saturday vowed to expose the Arvind Kejriwal Government.

A political resolution proposed by adopted by the Leader

of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bhiduri and approved by MP Pravesh Sahib Singh and State General Secretary Harsh Malhotra, stated that the Delhi government has become like bankruptcy.

DTC employees, civil defence volunteers and home guards are not being paid salaries. Even the doctors and other staff of the Mohalla clinic did not get their salaries for several months. Mohalla clinic tests could not be done due to non-payment for several months.

Union Information and



Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur was also present at the Delhi BJP executive meeting.

At a press conference held on Saturday, Bhiduri alleged that the AAP dispensation was indulging in "corruption" in

different departments such as excise and electricity as well as projects such as building classrooms. There was no immediate reaction from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) or the Delhi government.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia alleged on Saturday that doctors' salaries and Government projects were unlawfully stalled in order to influence the MCD polls, but asserted that these actions will not obstruct the public welfare work of the Arvind Kejriwal-led dispensation.

Sisodia inaugurated a new casualty and emergency and labour room in the department of obstetrics and gynaecology in the MCH (maternity and child health) block, along with

upgraded oxygen facilities, at the state-run Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital.

"The Delhi government's health department has been working round the clock to ensure that the people of the national capital get the best of world-class health facilities at the hospitals run by the city government, which is a priority of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Delhi's health model has received acclamation the world over. Upgrading our hospitals is just another effort to make our health model more efficient



and sustainable," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said.

He said the new casualty and emergency and labour room in the department of

obstetrics and gynaecology at the MCH block of the GTB Hospital will ensure that pregnant women, mothers and children get swift and quality emergency treatment.

Orders issued, tasks outlined for cleaning, rejuvenating Yamuna

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The High Level Committee (HLC) headed by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, constituted by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), issued detailed orders with specific tasks and timelines to ensure the cleaning/rejuvenation of river Yamuna and the sewage carrying drains falling into it.

All the crucial parameters on river health [like BOD < 3 mg/l, DO > 5 mg/l, minimum environmental flow — 23 Cumecs (437 MGD), etc.] were accepted by the HLC, and to achieve these parameters, the HLC finalized the Action Plan, including but not limiting to

treatment of all sewage generated in Delhi, trapping of all major drains out falling into river Yamuna, extending sewerage network in all unauthorized colonies and JJ Clusters, regulation of Yamuna Flood Plain including removal of all encroachments / Dhobi Ghats, enforcement of Delhi Water Board Septage Management Regulations 2018, utilization of treated STP water and upgradation of 13 Common Effluent Treatment Plants treating industrial effluents, etc.

It was also decided by HLC to constitute a Committee under the Chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner, Revenue Department, GNCTD and consisting of CEO, DJB:

Commissioner MCD as members; and Secretary, Urban Development Department, GNCTD as member-cum-convenor of this Committee, to revisit the Delhi Water Board Septage Management Regulations 2018 to make them more effective & enforceable. The Committee will submit its report latest by February 15, 2023 to the Convenor of this HLC.

"Completion of construction of 40 New Decentralised STPs with total capacity of 92 MGD. 29 Decentralized STPs with total capacity of 57.57 MGD will be constructed by December, 2023. The remaining 11 Decentralized STPs having total capacity of 32.43 MGD, for which land is yet to



be allotted by DDA, required land will be made available at the earliest and thereafter construction will be completed within 12 months," it said.

It has been noted with concern that no desilting of existing drains network has

been carried out in the recent past. As a result most of the drains are either completely choked or functioning with 10-15% of their designed flow. Hence a major desilting drive must be undertaken. Out of an approximate 200 km of

trunk/peripheral sewerage held with DJB. 90.34 Km of desilting will be completed by June, 2023. In addition, fresh contract will be done for remaining 110 km at the earliest. The entire desilting will be completed by September 2023.

Out of 18 major drains out falling into river Yamuna in Delhi stretch, trapping of 11 drains which include Magazine Road, Sweeper Colony, Khyber Pass, Metcalf House, Tonga Stand, Moat (Vijay Ghat), Civil Military, drain 14, Tughlagabad, Kalkaji and Tehkhand has been completed.

DJB shall construct 10 MGD STP to trap the remaining flow in the Delhi Gate Drain within 12 months and

matter of allotment of land shall be resolved by all concerned by January 31. Sen Nursing Home Drain has been trapped into Sen Nursing Home STP as well as into the Ring Road trunk sewer. However, some marginal flow/overflow still passes during peak hours. DJB to take measures to stop this marginal flow by desilting the drain and proper operation of Ring Road trapping by March 2023.

74 un-trapped sub-drains [44 in Najafgarh Drain and 30 in Supplementary Drain (which is sub drain of Najafgarh drain)] to be intercepted by October 2023 while two un-trapped sub-drains of Shahdara Drain to be inter-

cepted by June, 2023. Full trapping and treatment of 242 MGD wastewater of the Interceptor Sewer Project (ISP) to be completed by DJB by June, 2023. "Work of sewer network is in Progress in 573 unauthorised colonies to be completed by Dec, 2023. Out of 161 unauthorized colonies. 123 awaiting NOC/Clearance from Forest, ASI and 0 Zone will be completed within 12 months of obtaining clearances but not later than June, 2024," it said.

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) offered to develop a bio-diversity park in the Yamuna floodplain in case Delhi Development Authority (DDA) allots a land of appropriate area to it.

Cong seeks debate on Chinese incursion in Budget Session

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress has renewed its demand for a debate on the alleged Chinese incursion across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the upcoming Budget Session of Parliament.

The party said for security interest of the nation, the Government should not shy away from talking about China in the Parliament.

The Congress on Saturday said it will seek cooperation from other Opposition parties to press for a discussion on this issue.

The [party alleged that the Modi Government did not heed to Congress' demand for a discussion in Parliament on this issue session after session and sought to know whether the government will continue to keep the country in the dark or tell the nation the truth about China's "illegal occupation".

"We demand immediate discussion on this issue in Parliament, in the forthcoming Budget session. India's territor-



ial integrity and sovereignty is at stake and we should do everything possible, together to uphold it.

"Enough of 'clean chits' to China, now, the time has come for the Modi government to come clean on China," AICC Media and Publicity chief Pawan Kherra said at an AICC Press conference.

Congress claimed that recent reports say that India has

lost access to 26 out of 65 patrolling points (PP) which was not the case before May 2020 and the subsequent Galwan clash where 20 bravehearts sacrificed their lives.

"The Congress asks why after 17 rounds of military talks, the Modi government has not ensured the status quo ante even after almost three years of the Galwan clash? Given the fact that a senior

police official has flagged this highly sensitive issue, will the Modi government tell the nation why it has conceded India's rightful hold on our territory to China," he asked.

Alleging that the document has exposed the government's "weak-kneed approach" towards China, Kherra asked the Prime Minister to spell out if he is still "afraid" of China or still "loves" the country.

Kharge writes to Shah, demands foolproof security in Bharat Jodo Yatra in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah seeking his intervention in ensuring adequate security to the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir. Then yatra is scheduled to end on Monday.

The request has come after the Yatra was suspended for a day in view of "security lapse".

Congress alleged that the J and K Police had withdrawn security around its leader Rahul Gandhi in the wake of surging crowds during the foot march in Qazigund.

"We are expecting a huge gathering to join the yatra over the next two days and also the function that will be held on January 30 at Srinagar. Many

senior Congress leaders and leaders of other important political parties are attending the culmination function to be held on the 30th of January. I shall be grateful if you could personally intervene in this matter and advise the concerned officials to provide adequate security till the culmination of the yatra and the function on the 30th January at Srinagar," the Congress president said in his letter to the Home minister.

He said he is writing after the "unfortunate security lapse" during the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

On the advice of the security officials in charge of the security detail of Rahul Gandhi, the Yatra had to be suspended, Kharge said.

"We appreciate the Jammu and Kashmir Police and welcome their statement saying



they will continue to ensure complete security till the culmination of the journey," he said.

"You will appreciate the fact that a large crowd of common people has joined and walked in the Bharat Jodo Yatra every day. It is difficult for the organisers to tell exactly how many people are expected over the day as it is a spontaneous gesture of the common people to join the

yatra," Kharge wrote.

Kharge had earlier said that the alleged lapse in Gandhi's security detail in J and K during the Yatra was disconcerting to say the least.

"It is government of India's prime responsibility to provide security. India has already lost two PM's and scores of leaders and we demand better security for the Yatris," he said on Twitter.

ED arrests 4 more in C'garh coal levy scam, gets 3-day remand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested four more accused on money laundering charges in the illegal coal levy scam of Chhattisgarh in which several others, including an IAS officer and deputy secretary to Chhattisgarh Chief Minister, were also arrested earlier.

The arrested accused persons were produced before the PMLA Special Court at Raipur that remanded them to three-day ED custody till Monday, the agency said in a statement.

The ED had earlier issued a provisional attachment order attaching 'proceeds of crime' worth Rs 152.5 crore and has filed a Prosecution Complaint or chargesheet under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Recently, searches were

conducted in Chhattisgarh, Delhi, and Pune on specific inputs following which the four accused persons were arrested, it said.

Those arrested are Deepesh Taunk, a close confidant of one of the main accused in the case, Saumya Chaurasia, Deputy Secretary in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) and "knowingly involved in Money Laundering" and Sandeep Kumar Nayak (Surajpur) and Shiv Shankar Nag (Korba), Mining Officers who knowingly and willingly assisted the syndicate of Suryakant Tiwari in committing extortion and acquisition of the proceeds of crime, the ED said.

Another accused arrested is Rajesh Chaudhary a common man who cheats on people by claiming to work as a middleman to settle cases.

"ED investigation has established that close family members of Sunil Agarwal (an accused arrested by ED and presently in



Judicial Custody) were making desperate efforts to secure the release of Sunil Agarwal, soon after his arrest by ED on 12.10.2022. At that time, this self-acclaimed 'liaisoner', got in touch with the relatives of Sunil Agarwal," it said.

Since Rajesh Chaudhary had acquired part of the proceeds of crime as revealed by investigation, on getting specific intelligence inputs, ED on its own launched an operation. Chaudhary was traced and arrested under PMLA. "During his interrogation, it was discovered that he had also creat-

ed fake ID Cards of a ED officer and was also declaring himself as an ED employee in various KYC documents submitted to banks," it said.

Meanwhile, in a separate case, the agency on Saturday said it has attached assets worth Rs 24.13 lakh of an Andhra Pradesh-based trader who allegedly under-valued goods imported from China.

The ED has attached some residential premises located in the Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh and other immovable properties of M Hari Babu, the proprietor of Bhavani Diamond Tools on money laundering charges. Babu evaded customs duty to the tune of Rs 2 crore through Bhavani Diamond Tools, the agency added.



CHANGE OF NAME

I, Bibi Asma Fatma, W/o. Mohd. Kamil Hussain, R/o.B-28/7, Flat No.101, UGE Thoker No.7, Shaheen Bagh, New Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Asma Fatma for all future purposes.

PD(90255)A

PUBLIC NOTICE
Known to all that my client VIRENDRA PRASAD is purchasing property first floor, area 83.61 SQ. Mtrs., property Bearing No.485-B,Gali No.6, Out of Khalsa No. 600/92, Govind Puri, Kalkaji, New Delhi., from Shikha Bansal and mortgagee the same with Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd., and Shikha Bansal Kalkaji not having Originals 1. Death and Survivor Certificate of Kanwaljeet Singh, 2. succession certificate in favour of Gurd Deep Singh and RenuBala. It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim/right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 8 days of this publication.
AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760, Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
M:- 98990113918

United Textiles Limited
Regd. Office: 7th K.M. Stone,
Barwala Road, Hisar - 125001
(Haryana)
CIN: L17115HR1993PLC032092

Notice
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations & Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that the Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Monday, 13th February, 2023 at 11.00 AM at the Regd. Office of the Company to consider the Unaudited Quarterly Results for the Period Ended 31st December, 2022.
Further as per the Company's Code of Conduct for Prevention of Insider Trading, the trading window for dealing with securities of the Company will remain close from 31.12.2022 to 48 hours after the declaration of the Financial Results. The said information is also available on Company's Website www.unitedtextileslimited.com & also on the website of stock exchanges at www.bseindia.com.
For United Textiles Limited
(Vivek Aggarwal)
Whole Time Director
Dated 24.01.2023 (DIN 07079208)

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that (1) Mrs. Bidvandidevi Tiwari W/o Mr. Prabhakar Tiwari (2) Miss. Harshita Pathak D/o Mr. Satya Prakash Pathak are the owners of FREEHOLD RESIDENTIAL PLOT AREA MEASURING 100 SQ. YARDS i.e. 83.61 SQ. METERS, OUT OF KHASRA NO. 481, SITUATED IN THE VILLAGE OF SARFABAD PARGANA & TEHSIL DADR, DISTT. GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, (U.P.) from Sale Deed dated 13.06.2022 Vide Document No. 3671, is taking the financial assistance from Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Ltd. However, Original Sale Deed dated 29.03.2006 and Original Sale Deed dated 12.07.2019 has been lost and not available and a Complaint has lodged on dated 15.10.2022 with Dairy No. 076 for loss of document. If any Person having any type of claim / right / title / interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, disputes etc.
Lucem Legal LLP
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank Sector 2, Noida, UP - 201301
Contact # 0120-4269379

Indiabulls Enterprises Limited						
(CIN: U71290HR2019PLC077579)						
Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2022						
Particulars	(Rs. in Crores)					
	Quarter ended 31-Dec-22	Quarter ended 30-Sep-22	Quarter ended 31-Dec-21	9 months ended 31-Dec-22	9 months ended 31-Dec-21	Year ended 31-Mar-22
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
Total Income from operations	25.30	32.30	56.40	88.30	159.02	209.01
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax and Share of Profit / (Loss), Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	2.28	(0.98)	(18.00)	(12.95)	(63.22)	(94.85)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (after Tax and Share of Profit / (Loss) (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items))	1.51	(3.77)	(14.79)	(16.85)	(65.85)	(98.08)
Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	1.41	30.28	(16.28)	16.24	(69.68)	(102.68)
Equity share capital	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67
Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve) as shown in the audited Balance Sheet						226.83
Earnings per share (EPS) of Rs.2 each before extraordinary items from continuing operations						
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	0.08	(0.19)	(0.75)	(0.85)	(3.32)	(4.95)
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	0.08	(0.19)	(0.75)	(0.85)	(3.32)	(4.95)
Earnings per share (EPS) of Rs.2 each before extraordinary items from discontinued operations						
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	-	1.71	(0.07)	1.66	(0.19)	(0.25)
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	-	1.71	(0.07)	1.66	(0.19)	(0.25)
1. The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 28 January 2023.						
2. Key Standalone Financial Information: (Rs. in Crores)						
Particulars	Quarter ended 31-Dec-22	Quarter ended 30-Sep-22	Quarter ended 31-Dec-21	9 months ended 31-Dec-22	9 months ended 31-Dec-21	Year ended 31-Mar-22
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
Total Income	15.36	32.01	50.06	79.28	131.75	180.96
Profit/(Loss) before Tax	(3.94)	4.08	1.15	0.05	0.12	(13.84)
Net Profit/(Loss) after Tax	(3.94)	2.26	4.70	(2.22)	(1.02)	(15.04)
3. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly / nine months financial results filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / nine months Financial Results are available on the Company's website (https://www.indiabullsentprises.com) and on the website of BSE (https://www.bseindia.com) and NSE (https://www.nseindia.com).						
Registered Office: 5th Floor, Plot No. 108, IT Park, Udyog Vihar, Phase-1 Gurugram, Haryana 122016						
For and on behalf of Board of Directors						
Place : Gurugram						
Date : 28 January 2023						
Vijay Kumar Agarwal Executive Director & CFO						

Jaishankar: Atmanirbhar India sees huge transformation, set to be world's leading power

PTI ■ PUNE

India has seen a huge transformation in the last eight to nine years and the country will be a leading power after it becomes 'atmanirbhar' (self reliant), External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said here on Saturday.

In Pune to launch 'Bharat Marg', the Marathi translation of his book 'The India Way', the EAM said the aim was to get people to associate with the nation's foreign policy and not just listen to the "mandarins" (a term generally used for powerful bureaucrats).

He also spoke on China and the challenges the country faces with the ambitious northern neighbour as well as India's ties with Japan and the role in the Indo-Pacific.

"There are eight chapters. I wanted people to be associated with (the country's) foreign policy. I want to involve people from other states as well, not just Delhi. I have written this book in simple language and it is an easy read," he said.

The first chapter is about two nawabs losing Awadh to the British East India Company while playing chess,



the second chapter is about globalisation and the challenges it throws up, and the third chapter is about the "dogmas of Delhi that is traditionally defined and constrained," Jaishankar said.

"The fourth is about foreign policy. Some people allege we are sitting in ivory towers and analysing the world. I feel we should not leave foreign policy to the mandarins. We should also listen to the masses. We should consider the feelings of people while formulating our foreign policy," he said.

Speaking about China, the EAM said it is India's only neighbour which is a global power and may become a superpower in the years to come.

Tunes based on classical ragas to be flavour of beating retreat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Spectators at the Vijay Chowk and television viewers are in for a treat on Sunday when Indian tunes based on classical ragas will be the flavour of Beating the Retreat ceremony. Nearly 3,500 drones will also enthrall the viewers by engaging in some spectacular aerial show.

Giving details of the function, defence ministry officials said on Saturday President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Droupadi Murmu will grace the show along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and the three Services chiefs at the Vijay Chowk.

As many as 29 captivating and foot-tapping Indian tunes will be played by the music bands of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the State Police, and the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF).

The ceremony will also witness the country's biggest Drone Show, comprising of 3,500 indigenous drones. The magnificent drone show will light up the evening sky over the Raisina hills, weaving myriad forms of national figures and events through smooth synchronisation. It will depict the success of the start-up ecosystem, the technological prowess of the country's youth and pave the way for future path-breaking trends. The event will be organised by Botlabs Dynamics.



For the first time, a 3-D anamorphic projection will be organised during Beating Retreat Ceremony 2023 on the façade of North and South Block.

The Ceremony will begin with the massed band's 'Agniveer' tune which will be followed by the enthralling tunes like 'Almora', 'Kedar Nath', 'Sangam Dur', 'Queen of Satpura', 'Bhagirathi', 'Konkan Sundari' by Pipes and Drums band.

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

The Indian Army's band will play 'Shanknaad', 'Sher-e-Jawan', 'Bhupal', 'Agranee Bharat', 'Young India', 'Kadam

Kadam Badhaye Ja', 'Drummers Call', and 'Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon'.

The event will come to a close with the ever-popular tune of 'Sare Jahan se Acha'.

The principal conductor of the ceremony will be Flight Lieutenant Leimapokpam Rupachandra Singh. While the Army Band will be led by Subedar Major Digger Singh, the Naval and Air Force band commanders will be M Anthoni Raj and Warrant Officer Ashok Kumar. The conductor of the State Police and CAPF bands will be Assistant Sub Inspector Prem Singh.

The Buglers will perform under the leadership of Naib Subedar Santosh Kumar Pandey, and pipes and drums band will play under the instructions of Subedar Major Baswaraj Vagge.

'Beating the Retreat' ceremony at the Vijay Chowk on January 29th every year marks the culmination of the four-day-long Republic Day celebrations. It has emerged as an event of national pride when the Colours and Standards are paraded.

The ceremony traces its origins to the early 1950s when Major Roberts of the Indian Army indigenously developed the unique ceremony of display by the massed bands. It marks a centuries old military tradition, when the troops ceased fighting, sheathed their arms and withdrew from the battlefield and returned to the camps at sunset at the sounding of the Retreat. Colours and Standards are cased and flags lowered. The ceremony creates nostalgia for the times gone by.

7 killed in shooting at Jerusalem synagogue

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

At least seven people have been killed and three others injured in a shooting incident at a synagogue in the Neve Yaakov neighbourhood of Jerusalem, police and medics have said. The shooting took place on Friday evening in the northern part of East Jerusalem, they said. “The terrorist arrived by car at a building used as a synagogue in the neighbourhood in the northern part of East Jerusalem and opened fire,” police said.

Police located and shot the gunman. A handgun apparently used in the attack was seized, they said.

Seven people were shot and killed and at least three others were wounded in a terror shooting attack, The Times of Israel newspaper said, quoting police and medics.

Police said the terrorist — a resident of East Jerusalem — was shot dead after he exited the car and opened fire on the officers while trying to escape on foot, the report said.

Magen David Adom (MDA) rescue services said its medics declared five victims dead at the scene, and another two victims were declared dead at hospitals in Jerusalem, it added.

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speak-



Victims of a shooting attack are covered on the ground near a synagogue in Jerusalem on Friday

AP | PTI

ing after visiting the scene, called the attack “one of the most severe we have known in years.”

“Our hearts are with the families. We must act with determination and composure. I call on people not to take the law into their own hands,” he was quoted as saying in the report.

Defense Minister Yoav Galant was to soon hold a special situation assessment meeting with the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff, the head of Israel’s internal security agency Shin Bet, and other security officials, his office said.

Biden calls Israeli PM after terrorist attack in Jerusalem

Washington: US President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, condemning what he called a “horrific terrorist attack” outside a Jerusalem synagogue in which a Palestinian gunman killed at least seven people.

President Biden, who called Netanyahu on Friday, also offered support to Israel’s government and people following the attack.

Palestinian teen wounds 2, day after 7 killed in Jerusalem

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A Palestinian attacker in his early teens opened fire in east Jerusalem on Saturday, wounding two people, officials said, a day after another assailant killed seven outside a synagogue in the deadliest attack in the city since 2008.

The shooting in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan in east Jerusalem, near the historic Old City, wounded a father and son, ages 47 and 23, paramedics said. Both were fully conscious and in moderate to serious condition in the hospital, the medics added.

Police said they shot and overpowered the 13-year-old attacker, wounding him. He was taken to a hospital, they said, and there was no further word on his condition. Video showed police escorting a wounded young man, wearing nothing but underwear, away from the scene and onto a stretcher.

Authorities taped off the street and emergency vehicles and security forces swarmed the area as helicopters whirled overhead.

Saturday’s events — just a day before US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was set to arrive in the region — raised the possibility of even greater conflagration in one of the bloodiest months in Israel and the occupied West Bank in several years.

On Friday, a Palestinian gunman killed at least seven people, including a 70-year-old woman, in a Jewish settlement in east Jerusalem, an area captured by Israel in 1967 and later annexed in a move not internationally recognized.

The attacks pose pivotal test for Israel’s new far-right government.

Its firebrand minister of national security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, has presented himself as an enforcer of law and order and grabbed headlines for his promises to take even stronger action against the Palestinians.

The Israeli army said it had deployed another battalion to the West Bank on Saturday, adding hundreds more troops to a presence already on heightened alert in the occupied territory.

Prime Minister Benjamin said he would convene his Security Cabinet on Saturday night, after the end of the sabbath, to discuss a further response to the attack near the synagogue.

Security forces launched a crackdown early Saturday, fanning out into the neighbourhood of the 21-year-old Palestinian gunman, who was shot and killed at the scene. Police arrested 42 of his family members and neighbours for questioning in the At-Tur neighbourhood in east Jerusalem.

‘3 dead, 4 hurt in California shooting’



AP ■ BEVERLY CREST

At least three people were killed and four others were wounded in a shooting in California area early on Saturday morning.

Sgt. Frank Preciado of the Los Angeles Police Department confirmed the shooting happened just after 2:30 am in Beverly Crest, an upscale Los Angeles neighbourhood.

Of the seven people who were shot, four were standing outside. The three who were killed were in a vehicle.

Their identities were not released. Those who were injured were taken to a hospital and are in critical condition.

Preciado said he did not have information on what led up to the shooting, or if it occurred at a residence.

This is the fourth mass shooting in California this month.

The shooting comes a week after a massacre at a dance hall in a Los Angeles suburb left 11 dead and nine wounded and only days after a gunman opened fire on a pair of mushroom farms south of San Francisco on Monday, fatally shooting seven people and wounding one.

The killings have dealt a blow to the state, which has some of the nation’s toughest firearm laws and lowest rates of gun deaths.

Trump kicks off 2024 bid with events in early voting States

AP ■ COLUMBIA



Former President Donald Trump is set to kick off his 2024 White House bid on Saturday with visits to a pair of early voting states, his first campaign events since launching his bid more than two months ago.

Trump will be the keynote speaker at the New Hampshire GOP’s annual meeting before travelling to Columbia, South Carolina, where he is set to unveil his leadership team at the Statehouse.

The states hold two of the

party’s first three nominating contests, giving them enormous power in selecting its nominee.

Trump and his allies hope the events will offer a show of force behind the former president after a sluggish start to his

Mali defends military ties with Russia

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Mali’s Foreign Minister defended the military government’s cooperation with Russia on Friday and rejected three options proposed by the UN chief to reconfigure the UN peacekeeping force in the West African country where Al-Qaeda and Islamic State extremist groups are driving insecurity.

Abdoulaye Diop told the UN Security Council that security is the country’s top priority and Mali will not continue to justify its partnership with Russia, which is providing training and equipment to the military. He did not mention Russia’s Wagner Group, the private military contractor with ties to the Kremlin.

But Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ internal review released this week of the 17,500-strong UN mission, known as MINUSMA, noted that Mali’s longstanding security partnership with France and others deteriorated over concerns about Wagner Group personnel operating in support of the Malian armed forces, which he said Russian officials have publicly acknowledged.

PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz returns to Pakistan after almost 4-month stay in UK

PTI ■ LAHORE

Senior Vice President of the PML-N Maryam Nawaz returned to Pakistan on Saturday to strengthen her party ahead of the crucial assembly elections, nearly four months after she flew to London to meet his father and former premier Nawaz Sharif.

Maryam, who has been appointed as the party’s chief

organisier, landed at Allama Iqbal International Airport here from Abu Dhabi after a one-hour delay in her flight due to a medical emergency on the plane. “Long live Pakistan,” she tweeted after her return to Pakistan.

She left Pakistan for London in October last year after she was acquitted in a corruption case. At the time, she had said she was “eager” to see



her father Nawaz, whom she hadn’t met since 2019.

The 49-year-old senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader, on her return

to Pakistan, told Geo News that she would utilise all her energy to strengthen the party.

Earlier, party spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb said Marriyum was returning to begin the “reorganisation of the party”. Maryam is likely to have a more significant role in the political happenings of the country after her appointment as the PML-N’s chief organisier earlier this month.

PML-N supremo Nawaz has authorised Maryam, along with Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, to lead rallies and hold meetings ahead of the upcoming elections in Punjab.

Her elevation in the party is a clear message from Nawaz to the camp led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif that she would succeed him, a PML-N leader from Punjab told the Dawn newspaper.

Myanmar’s military Government enacts new political party law

AP ■ BANGKOK

Myanmar’s military-controlled government has enacted a new law on registration of political parties that will make it difficult for opposition groups to mount a serious challenge to army-backed candidates in a general election set to take place later this year.

The new electoral law, published Friday in the state-run Myanma Alinn newspaper, sets minimum funding and membership levels for parties participating in the polls.

It also bans participation by parties or candidates deemed unlawful or linked to organizations declared by the military government to be terrorist groups.

The army seized power in February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, arresting her and top members of her governing

National League for Democracy party, which had won a landslide victory for a second term in a November 2020 general election.

The security forces suppressed widespread opposition to the military takeover with lethal force, killing almost 2,900 civilians and arresting thousands more people who engaged in nonviolent protests. The savage crackdown triggered armed resistance in much of the country.

The military government deemed major organizations opposed to army rule to be “terrorist” groups, and communication with them was declared illegal.

The new law gives parties two months to re-register with the Union Election Commission and says those that do not will be “automatically invalidated” and considered dissolved.

Deeply pained to see horrific video of beating, death of African American youth: Biden

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has said that he is outraged and deeply pained to see the horrific video of the beating of African American youth Tyre Nichols in Memphis city of Tennessee that ultimately resulted in his death earlier this month.

The release of the graphic video by the Memphis police Friday evening has increased social tension across the country. Protests in New York City were largely peaceful despite the three arrests and some minor clashes between police and protesters in the city.

The White House had a call with Mayors of several cities including those from Atlanta, Aftab Pureval, and the Cleveland Mayor Justin Morris Bibb to calm down tensions.

“Like so many, I was outraged and deeply pained to see the horrific video of the beat-



ing that resulted in Tyre Nichols’ death. It is yet another painful reminder of the profound fear and trauma, the pain, and the exhaustion that Black and Brown Americans experience every single day,” Biden said on Friday, soon after the video was released.

According to The New York Times, videos of the January 7 incident show Memphis police kicking and beating Tyre Nichols, 29, as he begs them to stop. He was on his way home on January 7, when police pulled him over for alleged reckless driving.

Czechs select successor to Zeman in Prez runoff

AP ■ PRAGUE

Czech voters were casting ballots on the second day of a presidential runoff election on Saturday, picking a successor to Milos Zeman in the largely ceremonial post.

Retired army Gen. Petr Pavel and populist billionaire Andrej Babis, advanced to a second round of voting because none of the eight initial candidates received an absolute majority in the first round two weeks ago.

The polls favour Pavel, an independent candidate who came a narrow first in the opening round. Three other candidates pledged their support for Pavel ahead of the voting that started Friday.

Pavel, 61, a former chairman of NATO’s military committee, is a political newcomer. He has fully endorsed the country’s military and humanitarian support for Ukraine in its fight against Russia.

Babis, 68, is a former prime minister whose centrist ANO (YES) movement ended up in opposition after losing the 2021 general election. He is supported by Zeman, with whom he shares eurosceptic views and the habit of using anti-migrant rhetoric.

Zeman was the first president elected by popular vote. His second and final five-year term expires in March. Lawmakers elected the previous two presidents, Vaclav Havel and Vaclav Klaus.

2 dead, 2 missing as rain pounds New Zealand’s largest city

Wellington: Police said Saturday that two people had died and two more were missing as record levels of rainfall pounded New Zealand’s largest city, causing widespread disruption. Authorities declared a state of emergency for the Auckland region and the nation’s new Prime Minister, Chris Hipkins, flew to the city on a military plane to assess the damage. Hipkins was sworn in to the top job on Wednesday after Jacinda Ardern resigned.

Hipkins said the rain had hit the city fast. “Aucklanders need to brace for the fact there could be more rain,” he said. Earlier, hundreds of people were stranded at Auckland Airport overnight after the airport stopped all flights and parts of the terminal were flooded

Climate activists block main road into Netherlands city

AP ■ THE HAGUE

Hundreds of climate activists blocked one of the main roads into The Hague on Saturday, defying attempts to prevent their protest that have sparked concerns about restrictions on the right to demonstrate in the Netherlands.

The protesters, many waving coloured flags with the symbol of environmental group Extinction Rebellion and one holding a sign saying, in Dutch, “This is a dead end road,” gathered on the A12 road near the temporary home of the Dutch parliament. Police and hundreds more demonstrators looked on.

Protesters who ignored police orders to leave the road were picked up and carried away one by one to waiting buses and driven away.

Hours after the demon-



for the group said the order was a way of “taking away the right of climate activists to demonstrate.”

The arrests and exclusion order sparked unrest among activists who argue it infringes their right to peaceful protest.

Extinction Rebellion spokesperson Anne Kervers said the large number of participants “shows what society thinks of fossil fuel subsidies and of the intimidation and criminalisation of nonviolent climate activism.”

Prosecutors defended their action, saying the suspects were calling for supporters to take part in the “dangerous and disruptive blockade” of the road.

“Calling for a criminal offense — such as blocking a public road — amounts to sedition,” prosecutors said in a statement.

‘Election Budget’ to focus on job creation, farm sector & rural growth

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is going to present the last full budget of the second term of the Narendra Modi government in Parliament on February 1.

As this will be the last full budget of the Modi government before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, it is being said that the election glimpse will be apparent in the budget.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and other opposition parties are expected to make the budget an issue in the elections.

Looking at the preparations and record of the government regarding the budget, it is being said that the Modi government can majorly increase the total amount allocated to welfare schemes.

The BJP government,

which has been facing constant attacks from the opposition parties on the issue of unemployment, will be focusing on increasing employment opportunities in its upcoming budget.

More emphasis will be placed on increasing employment opportunities in urban and rural areas.

For this, along with basic infrastructure, a special announcement can be made for small and medium industries.

The funds allocated for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the biggest source of employment in rural areas, will also be increased this year.

Along with farming, special announcements for agriculture and other areas related to it are expected.

The government will increase its expenditure to ensure that along with the



increase in employment in rural areas, the income of the people also increases, which will boost the economy.

The government can make important announcements in the budget to provide relief to the people from inflation.

Giving great relief to the taxpayers, along with announcing a reduction in income tax rates, the government can make

Why’s insurance industry largely silent on 100% FDI demand?

FIANS ■ CHENNAI

Strangely not much of noise is being heard from the Indian insurance sector on hiking the foreign direct investment (FDI) to 100 per cent from the current 74 per cent as their budget wishlist.

In the past, the sector’s top executives would make a high-decibel pitch for their demand to increase the FDI limit.

Earlier, the life insurance industry had advocated that the increase in FDI from 26 per cent to 74 per cent would bring in an additional capital of Rs 50,000 crore.

Incidentally, not many foreign partners of Indian insurance joint ventures have increased their stakes to the permissible 74 per cent and the touted amount has not materialised.

"Among the host of

expectations from the budget, the proposal to increase the FDI limit to 100 per cent in insurance is unlikely to be introduced in the upcoming Budget, especially since the FDI limit has just been recently increased to 74 per cent," Anup Rau, MD and CEO, Future Generali India Insurance on the pre-budget expectations said.

He said the industry should nevertheless have this conversation with the policy makers on allowing 100 per cent FDI. According to him, one of the challenges for the global insurers is to find a suitable local partner.

"With over 60 insurers between life and general insurance and a large number of them joint ventures, there is really an acute shortage of local partners, who either have the ability or the inclination to get into this space," Rau said.



"In my view, this is not even a demand for the sector participants. The sector currently dominated by the domestic majority players, why would they want 100 per cent FDI," Avinash Singh, Senior Research Analyst, Emkay Global Financial Services, told IANS.

Singh noted: "And practically speaking, even 74 per cent has been a non-starter,

largely. The ones where any foreign investor would be interested in owning majority are not available as the domestic promoter wouldn't exit or go in minority."

He added: "Even the valuation of these entities are demanding. And where FDI of above 50 per cent is welcome are the struggling names where no foreign investor would be interested."

Adani rules out changes in price, dates of FPO; confident of share sales going through

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani's group on Saturday ruled out any changes in price or the dates of the Rs 20,000 crore follow-on share sale at the conglomerate's flagship firm despite its stocks being hammered after a scathing report by a US short seller.

"Adani Enterprises Limited's further public offer (FPO) is going as per schedule and the announced price band. There is no change in either the schedule of the issue price," a group spokesperson said.

The FPO got subscribed just one per cent on the opening day on Friday. Against an offer of 4.55 crore shares of Adani Enterprises Ltd, only 4.7 lakh shares were subscribed, according to information available from the BSE.

Adani Enterprises fell

almost 20 per cent to below the offer price of its secondary sale as all the seven listed companies of the conglomerate took a beating in the aftermath of Hindenburg Research alleging that the group was "engaged in a brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades".

The Group has dismissed the report as malicious and bogus aimed at torpedoing the FPO.

Adani Enterprises is selling shares in a price band of Rs 3,112 to Rs 3,276. On Friday, its share price closed at Rs 2,762.15 on the BSE.

"All our stakeholders including bankers and investors have full faith in the FPO. We are extremely confident about the success of the FPO," the spokesperson added.

The FPO closes on January 31.

On Wednesday, Adani

Enterprises raised Rs 5,985 crore from anchor investors.

The company allotted 1.82 crore equity shares to 33 funds at Rs 3,276 apiece, taking the transaction size to Rs 5,985 crore, according to a circular uploaded on the BSE website.

Foreign investors who picked up the shares included Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, BNP Paribas Arbitrage, Societe Generale, Goldman Sachs Investment (Mauritius) Ltd, Morgan Stanley Asia (Singapore) Pte, Nomura Singapore Ltd and Citigroup Global Markets Mauritius.

A slew of domestic institutional investors, including LIC, SBI Life Insurance Company, HDFC Life Insurance Company and State Bank Of India Employees Pension Fund, also participated in the anchor book.

Out of the Rs 20,000-crore



proceeds from the FPO, Rs 10,869 crore will be used for green hydrogen projects, work at the existing airports and construction of a greenfield expressway.

An amount of Rs 4,165 crore will be utilised for repayment of debt taken by its airports, road and solar project subsidiaries.

Adani Enterprises is India's largest listed business incubator and breeds businesses in four core industry sectors -- energy and utility, transportation and logistics, consumer, and primary industry.

The current business portfolio includes green hydrogen ecosystem, data centres, airports, digital, mining, defence and industrial manufacturing.

Index provider MSCI seeks feedback on Adani Group over Hindenburg report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Index provider MSCI on Saturday said it has sought feedback on Adani group securities after a report by US-based investment research firm Hindenburg alleged stock manipulation and accounting fraud by the conglomerate.

The index provider said it is aware of the reports recently published regarding the Adani group and associated securities.

"MSCI is closely monitoring publicly available information regarding the situation and the factors that may impact the eligibility of those relevant securities for the

MSCI Global Investable Market Indexes," it said in a statement.

The index provider said it welcomes timely feedback from market participants on these issues.

At present, there are eight Adani group & associates companies which are part of MSCI Standard Index.

Market experts believe any adverse feedback may lead to a reduction in weightage or even exclusion of Adani stocks from the MSCI index.

This might further increase the selling pressure faced by Adani group stocks, which took a beating for the past two trading sessions and

lost more than Rs 4.17 lakh crore in the combined market valuation of listed firms.

Market experts believe that MSCI will not take any action until the feedback process is completed.

On Wednesday, Hindenburg, which specialises in activist short-selling, made allegations of stock manipulation and accounting fraud against Adani Group.

The report was released just before Adani group's flagship company, Adani Enterprises' Rs 20,000 crore share offering opened to investors. The disclosure led to shares of Adani Group took a beating on the stock exchanges.

US industry urges FM to rationalise, simplify direct and indirect taxes in India

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Ahead of the annual budget presentation, an India-centric top US strategic and business advocacy group has urged Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to simplify and rationalise direct and indirect taxation system in India, a move it believes would increase the confidence of global investors and yield greater foreign direct investment.

Direct taxes can

be in the form of income tax, capital gains tax or securities transaction tax, while indirect taxes such as GST, Customs Duty or VAT are levied on all end-consumers to buy any goods or services.

"Rationalise corporate tax rates for foreign companies," said the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) in its submission to the finance ministry ahead of the annual budget presentations on February 1. It said that the rate for foreign companies, including banks be reduced to bring parity and sought to rationalise tax for

new manufacturing companies.

Urging India to simplify capital gain tax reforms, USISPF sought harmonising holding periods and rates of different instruments.

"Reiterate India's commitment to the global tax deal," it said and urged the Union Finance Minister to extend the concessional tax regime to Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) from investment in securities. USISPF has also suggested tax incentives to specific sectors like renewable energy and R&D investment in the health sector.

Among the Forum's recommendations include advocating for a stable and predictable tax environment, improving the ease of doing business environment, ratio-

nalisation of the cost of doing business, and rationalisation of tax rates and tariffs.

On indirect taxes, the USISPF sought clarification on customs duty exemptions provided to oil and natural gas companies, reduction in customs duty rates for x-ray



machines from 10 per cent to 7.5 per cent and providing customs duty exemption on all items imported by specified research and development units.

USISPF urged the finance minister to roll back the customs duty increase on nutritional products considering the importance and significance of the product and encourage the availability of scientifically designed nutritional food in India.

LG Electronics Q4 operating profit collapses on slumping demand, rising cost

FIANS ■ SEOUL

LG Electronics said its operating profit for the fourth quarter nosedived more than 90 per cent on a drop in demand for home appliances and rising promotion cost amid global macroeconomic woes.

The tech firm said operating income for the three months ending in December fell 90.7 per cent on-year to 69.3 billion won (US\$56.2 million), 74.8 percent lower than the average estimate by Yonhap Infomax, the financial data firm of Yonhap News Agency.

It reported a net loss of 212.4 billion won for the October-December period, turning from a profit of 21.3 billion won a year earlier.


Sales increased 5.2 per cent to 21.85 trillion won.

The company said pan-



demically-driven pent-up demand for home appliances, including TVs, has lost steam, and aggressive rate hikes in major economies to tamp down inflation have significantly weakened consumer spending power.

Global TV shipments are estimated to have dropped 3.9 percent on-year to a decade low of 202 million units last year, according to industry tracker TrendForce.



ORISSA SPONGE IRON & STEEL LIMITED

(Formerly Orissa Sponge Iron Limited)

(An ISO 9001 & 14001 Certified Company)

CIN: L27102OR1979PLC000819

Regd. Office: OSIL House, Gangadhar Meher Marg, Kiliti Bhubaneswar – 751024

Corporate Office: A-201, First Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-1, New Delhi - 110 020

Site: P.O. Palaspanga, Dist. Keonjhar – 758 031, Odisha

E-Mail: corporate@orissasponge.com; Website: www.orissasponge.com; Tel: +91 11-43742000

POSTAL BALLOT NOTICE AND E-VOTING INFORMATION

The members of "Orissa Sponge Iron and Steel Limited" ("the Company") are hereby informed that in compliance with the provisions of Section 108 and 110 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act") read with Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, read with General Circular No. 14/2020 dated April 08, 2020, 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, 22/2020 dated June 15, 2020, 33/2020 dated September 28, 2020, 39/2020 dated December 31, 2020, 10/2021 dated June 23, 2021 and 20/2021 dated December 08, 2021, 3/2022 dated May 05, 2022 and 11/2022 dated December 28, 2022 issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA Circulars") and Regulation 44 and 47 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("Listing Regulations") and other applicable provisions including any statutory modifications or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force and as amended from time to time, a Postal Ballot Notice ("Notice"), seeking consent of the members for approval of Material Related Party Transaction has been sent electronically to the members whose e-mail address are registered with the Depository Participants/ Registrar & Share Transfer agent i.e. Skyline Financial Service Private Limited ("RTA"), as on Friday, January 27, 2023 (Cut-off Date). The dispatch of the said notice through e-mails has been completed on Saturday, January 28, 2023.

The Postal Ballot Notice ("Notice") is available on the website of the Company at www.orissasponge.com and on the website of the National Securities Depository Limited ("NSDL") at www.evoting.nsdl.com.

Members holding shares either in physical form or dematerialized form, as on the Cut-off date i.e., Friday, January 27, 2023, may cast their vote electronically on the business item set out in the notice of the Postal Ballot dated Wednesday, January 25, 2023, through electronic voting system (remote e-voting) of National Securities Depository Limited ("NSDL").

The members are further informed that:

a) The special business set out in the notice of the Postal Ballot is to be transacted through voting by electronic means.

b) The remote e-voting begins at 9:00 a.m. (IST) on Monday, January 30, 2023.

c) The remote e-voting ends at 5:00 p.m. (IST) on Tuesday, February 28, 2023.

d) The cut-off date for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means is Friday, January 27, 2023.

e) The members may note that i) the remote e-voting module shall be disabled for voting and the voting by electronic means shall not be allowed after the date and time mentioned under point 'c' above; and ii) once the vote on resolution cast by a member, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently;

f) The manner of remote e-voting for the members holding shares in physical mode or dematerialized mode or who have not registered their email address with the Company/Depository Participant, is provided in the notice of the Postal Ballot as available on the Company's website www.orissasponge.com and NSDL's website www.evoting.nsdl.com.

g) Manner of registering/ updating email address:

i. Members holding shares in physical mode, are requested to get their email ids registered by writing to the RTA at compliances@skylineirta.com or to the Company at corporate@orissasponge.com along with signed request letter mentioning the name and address of the Member, scanned copy of the share certificate (front and back), self-attested copy of the PAN card, and self-attested copy of Address proof.

ii. In case shares are held in demat mode, members are requested to register / update their e-mail addresses with the relevant Depository Participant(s)

iii. Alternatively, members may send a request to evoting@nsdl.co.in for procuring user id and password for e-voting by providing above mentioned documents. The members may also refer the said Notice.

h) In case of any queries, the members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for shareholders and e-voting user manual for Shareholders available at the download section of www.evoting.nsdl.com or call on toll free no.: 1800 1020 990 and 1800 22 44 30 or send a request to Pallavi Mhatre, Senior Manager, NSDL at evoting@nsdl.co.in. Further, for any grievance regarding e-voting the members may also write to Mr. Darpan Sharma at email Id: corporate@orissasponge.com

i) The Company has appointed Ms. Riya Luthra, Practicing Company Secretary (Membership No. ACS 53802, COP 24472), Managing Partner of M/s. MARG & Associates, Company Secretaries, to act as the Scrutinizer for conducting the Postal Ballot, including e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner. The Scrutinizer will submit her report to the Chairman / any other Director / person as may be authorized by the Chairman, on or before Thursday, March 02, 2023. The results of the voting conducted by Postal Ballot along with Scrutinizer's Report will be made available on the website of the Company at www.orissasponge.com and on the website of NSDL at www.evoting.nsdl.com. Additionally, the results will also be displayed at the Registered Office of the Company.

For Orissa Sponge Iron and Steel Limited


Sd/-

Darpan Sharma

Company Secretary and Compliance Officer

Place: New Delhi

Date: January 29, 2023



UJVNL Limited

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

Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508

CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvnl.com

Latter No: 83

Date: 27/01/2023

Office of the Executive Engineer (P&C) Ganga Bhawan, Dehradun invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

Tender No.06/EE(P&C)/2022-23.

Name of Supply- Procurement of different Tyres & Tubes for various Power House/Sites vehicles of UJVNL Ltd.

Estimated cost : Rs.689836.00 (Excluding Tax)


Date of availability of bid document on website : 27.01.2023 from 16:00 hrs.

Last date for submission of bids on website: 18.02.2023 upto 17.00 hrs

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "<https://uktenders.gov.in>"

Executive Engineer (P&C)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"



कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियंता, अनुसूचण खण्ड, उत्तराखण्ड

उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान

सेन नं.-1, तरुण विहार, मोहरोवाला रोड, देहरादून-248001

Phone/Fax No.: 0135-2671940, E-mail: eeumduja@rediffmail.com, eeumduja-uk@nic.in

पत्रांक: 4865/अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना/2022-23

दिनांक: 27.01.2023

अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना

मुख्य महाप्रबन्धक, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, देहरादून की ओर से जलजीवन मिशन कार्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित पेयजल योजनाओं में द्वितीय चरण के कार्यों हेतु उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान/उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों/फर्मों से मुहरबंद निविदाएं दिनांक 13.02.2023 की सायं 03.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती हैं, जो उसी दिन सायं 04.00 बजे उपस्थित निविदादाताओं अथवा उनके प्रतिनिधियों के समुच्च अद्योहस्ताक्षरी अथवा मनोनीत अधिकारी द्वारा कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियंता, अनुसूचण खण्ड, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, देहरादून में खोली जाएगी, निविदा प्रपत्र किसी भी कार्य दिवस में (राजकीय/सार्वजनिक अवकाश को छोड़कर) निधिरित शुल्क जमा कर दिनांक 10.02.2023 सायं 5.00 बजे तक अद्योहस्ताक्षरी कार्यालय से प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं।

निविदा क्र.सं.	विकास खण्ड	कार्य विवरण	बरोहर धनराशि (रु.में)	निविदा का मूल्य (रु.में)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	ठेकेदार की श्रेणी
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	कालसी	लखवाड पेयजल योजना में स्रोत संवर्धन, सतही जलाशय निर्माण, पाइप लाइन बिछाने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य।	33600.00	₹1500 +GST	04 माह	डी. एवं उच्चतर

नोट-निविदा से सम्बन्धित समस्त जानकारी एवं शर्तें विभागीय नोटिस बोर्ड पर बरपा है।

“जल संचय-जीवन संचय”

सरोजेंद्र पाल

अधिशासी अभियंता

PUBLIC NOTICE

Before the Regional Director, Ministry of Corporate Affairs Northern Region

In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013, Section 14 of Companies Act, 2013 and rule 41 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014

AND

In the matter of M/s Nath Brothers Exim International Limited (Cin: U52110DL1971PLC005626) having its registered office at 42/1, Hanuman Road, New Delhi - 110 001, Applicant

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Company intending to make an application to the Central Government under section 14 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with aforesaid rules and is desirous of converting into a Private Limited Company in terms of the Special Resolution passed at the Extra Ordinary General Meeting held on Tuesday, the 27th day of December, 2022, at 11.00 A.M. to enable the Company to give effect for such conversion. Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change / status of the Company may deliver or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his interest and grounds of opposition to the concerned Regional Director (Northern Region), Address: B-2, Wing 2nd Floor, Pt. Deendayal Aniyodaya Bhawan, 2nd Floor, CGO Complex, New Delhi - 110 003, within fourteen days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to Nath Brothers Exim International Limited at its registered office at the address mentioned below.

For and on behalf of Nath Brothers Exim International Limited (Vishwa Nath)

Date: 29.01.2023 Managing Director

Place: New Delhi Din: 00829358

Regd. Office: 42/1, Hanuman Road, New Delhi - 110 001

NTPC net profit up nearly 5 pc at ₹4,854 cr in Q3

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned power giant NTPC on Saturday reported a nearly 5 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 4,854.36 crore for the December quarter, mainly due to higher revenue.

The company's consolidated net profit was Rs 4,626.11 crore in the quarter ended December 31, 2021, as per a BSE filing.

The total income rose to Rs 44,989.21 crore in the quarter from Rs 33,783.62 crore in the year-ago period.

The Board of Directors also decided to pay an interim dividend at the rate of 42.50 per cent (Rs 4.25 per share) on the face value of paid-up equity shares of Rs 10 each for the financial year 2022-23.

The average power tariff of the company during April-December 2022 stood at Rs 4.96 per unit compared to Rs 3.95 per unit a year ago.

The plant load factor (PLF) or capacity utilisation of coal-based thermal power plants climbed to 68.85 per cent in the third quarter from 67.72 per cent.

The imported coal supply rose to 1.57 MMT in the quarter from 0.52 MMT in the same period a year ago.

The domestic coal supply dipped to 52.45 MMT from 54.96 MMT. The coal production from captive mines stood at 5.35 MMT in the quarter against 4 MMT in the year-ago period.

The total installed capacity of the NTPC Group (including JVs and subsidiaries) stood at 70,884 MW as on December 31, 2022.

A U S T R A L I A N O P E N

Aryna wins 1st Grand Slam title

AP ■ MELBOURNE

One point away from her first Grand Slam title, Aryna Sabalenka faulted. And then she faulted again. She grimaced. She yelled and turned her back to the court. She wiggled her shoulders and exhaled.

Clearly, this business of winning the Australian Open was not bound to happen without a bit of a struggle Saturday night. Sabalenka knew deep inside that would be the case. She also knew that all of the effort she put in, to overcome self-doubt and those dreaded double-faults, had to pay off eventually. Just had to.

And so, as she wasted a second match point by flubbing a forehand, and a third by again missing another, Sabalenka did her best to stay calm, something she used to find quite difficult. She hung in there until a fourth chance to close out Elena Rybakina presented itself — and this time, Sabalenka saw a forehand from her similarly powerful foe sail long. That was that. The championship belonged to Sabalenka via a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 comeback victory over Wimbledon winner Rybakina.

“The last game, yeah, of

course, I was a little bit nervous. I (kept) telling myself, like, ‘Nobody tells you that it’s going to be easy.’ You just have to work for it, work for it, ‘til the last point,” said Sabalenka, a 24-year-old from Belarus who is now 11-0 with two titles in 2023 and will rise to No. 2 in the WTA rankings on Monday. “I’m super happy that I was able to handle all those emotions,” she said, “and win this one.”

The only set she has dropped all season was the opener on Saturday against Rybakina, who eliminated No. 1 Iga Swiatek in the fourth round.

It was telling that Sabalenka’s remarks during the post-match ceremony were directed at her coach, Anton Dubrov, and her fitness trainer, Jason Stacy — she referred to them as “the craziest team on tour.”

“We’ve been through a lot of, I would say, downs last year,” said Sabalenka, who was appearing in her first major final and had been 0-3 in Slam semifinals until this week. “We worked so hard and you guys deserve this trophy. It’s more about you than it’s about me.”

Well, she had a lot to do with it, of course. Those serves



that produced 17 aces, helping erase the sting of seven double-faults. Those hammered groundstrokes and relentlessly aggressive style that produced 51 winners, 20 more than Rybakina’s total. And, despite her go-for-broke shotmaking,

somehow Sabalenka limited her unforced error count to 28. One more key statistic: Sabalenka managed to accrue 13 break points, converting three, including the one at 4-3 in the last set that put her ahead for good.

She played really well today,” said Rybakina, who has lost all four matches she’s played against Sabalenka, all in three sets. “She was strong mentally, physically.”

While the latter has long been a hallmark of her game,

even Sabalenka acknowledges that the first has been an issue.

Her most glowing strength was also her most glaring shortfall: her serve. Capable of delivering aces, she also had a well-known problem with double-faulting, leading the tour in

that category last year with nearly 400, including matches with more than 20.

After much prodding from her group, she agreed to undergo an overhaul of her mechanics last August. That, along with a commitment to trying to keep her emotions in check — she used to work with a sports psychologist but no longer, saying she relies on herself now — is really paying off.

“She didn’t have great serve last year, but now she was super strong and she served well,” said Rybakina, a 23-year-old who represents Kazakhstan. “For sure, I respect that. I know how much work it takes.”

With seagulls squawking loudly while flying overhead at Rod Laver Arena, Rybakina and Sabalenka traded serious racket swings for nearly 2 1/2 hours.

The serves were big. So big. Rybakina’s fastest arrived at 121 mph (195 kph), Sabalenka’s at 119 mph (192 kph).

The points were over quickly. So quickly: Seven of the first 13 were aces.

Sabalenka had been broken just six times in 55 service games through the course of these two weeks, but Rybakina did it twice in the opening set. And never again.

Sabalenka resolved to take the initiative even more, and the payoff for her high-risk, high-reward attitude was too much for Rybakina to withstand over the last two sets.

Sabalenka said ahead of time that she expected to feel some jitters. Which makes perfect sense for anyone: This was the most important match of her career.

At the end, when it mattered more than ever, Sabalenka was able to steady herself. After the final point, she dropped to her back on the court and stayed down for a bit, covering her face as her eyes welled with tears.

Quite a difference from a year ago at Melbourne Park, when Sabalenka departed after 15 double-faults in a fourth-round loss.

“I really feel right now that I really needed those tough losses to kind of understand myself a little bit better. It was like a preparation for me,” Sabalenka said at her post-match news conference, her new trophy nearby and a glass of bubbly in her hand. “I actually feel happy that I lost those matches, so right now I can be a different player and just a different Aryna, you know?”

Australian Open lookaheads:

Djokovic meets Tsitsipas in final

AP ■ MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

There will be a lot on the line for both players when Novak Djokovic meets Stefanos Tsitsipas in the Australian Open men’s final. Djokovic is trying to win a record-extending 10th title at Melbourne Park and a 22nd Grand Slam trophy overall to pull even with Rafael Nadal for the men’s mark. It is his 33rd major final. Tsitsipas seeks his first Grand Slam title. And the winner will move up to No. 1 in the ATP rankings. Djokovic, a 35-year-old from Serbia, takes a 27-match Australian Open winning streak into the final, an unbeaten run that was put on pause a year ago when he was deported from the country because he was not vaccinated against COVID-19. Tsitsipas, a 24-year-old from Greece, will be appearing in his second major final after losing to Djokovic in the 2021 French Open title match. Djokovic leads their head-to-head series 10-2, including nine consecutive victories. In the women’s doubles final, Barbora Krejickova and Katerina Siniakova meet Shuko Aoyama and Ena Shibahara.



SATURDAY’S KEY RESULTS

Women’s Singles Final: No. 5 Aryna Sabalenka beat No. 22 Elena Rybakina 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Men’s Doubles Final: Rinky Hijikata and Jason Kubler beat Hugo Nys and Jan Zielinski 6-4, 7-6 (4).

Junior Girls Singles Final: No. 9 Alina Korneeva beat No.

7 Mirra Andreeva 6-7 (2), 6-4, 7-5.

Junior Boys Singles Final: No. 3 Alexander Blockx beat Learner Tien 6-1, 2-6, 7-6 (9).

Junior Girls Doubles Final: Renata Jamrichova and Federica Urgesi beat Hayu Kinoshita and Sara Saito 7-6 (5), 1-6, 10-7.

Junior Boys Doubles Final:

Learner Tien and Cooper Williams beat Alexander Blockx and Joao Fonseca 6-4, 6-4.

Women’s Singles Wheelchair Final: No. 1 Diede de Groot beat No. 2 Yui Kamiji 0-6, 6-2, 6-2.

Quad Singles Wheelchair Final: No. 2 Sam Schroder beat No. 1 Niels Vink 6-2, 7-5.

Men’s Singles Wheelchair Final: No. 1 Alfie Hewett beat No. 3 Tokito Oda 6-3, 6-1.

Aussies Hijikata, Kubler win

Australian Open men’s doubles

AP ■ MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The Australian pair of Rinky Hijikata and Jason Kubler defeated Hugo Nys and Jan Zielinski 6-4, 7-6 (4) to win the men’s doubles title at the Australian Open on Saturday.

It was the first Grand Slam title for both Hijikata and Kubler — the third Australian team to win a men’s doubles title in the last five Grand Slams.

The Australians entered the tournament playing for the first time as a team.

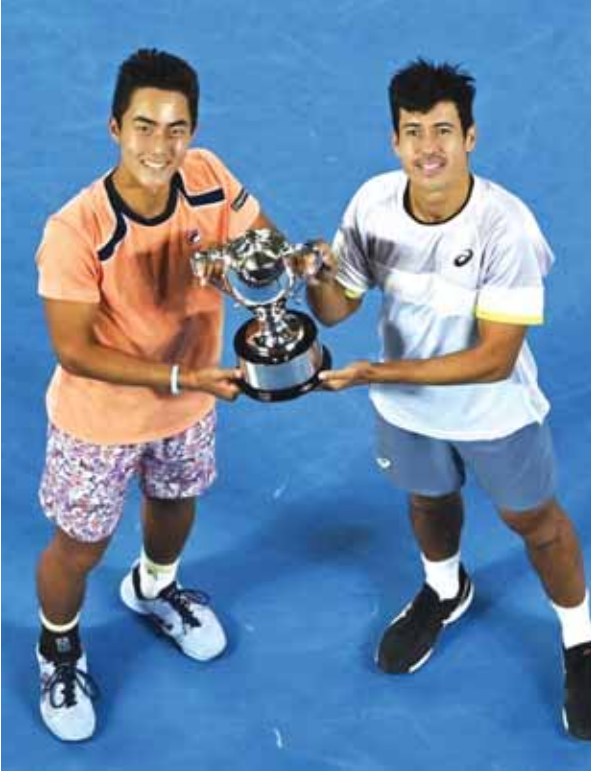
“Rinky and I definitely didn’t think this was happening two weeks ago,” Kubler said. “A bit of a pleasant surprise I should say.”

Kubler, who has battled knee injuries, said Hijikata approached him about playing together.

“He (Rinky) was actually the reason we teamed up for this tournament,” Kubler explained. “I wasn’t sure I was going to play, then Rinky asked me and I decided to play. Two weeks later, now we’ve got this trophy.”

Nys and Zielinski were also after their first Grand Slam title.

“Play Australians in Australia is never easy,”



Zielinski said in an on-court interview, drawing loud applause from fans at Rod Laver Arena where the match ended just after midnight local time.

Australia has a long history of strong doubles team. This pair was the 16th all-Australian team to win a Grand Slam men’s doubles title in the Open era.



Blockx, Korneeva win Australian

Open junior titles

AP ■ MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Alexander Blockx of Belgium beat American Learner Tien 6-1, 2-6, 7-6 (9) to win the junior boys championship at the Australian Open on Saturday.

“It was one of my hardest battles of my life,” the 17-year-old Blockx said.

In the junior girls singles final, ninth-seeded Alina Korneeva beat seventh-seeded Mirra Andreeva 6-7 (2), 6-4, 7-5 in a 3-hour, 18-minute baseline duel between the 15-year-old Russian doubles partners.

“It’s not our last battle,” Korneeva said during the trophy presentations. “We will have a lot of good matches.”

In the junior girls doubles final, Renata Jamrichova of Slovakia and Federica Urgesi of Italy beat Japan’s Hayu Kinoshita and Sara Saito 7-6 (5), 1-6, 10-7.

Tien paired with fellow American Cooper Williams to beat Blockx and Brazilian Joao Fonseca 6-4, 6-4 in the junior boys doubles final on Friday.

Mithali roped in as

WPL side Gujarat Giants’ mentor

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Former India cricket captain Mithali Raj has been roped in as mentor and advisor by Women’s Premier League (WPL) side Gujarat Giants ahead of the inaugural season, which will take place in March-April this year.

Mithali, the highest run-getter in women’s international cricket, had retired last year from all formats after a 23-year-long career. As mentor of the side, the 40-year-old cricketer will also promote women’s cricket and help develop the sport at the grassroots level in Gujarat. The Ahmedabad franchise had emerged the costliest of the five teams during the auction recently, with Adani Sportslines shelling out Rs 1289 crore. Mithali said the new BCCI initiative will help women’s cricket grow steadily and encourage young players to take up cricket professionally.

“The inaugural season of the Women’s Premier League is a fantastic move for women’s cricket and the involvement of the Adani Group is a massive boost for the sport as well,” said Mithali on Saturday.

‘Brave, offensive and risky hockey can only stop Belgium’

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Germany head coach Andre Henning on Saturday said his side will have to put up a brave effort and play risky hockey to stop the rampaging run of Belgium in the World Cup summit clash on Sunday.

After winning a silver in the 2016 Rio Olympics, Belgium went on to win the 2018 World at the same venue here and then clinched gold in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

“We played against them in Pro League in Argentina, one win and one loss. Played them here and it was a draw. Seems to be very close on an eye level. My biggest respect for Belgium with what they have achieved in the last few years. They are clearly the best team in the world at the moment,” Henning said at the pre-final press conference.

“So, it will be a tough match, we will have to challenge them. All of their players are world class but we will focus on our strength and qualities.” Henning feels Belgium don’t have any weakness.

“It does not seem that they are vulnerable at the moment, weak or disadvantaged. They

are still very strong. But we want to challenge them, how long that go (on dominating). We will like to stop that, in a most respectful way.

“We have to be brave, offensive and play risky hockey as well. We have to bring all our qualities on the pitch. Then only we will be able to challenge a team like Belgium.”

Henning said his team will try to repeat their strong semi-final performance against Australia, whom they had beaten 4-3, to challenge the defending champions on Sunday.

“Against England (in quarterfinals) we did not play our best hockey for 55 minutes, but that was because of England mostly, they defended extremely well and they had an amazing tournament. Luckily, we played our best hockey in the last five minutes,” he said.

“The match against Australia was a little bit different, because we played extremely well and strong. It was a well deserved win. We defended well, had a lot of chances. We would aim to perform like that tomorrow. We will have a chance.

“Our high press was really good against Australia. We have to be good in the first line



and our forwards are working a lot, running metres are amazing against Australia. Running wise one of the best games ever since we have GPS running data.”

Germany came back twice in the tournament from two-goal down to force a win against England and Australia

but Henning said it was not an ideal situation.

“I would prefer to be not a goal down two minutes before the end of match. So, there is something to improve,” the coach said.

“We have done very well in defending in our zone, that is very strong and we have

improved on that. That is something we want to do, to be kind of typical German tournament team and take steps game by game.”

Asked if his team would like to keep the ball against Belgium on Sunday, Henning said defending and counter-attacking will be the main focus.

“Hockey is now about defending, counter-attacking and the game is getting faster and faster. We have a lot of rapid players, our counter attacks are very strong.

“Germany traditionally is or was a team which like to have ball possession and we will not change this culture 100

per cent. It has to be a good mixture. So we will like to have the possession and good build up but our defending has a massive focus this year and also counter attacking.”

Belgium head coach Michel van den Heuvel said his team will have to guard against Germany’s ability to have a strong finishing.

“We have been playing them a couple of times last couple of months and they have grown game by game. As a natural character, Germany is able to finish well. We had a saying in the past that we always win against German when they are in the bus.

“We also have a strong group which can handle pressure. It will be an interesting clash between two fantastic teams and fantastic individuals. It will be a good advertisement of hockey.” Belgium captain Felix Denayer said the success of the side was due to the effort of the team, the support staff and togetherness of the group for a long time.

“This group has been together for a long time even before 2016 (even before winning silver in Rio Olympics). Our best player is the team and that is our strength.”

Pandya faces must-win situation against NZ

Time for Ishan, Hooda to fire

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

India will have to raise their game a few notches as the Hardik Pandya-led side faces a must-win situation to level the three-match T20I series against New Zealand, here on Sunday.

India were caught in a spin web on the Ranchi pitch and lost the opener by 21 runs on Friday.

The loss also highlighted India's bowling profligacy, especially by the pace duo of Arshdeep Singh and Umran Malik.

If tearaway pacer Malik conceded 16 runs in one over, Arshdeep leaked 27 runs in the last over, which put pressure on the India batters while chasing.

That expensive over from the young left-arm quick was the turning point as he was smashed for three sixes and a boundary.

India's batters were off to an inauspicious start with the top-three managing just 15 runs. The hosts ended up scoring 155/9, which would have been a par score to defend on the wicket, as indicated by Washington Sundar after the match.

"150 would've been par and we would've been very happy with it," the India all-rounder said.

Skipper Pandya, however, is unlikely to bring in uncapped pace bowler Mukesh Kumar for the second T20I and will probably back Arshdeep to bounce back.



KISHAN, HOODA UNDER SCRUTINY

While Shubman Gill, who has been in red-hot form in the ODIs, has played just four T20Is and is still learning the nuances of the shortest format, the big concern will be the two key batters -- Ishan Kishan and Deepak Hooda.

Occupying the opening spot, Kishan is nowhere near the ominous form he showed while slamming a record-breaking ODI double-century against Bangladesh last December.

Since then, Ishan's scores in the last seven innings in both ODIs and T20Is read 37, 2, 1, 5, 8 n.O., 17 and 4.

If one just considers the T20Is, it's been a while since he last scored a fifty -- against South Africa on June 14, 2022.

Hooda, too, hasn't enjoyed much success as a lower middle-order batter and averages just 17.88 in the last 13 innings, with the highest being the unbeaten 41 against Sri Lanka at the Wankhede.

His innings of 10 runs from 10 balls at No. 7 on Friday lacked impact and the rotation of strike also came under scrutiny, especially when the New Zealand spinners were bowling.

While India are unlikely to try out newcomer Jitesh Sharma in the role of wicket-

keeper-batter in the middle-order on Sunday, time is certainly running out for Hooda and Kishan.

Despite the loss on Friday, there was a huge positive for India in Washington Sundar, who not only bowled a tidy four overs of spin to take two wickets, but also emerged India's topscorer with a 28-ball 50 batting at No. 6.

With No.1-ranked T20I batter Suryakumar Yadav in terrific form, India would need someone at the top of the order to raise their game and do some big hitting, given that the Ekana Stadium here has big boundaries.

The Kiwis, on the other hand, would look for another victory to secure a memorable series win in India. They will once again rely heavily on their in-form duo of Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell.

Teams (from) India: Hardik Pandya (c), Suryakumar Yadav (vc), Ishan Kishan (wk), Shubman Gill, Prithvi Shaw, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik, Shivam Mavi and Mukesh Kumar.

New Zealand: Mitchell Santner (c), Finn Allen, Devon Conway (wk), Glenn Phillips, Dane Cleaver (wk), Mark Chapman, Michael Bracewell, Daryl Mitchell, Michael Rippon, Michael Ferguson, Ish Sodhi, Blair Tickner, Jacob Duffy, Henry Shipley and Ben Lister.

‘Birthday girl’ Shafali in pursuit of WC title for India



PTI ■ POTCHEFSTROOM

Batting sensation Shafali Verma will chase history when she leads India against England in the first-ever ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup final here on Sunday.

For all their success at the international stage, the Indian women's cricket team has never won a World Cup at any level and the young batter, who has been part of two World Cup and one Commonwealth Games final with the senior team, will look to bring the elusive title home.

The seniors have made the World Cup final on three occasions across formats only to have returned with bitter memories -- losing to Australia by 98 runs in 2005 and losing to England by 9 runs in 2017 in the ODIs, and in T20Is they went down in the 2020 final to the Aussies by 85 runs.

The youngster from Rohtak has been part of two World Cups across formats and she also witnessed another final defeat when India had settled for a silver medal in last

year's Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

Shafali, however, does not want to let go of the opportunity this time.

"Haan bahut finals khela hai (Yes, I've played a lot of finals and seen it all)," Shafali, who turned 19 on Saturday, said on the eve of the final.

"It's about going out there and enjoying the game. I've told the teammates 'don't stress, just give your 100 percent without thinking of it as the final. Just believe in yourself.'"

"It's all past and that can't be recreated. We are determined to bring the World Cup this time and are trying to improve day by day," she added. India suffered one defeat in the Super Six league stage where they lost to their 'nemesis' Australia after being bowled out for 87.

"We had nervous moments and couldn't sleep, thinking about whether we could make the final or not... But we have learnt from the mistakes and here we are."

"Now we're all very confident, clear of our roles."

Everyone is enjoying each other's company and stay normal, we are not thinking much."

Shafali has told her teammates not to think of her as the "senior". "I may be senior to many of them but I've told them 'on the ground we all are equal' it's about keeping everyone comfortable," she said.

In the semifinal, India registered a dominating eight-wicket win after their bowlers restricted a powerful New Zealand side to an under-par 107/9.

Leg-spinner Parshavi Chopra led the bowling show by claiming 3/20, while Shafali went for just seven runs in her four overs, taking one wicket.

In reply, a ruthless half-century from the opening batter and the tournament's leading scorer, Shweta Sehrawat, saw India home. Shweta finished unbeaten on 61 as India cantered home in 14.2 overs.

Personally, Shafali is also living her father's dream. She remembered her father Sanjeev Verma's words that she would one day win the World Cup.

Bolt fires business manager for fraud

AP ■ SAN JUAN (PUERTO RICO)

Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt told reporters Friday that he is baffled over how USD 12.7 million of his money has gone missing from a local private investment firm that authorities are investigating as part of a massive fraud that began more than a decade ago.

Bolt also said he has fired his business manager, adding that it was not an amicable split.

When asked if he was "broke," the retired star athlete laughed. "I'm not broke, but it's definitely put a damper on me," he said. "It was for my future. Everybody knows I have three kids. I'm still looking out for my parents, and I still want to live very well."

Bolt's attorneys have said the athlete's account with Kingston-based Stocks and Securities Limited dwindled from nearly USD 12.8 million to some USD 12,000. They had given the company until Friday to return the money or face civil and criminal action. It wasn't immediately clear whether any action had been taken as of late Friday. Attorney Linton P Gordon did not return a message seeking comment. He told the Jamaica Observer newspaper that the public should anticipate the "expected and the unexpected" in the case.

"There is nothing to say at this stage, given what is happening," he was quoted as saying. "We have met with persons, and we are dealing with certain matters." Earlier this week, Jamaican Finance Minister Nigel Clarke announced that the director of the Financial Services Commission was stepping down and that the Bank of Jamaica would now be in charge of regulating the island's financial system.

India beat South Africa 5-2 to finish joint ninth in FIH Men's WC

PTI ■ ROURKELA

A dominant India scored twice in the first and fourth quarters to beat South Africa 5-2 in a classification match and finish joint ninth in the FIH Men's World Cup here on Saturday.

World number six India earned six penalty corners in the match and scored one from them while South Africa, ranked 14th, got three PCs without converting any one of them. India had 31 circle penetrations in total while South Africa had 22.

With around 60 per cent ball possession, the home side had 14 shots at goal as against nine by South Africa.

Abhishek, who was named player of the match, opened the scoring for India in the fifth



minute before captain Harmanpreet Singh struck from his drag flick in the 12th minute.

The second quarter did not yield any goal from either side though India kept on attacking and made several circle penetration.

India, who led 2-0 at half time, had 15 circle penetration

as against eight by South Africa at the breather.

In the third quarter, Amit Rohidas was shown a yellow card and India had to play one man short for five minutes.

But once Rohidas came back, India scored a goal in the last minute of the third quarter through Shamsher Singh (45th).

I'm quite tired, exhausted: Warner ahead of Test tour of India

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

An intense home season has left star Australian opener David Warner "tired and exhausted" ahead of the upcoming four-Test series in India, beginning in Nagpur on February 9.

The 36-year-old played in multiple formats in a hectic summer, including ODI series against Zimbabwe, New Zealand, and England and Tests against West Indies and South Africa.

Warner also competed in the T20 World Cup at home besides playing half a dozen games for Sydney Thunder in the Big Bash League (BBL).

"It's been challenging. I'm quite tired and exhausted," Warner was quoted as saying by Cricbuzz.

"A few guys have gone to the UAE League but aren't



attending the Cricket Australia awards. From my perspective, it would have been nice to have had another night at home. But it is what it is."

Warner snapped a poor run of form with a double-century in his 100th Test. He also looked in good touch during

his 20-ball 36 not out for Sydney Thunder in the BBL Eliminator before rain played spoilsport, handing the win to Brisbane Heat.

Warner said the BBL comeback was to help out his franchise.

"You're not really trying to negate the spinning ball, it's a white ball as well," Warner said of the BBL.

"For me, it was about coming back and trying to inject some energy into the Thunder team and trying to put my best foot forward for the team. It hasn't come off this year."

"Hopefully, next year I can come out and be fresher than I am now. It will be a long lead-in to our summer (that includes the ODI World Cup in India). From a personal point of view, I'm going to have to try and work out how to stay nice and fresh," he added.



It was just one-off game: Washington on loss to NZ in T20I opener

PTI ■ RANCHI

India all-rounder Washington Sundar termed their loss to New Zealand in the opening T20I here as a "one-off" defeat and backed the hosts to bounce back in the three-match series.

Chasing a competitive 177, India's top-three, including in-form Shubman Gill (7) were dismissed for just 15 runs inside 19 balls, making the task difficult for the remaining batters with the home team settling for 155 for 9, handing New Zealand a 21-run win, their first victory of the tour on Friday night.

New Zealand were swept 0-3 in the preceding ODI series by India before the new-look home side under Hardik Pandya took over for the T20 leg.

"I think it was just a one-off game," said Washington, who scored a quickfire 28-ball 50, besides returning with tidy figures of 2/22.

"I don't think that just because it was spinning so much, we have to address anything. Just that one-off game. Had we got off to a flier or a better start, things would've been much different. Obviously, it did spin, and you will see such wickets here and there. "...People over here and players in our team have played on such wickets in the IPL and even in the Indian team. So, just that one-off game where certain things didn't go our way," he added.

Will you stop going to a restaurant, if you don't get your favourite biryani?"

But his responses seemed "unconvincing" for a journalist,

who went on to probe further and asked whether they should "change" their top order.

This time, the youngster was at his wittiest best.

"Do you really think a change is needed? If you don't get your favourite biryani in one of the restaurants, you will never go to that restaurant?" "All of them have made so many runs. It's just one day. It happens to anyone -- even New Zealand collapsed in Raipur (108 all out in 34.3 overs in the second ODI)," Washington said.

"It did not mean they had to change their top order. It's a game where anything can happen. We will have to be patient. At the end of the day, it's a sport where both teams cannot win and all 22 players cannot perform. All of them have done well to get to this stage."

The 23-year-old backed left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh, who registered poor figures of 4-0-51-1 and young pace sensation Umran Malik, who conceded 16 runs in the only over he bowled during New Zealand's innings.

"He (Arshdeep) has taken so many wickets -- for India and in the IPL. We are also human beings, we also want to play the sport. When the competition is very high, and the opposition is of the highest quality such things can happen," Washington said in support of his teammate.

"The way he (Malik) bowled against Sri Lanka and New Zealand (in ODIs) that's why we all know he's here. He's an X-factor, someone who bowls above 150 consistently and that's a rare quality."

Santner currently best spinner in white-ball cricket, lucky to have him: Mitchell



PTI ■ RANCHI

New Zealand all-rounder Daryl Mitchell believes stand-in T20 captain Mitchell Santner is currently one of the best spinners in white-ball cricket after the left-arm twerker's impressive outing against India in the series opener here.

Santner returned with miserly figures of 2/11 from his four overs to set up New Zealand's 21-run win over India in the first T20I of the three-match series on Friday.

Santner bowled a splendid spell and kept India under check by bowling a maiden over to Suryakumar Yadav in power-play.

"He is one of the best spinners in world cricket with the white ball at the moment," Mitchell, who was adjudged man-of-the-match for his 30-ball unbeaten 50, said at the post-match media interaction.

He picked up the wicket of in-form Shubman Gill, who inspired India to a 3-0 sweep over the Kiwis in the preceding ODI series.

"He (Santner) keeps proving his class. It was a very special spell by him that put us in a good position to win. He has done it for a long time now, we are very lucky to have him," Mitchell said.

Put in, New Zealand got off to a fine start with opener Devon Conway smashing 52 off 35 balls, while Finn Allen made a quickfire 35 off 23 balls as the visitors set India a challenging target of 177.

"I thought the partnerships that Finn and Dev (Conway) did early and obviously Glenn (Phillips) and Dev as well allowed us to take the innings deeper and allowed us to put some pressure on India towards the end of the innings," Mitchell said.

"It was about constantly adapting, trying to find ways to put pressure back on their bowlers."

Lack of tactical awareness, non-existent club culture behind India's early exit: Oltmans

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Former India men's hockey head coach Roelant Oltmans has blamed the lack of tactical awareness and a non-existent club culture for India's early exit in the ongoing edition of the FIH Men's World Cup.

India lost the crossover match to New Zealand and failed to make the quarter-finals after going down 4-5 in sudden death. India's current head coach Graham Reid had also voiced concern about the lack of club culture after the Hockey India League (HIL) became defunct in 2017.

"There is no club culture in India, that is for sure. And the players need to continue playing games, that this team is lacking," Oltmans, who was at the helm of affairs of the Indian team from 2015 to 2017, told PTI in an interview.

"These Indians are fantastic hockey players, no doubt about that. But you need to know what to do at which moment of the game. If all of a sudden, you are 11 against 10, what are you going to do?" added the Dutchman, who also served as the High Performance Director of Indian hockey from 2013 to 2015.

India were unable to take



advantage of the circumstances after New Zealand were reduced to 10 men in the crossover match.

After New Zealand made it 3-3 in the fourth quarter, Nick Ross received a yellow card in the 53rd minute and was suspended for five minutes. New Zealand defended doggedly to take the match into penalty shootout and then sudden death.

"India had five minutes before the end of the match when a New Zealand player was out. What were India doing at such a moment? You need to

play tactical games, execute them properly," Oltmans, who was India head coach during the 2016 Rio Olympics, said.

"The Germans scored two goals in three minutes (against England), that is the difference, that is something India still need to work on."

Oltmans was surprised that India did not have a mental-conditioning coach. The Dutchman said that a psychologist was with the team at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centre in Bengaluru when he was at the helm.

"Absolutely, it (having a mental-conditioning coach) makes a difference. When I was the head coach prior to the (Rio) Olympics, I had a psychologist in my staff. It is more or less the same as having a mental-conditioning coach."

"For the physical part of the game, we have physical training, for tactical part of the game, we have tactical training, for skill training we have drag-flick trainers. But the mental aspect made a major difference and there we don't have a serious trainer. That is strange," said Oltmans.

I started auditioning when I was about 10 and I didn't get my first job until I was 12, and two years at that age is really hard
— Anna Kendrick



A NEW BUZZ IN THE BJP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advice to the party to reach out to Muslims like Shia Bohras and 'Pasmanda', the socially backward class in the community, has created a new buzz in the BJP at the ground level, write DIPAK K UPRETI, SAUGAR SEN GUPTA, BISWAJEET BANERJEE

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was among the few BJP leaders who had somewhat acceptability among Muslims because he kept an unstated channel of communication open with the Muslims and genuinely tried to reach out to them. LK Advani who was largely responsible for the demolition of the Babri masjid, also tried to do a course correction during his Karachi 'Yatra' in 2006 when he visited the 'Mazar' of the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The RSS went all out against Advani for his reverence shown to the man Parivar hated the most. Advani had to pay a heavy political price and humiliation.

The advent of the Narendra Modi era in 2014 set aside all past equations of the BJP with Muslims in the country.

In the last nine years, the ruling BJP has been accused of aggressively cultivating a 'Hindu vote bank' and making the community dispensable which according to the 2011 census constitutes 14.2 percent of the Indian population.

The BJP has roundly refuted the charge arguing that it was 'saving' Muslims from the clutches of "appeasement" and "vote bank politics" of the Congress, Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal, and likes of others and taking them to the path of "Vikas" that eluded them in over 70 years of national politics.

In this backdrop, Prime Minister Modi's concluding address at BJP's National Executive in Delhi on January 17 where he asked his party to vigorously approach Muslims like Shia Bohras and 'Pasmanda', the socially backward class in the community, drew more than casual interest of the observers as well as the party leaders from within.

"We have identified 60 constituencies in 10 states where Muslims are more than 30 percent. Around 5000 people from each of these constituencies who have genuinely appreciated PM Modi's development programmes would be selected and be part of scooter rallies in different states creating awareness among Muslims and taking their feedback", says Jamal Siddiqui, BJP Minority Morcha national president.

The Morcha has appointed a 'Prabhari' for each of the Lok Sabha constituencies selected for the rallies where all key BJP leaders of the region will also be present.

He asserts that PM 'Yojnas' relating to housing, drinking water, 'Garib Kalyan' and scholarships and education, among others, have "convinced" Muslims that they were used all these years for "vote bank politics".

Siddiqui rejected the charges that the BJP has been inimical to Muslims and claimed that 50 percent of Muslims in Gujarat, 20 percent in UP, 22 percent in Delhi, and 20 percent in Assam are now voting for the BJP.

"Muslims voters are not captive to any party now," Siddiqui said.

The BJP leader says the party will organize scooter rallies in 60 constituencies for four months as part of its Muslim outreach. Some important constituencies Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Lok Sabha seat in Wayanad in Kerala, Rampur in Uttar Pradesh, and Behrampur in West Bengal.

"We will contact social workers and take the message in a door-to-door campaign and communicate with Muslims of all categories", he says.

On February 1 and 2, the Morcha will have its National Executive in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, where it would further discuss and strategize its 'Muslim Approach'.

After four months of scooter rallies in 60 Constituencies, the Muslim representatives will 'gather in Delhi on the first of May and meet the Prime Minister for dialogue and take the campaign to the next leg.

The whole idea is to connect and communicate with the community and make it aware of PM's welfare programme which benefited it "away from the vote bank politics" which "kept Muslims backward" for "so long."

Muslims in Mamata Banerjee's West Bengal are the "most poor and backward", he goes on to add.

The 'paradigm shift' in the development policies, asserts Siddiqui would leave Congress high and dry as far as minorities are concerned.

"jab tak 2029 LS elections ayenge.. Congress ki arthi lo Kandha Lagane Wala bhi nahin milega..", he hits out at the opposition party and its minority-friendly image

Senior BJP leader and former union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi pointed out that the BJP has been winning in the Muslim dominant or majority constituencies like Rampur and Azamgarh.

He maintains that under Modi's leadership, the BJP won 16 percentage of Muslim votes in the 2014 Lok Sabha poll and 20 percent in the 2019 elections.

Annulment of triple talaq has also impacted Muslim women positively, says Naqvi adding Modi's "reform, perform and transform" has done well for the community.

In several parts of the country, BJP has already started the Muslim outreach programme. For example in West Bengal, where Muslims account for nearly 30 percent of total voters, BJP leaders have started to walk Prime Minister Narendra Modi's talk.

An initial sign of the BJP's changing tack came in the form of the January 25 'solidarity march' in support of the sole Indian Secular Front MLA, Naushad Siddiqui, who is a scion of Furfura Sharief, the largest Muslim congregations of the State.

Naushad was arrested after his followers

clashed with the police in Kolkata where thousands of them had gathered to protest against an attack by the TMC goons.

Siddiqui's ISF --- in alliance with the Left Front --- had won the Bhangar Assembly seat in 2021.

BJP Minority Cell chairman Charle's Nandi's statement assumes importance as he says, "Though we represent different ideologies the brutal attack and arrest of Naushad Bhai an opposition MLA is deplorable ... the BJP demands his immediate release... we will launch a statewide protest against his arrest."

Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari too condemns the arrest of Siddiqui. He says, "apart from the BJP there is only one opposition MLA in the House we allot time to Naushad Bhai from our slot to let him speak ... we will stand by him in distress."

BJP WILL ORGANIZE
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CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL
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IN WAYANAD IN KERALA,
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PRADESH, AND
BEHRAMPUR IN WEST
BENGAL

Similarly, former State BJP president Dilip Ghosh says, "Naushad Bhai too is my MLA because I am a resident of his constituency ... ISF is a democratic party ... the police have no right to arrest him like this."

The BJP's pro-ISF stance is not an end in itself. The party has a larger plans to reach out to the Muslim masses.

"We are taking an inclusive approach where the Muslims will definitely play a big role ... Muslim voters impact at least 17-18 parliamentary constituencies ... we are working accordingly," one leader said.

Another leader says how the party is in touch with the youth Muslim leaders. "Many of them are contacting us and are ready to join us ... like the one leader from Hooghly who has

come directly from the Indian Navy," says a leader.

On whether the BJP too wants to pursue the policy of "appeasement," State BJP Yuva Morcha chief Dr. Indranil Khan says, "This is not appeasement ... In Bengal, all parties have exploited the minorities but left them deprived and poor ... the BJP will stop that exploitation"

On whether the party would soft-pedal the CAA issue, another leader Pronoy Roy says, "the Muslims are realizing that CAA will not take away their citizenship and hence they are taking a different view."

Another senior leader says that many Muslims have realized that there is a difference between CAA and NRC "as CAA will not lead to loss of citizenship they will have no problem with it," adding "panchayat elections will give us indications about our future path."

IN UP, the BJP has been actively wooing the Pasmanda Muslims. On October 22, 2022, the Uttar Pradesh unit of BJP held its first state-level Pasmanda Muslim meeting to sharpen its outreach among the socially backward Muslims, who have benefitted from government schemes like free ration and housing.

"Prime Minister had given credence to our efforts when he asked the party workers to reach out to marginalized sections of the society including Pasmanda Muslims, irrespective to the fact that they vote for BJP or not," Uttar Pradesh minister Danish Azad Ansari, who belongs to the community, said.

The Pasmanda community has 41 "castes", including Ansari, Qureshi, Mansoori, Salmani, and Siddiqui. They are in professions such as butchers and weavers and are considered backward in social, economic, and political terms.

The party claims it's working for the community's political uplift after their social and economic empowerment.

Azad said that the idea of social justice has reached 85 percent of Muslims, who constitute the Pasmanda community. In his message of outreach, Prime Minister is not only invoking Pasmanda Muslims but also opening the doors of political empowerment and social-economic upliftment for them. This is not influenced by religion but by the larger spectrum of poverty and backwardness.

President of the Uttar Pradesh BJP's minority wing Basit Ali said that BJP plans to give tickets to Pasmanda Muslims in the coming urban body elections. "We have planned that people from different groups of Pasmanda Muslims will hold conferences in their societies and BJP leaders will participate in these to convey to them the party's ideology and government plans," Ali said.

He said the parties like SP, BSP, and Congress have used Muslims as their vote bank, but BJP will empower them by giving them political power.

But the Opposition Congress is not convinced that the BJP will ever shut its distrust and dislike of Muslims.

They are quick to point to the recent hue and cry over the screening of the Bollywood film Pathaan starring megastar Shah Rukh Khan and say it has exposed the diabolical attitude of the BJP towards minorities.

"Perhaps this is for the first time that the country is witnessing such a sharp divide in the screening of films, mainly featuring Muslim actors. Who is behind such a dirty campaign? Citizens are free to watch a movie if they like. But today the Saffron cadres have taken over the role of the Censor board. The way the entire machinery is working to create a hate narrative and divide Bollywood is a serious cause of concern and reveals the BJP's true attitude towards the minorities, particularly the Muslims," said Pranav Jha, AICC Secretary and Coordinator to the Congress President office.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi in his Bharat Jodo Yatra had been talking about the palpable 'anger' among the people towards BJP and dismissed Modi's call for Muslim outreach as a deceptive move.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh told The Pioneer that Bharat Jodo Yatra has in a true sense made the BJP and RSS nervous and forced them to visit mosques and talk about reaching out to Muslims .

AICC head of Media and Publicity Pawan Kheda said with the tide turning against them, the BJP is forced to reach out to all the minorities.

Kheda asserted that the BJP's attitude towards minorities will never change. He pointed to The BJP's attempt to commercialize the holy pilgrimage centers of Jainism such as Sammed Shikharji, Palitana's Shatrunjaya hills (in Gujarat), Mount Girnar (also in Gujarat) and make them a medium to "fill the State coffers".

"Be it Muslims or Jains, the BJP has equal antipathy for the minorities, or for that all the weaker sections of the society," he said.

"Till so long they (BJP/RSS) accused Congress of appeasement. Now what do we call their so-called course correction and attitude towards the minorities?" asked Kheda.

Congress leaders believe the Bharat Jodo Yatra and further outreach programs of the party will help in bringing together all sections of society including the minorities.

"A party which does not field any Muslim candidate in elections and gives no representation to Muslims in the organization cannot be trusted by Muslims, The BJP has risen by fooling people. The minority outreach programme is another similar attempt—this time to fool Muslims. No one is going to buy this," said a senior Congress leader.

NEGLECT AT YOUR OWN PERIL

"Act now. Act together. Invest in Neglected Tropical Diseases," is the theme of this year's World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Day being observed on January 30. The Day is also marked as World Leprosy Day. NTDs is an umbrella term that refers to 20 medically diverse, communicable diseases. India is home to the world's largest absolute burden of at least 11 major NTDs viz. Ascariasis, Hookworm, Trichuriasis, Dengue, Lymphatic filariasis, Trachoma, Cysticercosis, Leprosy, Cystic echinococcosis, Visceral leishmaniasis or Kala-azar and Rabies. THE HEALTH PIONEER talks to two experts in the sector, exclusively focusing on status and elimination progress in Kala-azar and Leprosy (Hansen's Disease), both mostly impacting a large number of poor in the country but often overlooked by policymakers, and so a few resources are made available to address them.

Right Time to take a Stab At Innovations to Sustain Kala-azar Elimination



DR KAVITA SINGH
Director, South Asia, Drugs for
Neglected Diseases initiative

Earlier this month, Union Health Minister, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya shared that Kala-azar (also known as Visceral leishmaniasis, VL) cases in India fell to 834 in 2022 from 44,533 in 2007 — a 98.7 per cent decline. India renewed its commitment of eliminating Kala azar from the country by the end of 2023. VL is an ultimately fatal disease if not treated.

Early and effective treatment has been one of the pillars of the National Kala Azar Elimination Program of India. It is important to remember that in the past we had toxic, long and painful treatments for kala azar patients. The long treatment duration often led to non-compliance and possible emergence of resistance. To provide simpler treatments it was important to provide evidence-based recommendations for policy makers. Therefore a prospective, multicentre study was conducted by Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative and its partners NCVBDC, ICMR-RMRI, KAMRC, State Health Society Bihar and MSF in the public sector from 2012-2015.

The Government adopted a single dose treatment with Liposomal Amphotericin B which revolutionised the kala azar treatment and helped bring the number down consistently since 2014.

While we celebrate this milestone, it is important to sustain the momentum towards kala azar elimination. It is important we recognise the contribution made by each and every one who worked towards reaching the last mile of elimination including the



policy makers who gave strategic directions to doctors, nurses, ASHAs, vector control officials and the contribution of intersectoral ministries.

Research conducted by the DNDi in India has shown that post-kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis, a skin condition that occurs in 3-5% of treated visceral leishmaniasis patients may be an important reservoir for transmission, as are patients co-infected with HIV and the relapse VL cases. Existing diagnostics & treatments are not optimal for these patients, reminding us that still more need to be done for sustaining progress towards elimination. An outlook of fostering continual innovation of diagnostics and treatment is critical to meet the changing demands of disease elimination programmes.

In fact, Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) continue to pose significant health burdens on some of the most disadvantaged communities in our country. The task is to have a unifying theme of innovation in diagnostics, treatment, and prevention of NTDs to create solutions that are effective, relevant, locally feasible, and sustainable.

DNDi is continuing to find affordable, safe and easy treatment that will help sustain the elimination and feel an oral drug is the only way to sustain the elimination. We are continuing drug development of a new oral molecule, for VL which is presently in a phase 2 clinical trial. When we

develop drugs for such diseases, it is challenging to interest pharma companies and partners wherein affordability and availability in developing nations are the end goals. Therefore, our efforts have been towards open science, partnering with research institutes taking in-kind support of pharma companies and seeking funding from various sources. So it's a very unique model of doing drug R&D. With our frugal drug discovery and development model we have been successful in engaging Indian and International Pharma companies to be the market authorization holders in the last two decades.

The National Center for Vector Borne Diseases Control includes some of these diseases which are caused by mosquitoes or sandflies, while the Ministry of Health has additional programs focused on leprosy and soil transmitted helminthiasis. The National Center for Vector Borne Disease Control presently has a kala-azar and lymphatic filariasis (LF), both are on the elimination radar of the government, with VL being 2023 and LF being 2030. So there's a lot of implementation happening with a lot of Government and also international support. However, we need to remember that when a disease goes through a distinct programmatic phase, the requirement of the tools, whether it's a diagnostic or treatment tool, keeps chang-

ing. So investment s for these resources is the wish list of people who work in this space as we move towards sustaining elimination of VL.

As we progress, it is important to focus on optimal drugs and diagnostics that can help sustain the disease out of bay and are futuristic. As the number of cases go down, health professionals will be out of practice and so would be the availability of drugs at Primary Health care Centers. Looking into these aspects, DNDi is developing Centres of Excellence in two districts of Bihar for the management of complicated c leishmaniasis cases where we are training the health professionals in complicated diagnostic procedures and treatment regimens.

Continued vigilance will be required to sustain the gains achieved through kala-azar elimination efforts. Investing in the development of new drugs as well as diagnostics are important areas. Innovative vector control and surveillance strategies and intersectoral ministries continued contribution is crucial to sustain the elimination phase. This will also necessitate proportionate investments in research and development for new tools, training of health workers, and housing infrastructure, continued WASH advancement and quality of primary care. Commitment to eliminating the scourge of kala-azar must continue.

Leprosy: Reach those Out of Reach



DR RAMESH BHAT M
Dermatologist, Vice Dean, FMCC,
Mangalore

Leprosy, a neglected tropical disease (NTD) caused by Mycobacterium leprae, is at least 4,000 years old, making it one of the oldest diseases known to humanity. The transmission occurs through respiratory droplets. Overall, the risk of getting Hansen's disease for any adult around the world is very low. That's because more than 95% of all people have natural immunity to the disease. Prolonged, close contact with someone with untreated leprosy over many months is needed to catch the disease. Due to the slow-growing nature of the bacteria and the long time it takes to develop signs of the disease, it is often very difficult to find the source of infection. When the disease occurs, it mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosa of the upper respiratory tract, and the eyes. Leprosy is curable with a combination of antibiotics

known as Multi Drug Therapy (MDT), available for free across the world. If left untreated, it could lead to disabilities in a small proportion of patients. Visible deformities are one of the leading causes of stigma affecting health-seeking behaviour and social inclusion.

In India and the rest of the world, there has been a tremendous decline in the number of leprosy patients over the past four decades. This was possible due to various elimination programs launched by WHO and the national programs of respective countries. However, one of the major challenges faced by India and other countries like Brazil, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Nepal, Nigeria is the continued occurrence of new leprosy cases.

These countries reported more than 1,000 new cases of Hansen's disease to WHO in 2021-22; Brazil (22,476), Indonesia (12,316), Ethiopia (3,010), Nepal (2,418) Nigeria (1000). Leprosy is endemic in several states and union territories of India, with the annual case detection rate of 4.56 per 10,000 population. The prevalence rate of leprosy is 0.4 per 10,000 population in India. The WHO epidemiological report of 2020-2021 mentions that out of 1,40,546 new cases reported globally, 61,678 (43.8%) are contributed by India. Maharashtra alone recorded more than 12,000 cases during the same time period. Of the new cases detected during 2020-2021, 58.1% were multibacillary, 39% were women, 5.8% were children less

than 14 years of age, and 2.41% had visible deformities. The rate of visible deformities was 1.1 per million population.

However, there has been a massive drop in detection due to pandemic. One of the important factors for it could be the hurried declaration that India had reached the leprosy "elimination" target in 2005, which led to a false sense of security, loss of focus, and to erosion of expertise among program planners and healthcare professionals.

According to National Sample Survey and situational analysis done in 2015 by National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP), India, the major issues to be addressed by the program were delay in case detection, hidden caseloads, low awareness regarding leprosy in the community, and the lack of quality monitoring. In addition, in India, there are more than 3 million people with leprosy deformities needing attention and care. The postelimination annual NCDR was far higher than what is expected in certain states and blocks compared to the national average. It is very high in a few states such as Chhattisgarh (16.2/100,000 population), Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha. High NCDR appears to be due to continued transmission of the disease, evidenced by >50% multibacillary cases and more than 9% child leprosy rate in new cases detected in states/union territories (UTs) of India. These trends indicate that despite the successful implementation of MDT, the transmission of leprosy in India

is still a matter of concern.

After 40 years of strategies based almost entirely on early diagnosis and treatment with MDT, it is clear that there is a need to find additional tools to interrupt transmission, while continuing the efforts for vigorous new case finding.

Targets Under Sustainable Development Goals are 2021-22 are:

- Reduce the prevalence rate from 0.2 to <0.6/ million
- Rate of child case with zero disability to be sustained
- Reduce the rate of Grade 2 deformity (visible deformity) from 1.2/million to <1/million

Under Sustainable Development Goal, Government of India is committed to eradicate Leprosy by 2030. The State Government is targeted to eradicate Leprosy by 2025-26. World Leprosy Day is observed on the last Sunday of January every year. This international day is an opportunity to celebrate people who have experienced leprosy, raise awareness of the disease, and call for an end to leprosy-related stigma and discrimination.

This year's theme is "Act Now. End Leprosy" calls attention to three key messages: 1. Elimination is possible: We have the power and tools to stop transmission and defeat this disease. 2. Act now: We need the resources and commitment to end leprosy. Prioritize leprosy elimination. 3. Reach the unreached: Leprosy is preventable and treatable. Suffering from leprosy is needless.

Docs Fight for Their better Treatment

Last few days have seen the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA), India, raising a pitch for their demands that range from formation of the Indian Medical Service in line with the Union Public Service Commission, enactment of the Central Protection Act, giving allowance and bond-free medical education, among other demands. THE HEALTH PIONEER brings the report

On National Doctor's Day on July 1, last year Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the contribution of doctors in saving lives from the Coronavirus pandemic when it was at its peak and swept the country. He asserted, "India saved the lives of lakhs of its people and a big credit for that goes to doctors, healthcare and frontline workers."

However, action speaks more than words, say doctors in the government hospitals as they feel that not much has been done at the ground level as many of their long pending demands are yet to see the light of the day.

Now under the umbrella of the Federation of Resident

Doctors Association (FORDA), India, recently they enlisted ten demands including the formation of the Indian Medical Service in line with the Union Public Service Commission, enactment of Central Protection Act, giving allowance and bond-free medical education, among other demands.

FORDA General Secretary Dr Sarvesh Kumar Pandey said that merely showering praises is not enough while leaving the doctors to fend on their own to grapple with many challenges while FORDA president Dr Aviral Mathur said that their demands have been pending for years yet no action has



been taken to address them. "We urge the government to address the issues at the earliest. We find many healthcare workers are often assaulted. We demand that the Central Protection Act should be made," said Mathur.

"Nursing students and nurses are provided risk hazards allowances but doctors are not. We should be given risk hazards allowances," he added. The other demands included creation of permanent posts for doctors, provision of at least six months' duration in ad-hoc posts, amendment of residency scheme, provision of uniform stipend for resident doctors and timely conduction of NEET PG exam, among others.

Dr Pandey said that the doctors' body will invite other medical associations to build more momentum for their demands. "We will invite organisations to discuss these issues. We will invite IMA, FAIMA, DMA and Delhi-AIIMS RDA, All India

Medical Association and other major associations. Around the first week of February, we expect that we meet these organisations and raise these issues collectively to the government," he said.

One may recall that the Prime Minister during his address to the nation on the Doctor's Day last year had also expressed gratitude to all medicos on behalf of 130 crore Indians. "The way our doctors have served the country is an inspiration in itself...Today, when the country is fighting such a big war against Corona, doctors have saved millions of lives by working hard day and night," he had said.

^x“I think the challenge is recognised. I think the Army knows how to do it.” *AF*

