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AAP GOVT PUSHING  
PUNJAB INTO DEBT

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COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL  
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'GOVT TAKING STEPS TO MAKE  
INDIA \$5 TRILLION ECONOMY'

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY MARCH 15, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3

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## India a Hindu Rashtra: RSS

Hindu Rashtra is cultural concept, no law required for its validation, asserts Hosabale

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale on Tuesday said India is already a "Hindu Rashtra", which is a "cultural concept" that does not need to be established by the Constitution.

On the conclusion of the three-day meeting of Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) at Haryana's Panipat district, the RSS General Secretary also said the Sangh does not approve of "same sex marriage", saying marriage can only take place between persons of opposite genders.

He also criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his critical comments against



Indian democracy and said he should be speaking "more responsibly".

"About Hindu Rashtra, we have been saying for the last 100 years that it's a cultural concept, not theoretical," he said, while replying to a question on the issue at a Press conference "State and nation are two different things. A State is that which is established by the Constitution. It is State power," he said.

"Nation is a cultural concept. Bharat is already a Hindu Rashtra. It doesn't need to be made a Hindu Rashtra (by law)," he added.

"We are already a Hindu nation," he said conclusively.

Claiming that many have tried to "distort" the history of India and Hindutva over the years, the RSS has resolved to speed up measures to bring a change in the narrative and restore the country's prestige.

He accepted that there are "some drawbacks in our society like untouchability."

On the same sex marriage, Hosabale said his organisation agrees with the Centre's view on same-sex marriage and maintained that marriage could only take place between persons of opposite genders.

The Centre has opposed in the Supreme Court a batch of petitions seeking legal validation of same-sex marriages, claiming they will cause a "complete havoc" with the delicate balance of personal laws and accepted societal values.

On Monday, the Supreme Court referred the pleas seeking legal validation of same-sex marriages to a five-judge constitution bench for adjudication, saying it is a "very seminal issue".

The RSS General Secretary said that in Hindu way of life "marriage is a samskar not enjoyment or a contract where two individuals live together, establish family for betterment of the society and not for the self only".

On Rahul's critical and controversial comments abroad on the Indian democracy and the RSS, Hosabale recalled the imposition of emergency by the Congress when he said, "I and many others went to Jail" and questioned his ethical right to speak about Indian democracy.

The RSS leader also said

that while the Congress was speaking about weakening democracy in India, his own party has won in some States. Hosabale said the Congress leader should be expressing himself "more responsibly". "He is going by his agenda," he added and went on to say that Rahul's forefathers too had attacked the RSS.

In London, Rahul recently had termed the RSS a "fundamentalist organisation" that has changed the nature of the democratic contest in India by capturing the country's institutions.

On another question, the RSS leader said Sangh is not thinking of bringing women in the "Sakhas" where many sports activities are conducted by men.

Hosabale said the RSS meeting discussed ways to bring "social harmony" as also need to bring "population imbalance" in the country.

By the centenary year in 2025 the RSS has set the aim of expanding 'Sakhas' to one lakh and preparations for that have begun, he said.

## Virus on prowl; 150% rise in Delhi flu cases

H3N2 influenza takes two lives, Covid too kills 2 across India

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With two deaths due to H3N2 influenza — the first from Karnataka and second from Haryana — and two deaths due to Covid-19 — one each in Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh — on Tuesday, and Delhi hospitals witnessing a 150 per cent hike in H3N2 cases, the viral infections are again on the rise.

India reported a single-day rise of 402 coronavirus cases while the active cases have increased to 3,903 in the country, according to the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday.

Reports have surfaced of a 58-year-old woman dying due to H3N2-like symptoms at a State-run hospital in Vadodara city of Gujarat, an official said on Tuesday. When asked if the H3N2 influenza virus was the cause, the official said samples have been sent for testing and a review committee will determine the exact cause of death.

Though Goa has not reported any confirmed H3N2 cases so far this year, the Government held a high-level meeting on Tuesday to discuss monitoring of seasonal influenza subtype H3N2 as directed by the Centre, State Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said.

The H3N2 virus triggers symptoms like fever, cold and body aches, and in certain cases, leaves behind persistent cough making patients extremely weak.

Elaborating the possible



reasons behind the surge of influenza cases in Delhi, Dr Viny Kantroo, Consultant, Respiratory, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine Consultant, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, said the outbreak could have been triggered by seasonal change, mutation of virus and the economy being fully open.

"Children are going to school and they are transmitting it to the elderly. A lot of cross-country travel is happening. In the last two years, Covid was the dominant virus and there were restrictions but with relaxation of norms and return of normalcy, these outbreaks are being observed," she opined.

The Delhi Government's LNJP Hospital has set up a 20-bed isolation ward in the emergency block for such patients. In accordance with the ICMR guidelines, we have done so and also stocked up medicines. A 15-doctor team has been constituted to monitor the patients, said a senior doctor.

Dr Rajiva Gupta, Senior Consultant, Internal medicine at the CK Birla Hospital,

Gurugram and Delhi, said the ILI (influenza like illness) cases have seen a spike in the last few days. "For instance, if we were seeing two to three patients in OPDs last month, this month there is a one-and-a-half time rise. The symptoms are fever, discomfort, cold, and body aches. In some cases, patients also experience abdominal discomfort, diarrhoea, and even fullness in ears," he added.

The senior doctor said the treatment approach changes lightly when the patient has comorbidities and stressed that in those cases, they ask the family members to monitor the BP, pulse, oxygen saturation levels and consciousness levels. "If these levels fluctuate, the patient needs hospitalisation," he stressed.

Explaining the current strain, Dr Vikas Deswal, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Medanta, Gurugram said the influenza virus is the most prevalent virus that affects our respiratory system, and is present in three different types: A, B, and C.

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### CAPSULE

#### BHASHA FOUNDER-EDITOR VED PRATAP VAIDIK DIES

New Delhi: Senior journalist Ved Pratap Vaidik, founder-editor of PTI's Hindi news agency 'Bhasha' died on Tuesday after fainting at his Gurugram home. He was 78.

#### RAPE ACCUSED FOUND HANGING FROM TREE

Lucknow: A youth accused of attempt to rape a village girl was found hanging from a tree in the village in Shahjahanpur district. Victim's father claimed his son was innocent but was framed by the girl's family.

#### PM SECURITY BREACH: PUNJAB TO SEND ATR Chandigarh:

The Punjab Government will soon send an action taken report to the Centre over a security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the State in January last year, a top official said.

## Judge injured during robbery in Delhi, 2 held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman judge suffered injuries to her head during an alleged robbery by two motorcycle-borne men in North Delhi's Gulabi Bagh area, police said on Tuesday.

The men snatched her bag containing cash and essential documents, they said. Both have been arrested.

The matter came to light on March 7 after the victim's minor son, who was accompanying her at the time of the alleged robbery, reported the incident.

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## No let-up in ruckus over Rahul, Adani in Houses



Proceedings of the Rajya Sabha underway during Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Both the Houses of Parliament were adjourned for the second consecutive day on Tuesday with no business or discussion as the BJP insisted on its demand that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi must apologise for his "democracy under attack" remarks in London, while the Opposition stuck to its guns on its demand for a JPC on the Adani issue.

BJP leaders repeatedly kept shouting "Rahul maafi mango (Rahul apologise)". The Congress also waved placards with quotes from speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visits abroad.

"Pata nahi pehle janam main kya paap kiya tha, Hindustan main paida hua (Don't know what sin I had committed that I was born in India)," read another placard

waved by a Congress member quoting the Prime Minister's speech in Seoul in May 2015.

Opposition members raised slogans from the aisles and avoided trooping into the Well of the House. "BRICS ka 'T' ludak raha hai (the 'T' in BRICS is tottering)," read one placard referring to the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa grouping.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla tried to take up the Question Hour and appealed to the members to keep the dignity of the House in mind. Rajya Sabha Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar said a meeting of floor leaders has been called to discuss the issue.

"I am sure you will get my ruling at the earliest, maybe during the course of the day or tomorrow," he added.

Meanwhile, the Congress gave a notice for raising a

breach of privilege against Union Minister and Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal after he had criticised the MP from Wayanad.

At least 18 Opposition parties have decided to meet on Wednesday to discuss their next strategy in the Adani matter.

Sources said a proposal for a letter to be signed by all Opposition MPs may be discussed and a protest march to the ED office may also be considered.

Earlier in the day leaders of 16 parties, including the Congress, the DMK, the CPI(M), the JD(U), the RJD, the NCP, the SP, the SS (Uddhav), the AAP, the CPI, the JMM, the MDMK, the NC held a meeting and decided to raise the Adani matter in the House.

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## Meta lays off 10,000 more employees

AP ■ NEW YORK

Facebook parent Meta is slashing another 10,000 jobs and will not fill 5,000 open positions as the social media pioneer cuts costs.

The company said on Tuesday it will reduce the size of its recruiting team and make further cuts in its tech groups in late April, and then its business groups in late May.

Detailed report on P8

## Panel of Secretaries formed to speed up infra work along LAC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As tension persists along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China for the last two years and Beijing ramping up its infrastructure along the borders, the Government on Tuesday set up a committee of secretaries to speed up infrastructure development to meet any challenge.

This decision was taken at a high-powered meeting chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to review the progress in construction of various infrastructure projects on the northern border areas.

He called for expediting all pending projects on top priority, stating that the "whole of nation" approach should be adopted in matters of national security.



To fast-track the pending projects, it was decided to set up a Committee of Secretaries which will meet at frequent intervals, defence ministry officials said later.

Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics

and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Power and New and Renewable Energy RK Singh, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and others attended the meeting.

## TTE pees on woman, fired

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

In a stark reminder of the Air India flight peeing incident, an Indian Railways travel ticket examiner (TTE) allegedly urinated on a woman passenger on board the air-conditioned coach of the Kolkata-Amritsar Akal Takht Express and was quickly sacked by the national transporter declaring it has "zero tolerance" for such behaviour.

Munna Kumar, who was off duty and under the influence of alcohol, was arrested after the incident past midnight on March 13 following a complaint by the passenger's husband at Charbagh station. Kumar allegedly urinated on



Railway police with an off-duty TTE after he was arrested in the allegation of urinating on a lady passenger in Kolkata-Amritsar Akal Takht Express, in Lucknow

PTI

the woman's head. "Zero tolerance. Removal from service with immediate effect," Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav tweeted sharing the action taken report of the incident.

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## National Cultural University mooted

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Stating that each village in the country has its own distinct and unique identity, a Parliamentary panel has come out with a unique proposal seeking setting up a National Culture University with its headquarters in Delhi and affiliated colleges in each State.

"Such educational institutions may also perform research work on Vedas, Upanishads and other historical texts and languages," said the panel headed by Rajya Sabha MP V Vijayasai Reddy in its report tabled in Parliament recently.

The panel also urged the Union Culture Ministry to explore "the viability of replication of the State of Unity model (in Gujarat) in other



States."

The Committee recommended the Ministry to assess the number of people who have visited the Statue of Unity in Kevadia, Gujarat.

"The Ministry may make joint efforts along with the Ministry of Tourism to analyse the viability of the construction of statues of important regional historical figures in other States.

"The Committee feels that if found viable, the development of tourist hubs around such statues would serve the dual purpose of boosting tourism as well as educating the visitors about the significant role played by important historical figures in shaping India's destiny," said the report.

The other area where the committee pitched in was on signing more cultural agree-

ments and cultural exchange programmes with different countries to increase people-to-people contact and foster better understanding of each other's cultures.

"The Global Engagement Scheme should be expanded to showcase not only folk art but also contemporary art, music, dance, literature, and cuisine to showcase the diversity of Indian culture. India should leverage digital platforms to reach wider audiences and engage with people around the world by creating more virtual events, online exhibitions, and webinars to promote Indian culture. The Ministry should establish more collaborations and partnerships with international museums to promote the exchange of knowledge, resources, and exper-

tise," it said.

But since, the major challenges faced in cultural diplomacy efforts are language barriers, lack of awareness and understanding of Indian culture, and limited resources, India needs to address these issues by investing in language training programmes, cultural awareness campaigns, and increasing funding for cultural diplomacy initiatives, suggested the panel.

In the past five years, the Ministry has spent ₹85.69 crore on activities under the Global Engagement Umbrella scheme. However, the panel wanted the Ministry to allocate more funds for more cultural diplomacy initiatives to achieve better results and expand its soft power and goodwill across the world.

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See Edit: Relief to Govt



# ‘Integrate tech to take Ayurveda across world’

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Leveraging technology and scientific processes are vital in establishing Ayurveda as a holistic, sustainable and affordable wellness solution for the whole world, leading experts from across the country said on Tuesday.

Speaking on ‘Ayurswasthya’, a thematic session held as part of the One Week One Lab (OWOL) programme at CSIR-NIIST here, the panellists said that the time-tested Indian traditional system of medicine could play a vital role in addressing even serious health challenges of the modern world, if appropriate scientific and technological methods and platforms are employed, without diluting the fundamentals required for the validation and regulation of drugs and procedures, an official release said.

As part of OWOL, CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR-NIIST), a constituent laboratory of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Union Ministry of Science and Technology, is conducting a series of high-profile seminars featuring top scientists, technocrats and administrators on



its campus at Pappanamcode in the city.

Opening the session, Dr Manoj Nesary, Adviser-Ayurveda, Ministry of Ayush, said, “Ayurveda is the knowledge of life, and as such it goes beyond the science of life.”

He went on to claim that Ayurveda had even anticipated serious environmental challenges such as global warming and its impact on the health of living beings on the planet, adding, “But for today’s world to understand and use Ayurveda, technology integration is very much needed.”

Nesary noted that the country had embarked on an ambitious interdisciplinary programme for integration of Ayurveda with technology by entering into collaborations with leading institutions within and outside the country.

Since the approach of Ayurveda itself is interdisciplinary, it could easily integrate itself with proper scientific and technological processes, including those relating to biophysics and biotechnology, Nesary said.

Radha Rangarajan, Director, CSIR-CDRI, Lucknow, said collaborations between open-minded researchers and practitioners from Ayurveda as well as western medicine and biomedical scientists are needed to deliver a truly integrated wellness experience.

Emphasising the need to promote research in Ayurveda in the context of modern science, Rangarajan said identifying the right methodologies, broad-basing clinical trials and greater focus on efficacy and safety are critical.

## Govt to give tabs, smart phones to 2 crore youths, says UP Minister

PTI ■ NOIDA

Uttar Pradesh government has made a provision of ₹3,600 crore in the budget for free distribution of tablets and smart phones to the youth of the state, Cabinet minister Nand Gopal Gupta said here on Tuesday. He said the Yogi Adityanath government is committed to distributing two crore tablets and smartphones to the youth since it retained power in 2022.

The minister also slammed previous non-BJP governments in the state of making tall claims and false promises ahead of elections but never fulfilling them, as he participated in a programme to distribute tablets and smartphones to 650 students at the Gautam Buddha University in Greater Noida.

“Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken a historic decision to provide free tablets and smartphones to two crore youth of the state. A provision of Rs 3,600 crore has also been made in the annual budget.

“Other parties make tall claims and promises in elections, but after elections all the claims and all the promises go into cold storage. Our government does not make claims, it makes resolutions,” Gupta said.



College students wearing traditional dresses welcome G-20 delegates who arrived to attend the G-20 meeting in Amritsar on Tuesday

## Odisha painting school buildings in ‘Pak colours’: LoP

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Leader of Opposition Jaynarayan Mishra of the BJP on Tuesday said that many schools in Odisha do not have adequate teachers and the students cannot even identify Odia alphabets but the government was busy painting the school buildings in “Pakistani colours” as part of its transformation programme.

Mishra’s comments in the assembly during the Zero Hour sparked a row with the ruling BJD pointing out that the

national flag of India also has green in it, and so do trees and vegetables.

Many schools across the state do not have adequate teachers, and students of class 6 cannot even recognise Odia alphabets, Mishra claimed.

“Adding a fresh coat of the Pakistani colour to the school building won’t yield results. Is this the vision of the government’s 5T initiative?” he asked.

BJD MLA Arun Sahu immediately pulled out his mobile phone, and pointed to a photo of India’s national flag,

stating that Mishra should take note of the colours in it.

Speaker BK Arukha, however, asked him not to use mobile phone in the House.

Vegetables, trees, plants and forests are also green in color, Sahu said, adding, “Would you call them Pakistani as well?”

The schools being developed under the ‘5T’ programme — transparency, technology, teamwork, time and transformation — were being painted in green, akin to the colour of BJD’s party flag.

## AIIMS docs perform surgery on foetus’ grape-size heart in mother’s womb



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A team of doctors from AIIMS here have successfully performed a complex surgery on grape-size heart of foetus and reshaped it inside a mother’s womb. The 28-year-old pregnant woman who had suffered three miscarriages was crestfallen when she was informed about the heart condition of the foetus in her womb, doctors at the hospital said.

However, the woman was determined to continue with the pregnancy and agreed to allow the doctors carry out the procedure on the foetus’ heart.

“A team of interventional cardiologists along with doctors from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at AIIMS performed the procedure termed balloon dilation in the obstructed valve of the heart. Under the procedure which was performed under the guidance of ultrasound, a needle was inserted in the heart of the foetus and then using a balloon catheter, the obstructed valve was unclogged,” a senior doctor said.

“The whole procedure had to be done very swiftly. It was very challenging. We managed to do it in around one-and-a-half minutes,” the doctor said.

“With this reshaping procedure, hopefully the foetus’ heart will develop better. Both the foetus and the mother are stable and are being monitored closely,” the doctor added.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said, “I congratulate the team of doctors of @AIIMS\_NewDelhi for performing successful rare procedure on grape size heart of a fetus in 90 seconds. My prayers for the well-being of the baby and the mother.”

# TTE pees on woman, fired

From Page 1

A resident of Begusarai in Bihar, Munna Kumar was posted as a travel ticket examiner (TTE) in Saharanpur. The woman and her husband were travelling from Kiul in Bihar to Amritsar in Punjab.

Government Railway Police (GRP) Circle Officer (Lucknow) Sanjeev Kumar Sinha said they were informed through their helpline number that a passenger had urinated on a woman.

“The incident happened around 12.30 am on Monday. We sent a team to Charbagh railway station, and we asked the complainant, who is also a railway employee, to give a written complaint. In the complaint, her husband said that the accused urinated on his wife. We arrested Kumar from Charbagh railway station. He was sent to judicial custody,”

Sinha said.

A senior officer said Kumar was drunk when the alleged incident happened. “He was on the berth above the woman’s, and probably urinated in his sleep or unconscious state,” said the officer.

In a notice to Kumar, the Northern Railway said, “Your above conduct showing disrespect to women construes a serious misconduct, in the process, bringing disrepute not only to your own self but entire railways as an organisation. It is also seen that you are in judicial custody. Taking cognisance of this grave matter, I consider it to be a fit case to adopt the provision of Rule 14(ii). Thus, I hereby deem it fit to impose the punishment of ‘removal from service with immediate effect’ for behaviour unbecoming of a railway servant,” the notice signed by the divisional commercial manager said.

Last week, an inebriated student allegedly urinated while asleep in his seat on an American Airlines flight. It somehow leaked and fell on a fellow passenger, who complained to the flight crew. On November 26, a man identified as Shankar Mishra allegedly urinated in a drunken state on an elderly woman on a New York-Delhi Air India flight. In another case, a man allegedly urinated on the blanket of a female co-passenger on a Paris-Delhi flight on December 6.

# Kaushik death: Farmhouse owner, estranged wife quizzed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Tuesday questioned the owner of the farmhouse, where Satish Kaushik attended a party a day before his death, and his estranged wife after she alleged that her husband “was planning to get rid” of the actor-filmmaker, officials said.

Kaushik (66) died after suffering a heart attack while he was on his way to a Gurugram hospital in the early hours of Thursday. He felt dizzy late on



Wednesday night and was taken to the Fortis Hospital in Gurugram, where he was declared “brought dead on arrival,” they said.

While the farmhouse

owner was questioned for around three-and-a-half hours, his estranged wife was quizzed separately for nearly three hours.

The farmhouse owner joined the inquiry at 1 pm in the southwest district’s Kapashera police station and was questioned regarding the sequence of events that led to Kaushik’s death, police said.

“He came around 1 pm and the questioning ended at 4.30 pm. During questioning, he told police that Kaushik had come to celebrate Holi with

them and stayed at his farmhouse,” a senior officer said.

“He said he knew the actor for over 30 years and they were family friends. He (Kaushik) was doing fine at the Holi party but hours later, he complained about pain following which he was rushed to the hospital,” the officer said.

The farmhouse owner was present when Kaushik complained about sudden pain in his chest, he said.

When asked about allegations levelled by his estranged wife, he termed them “baseless,”

the officer said, adding that he will be called for questioning again in the coming days.

Meanwhile, the farmhouse owner’s wife was questioned at the office of her advocate in connection with her complaint. “She stands by her allegations but does not have any evidence to support her allegations,” the officer added.

In a complaint addressed to the Delhi Police commissioner, the woman had alleged that her husband had borrowed Rs 15 crore from Kaushik and did not wish to return it.

# Virus on prowl, 150% rise in Delhi flu cases

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“Among these, subtype A is the most commonly found. One subtype of the influenza A virus is H3N2, which produces symptoms similar to other flu viruses such as cough, fever, cold, sore

throat, fatigue, muscle pain, and respiratory complications, especially in children under two years, the elderly, and those with other medical conditions,” he said.

Both the doctors said in some cases, it has been observed

that patients have persistent coughs even after the fever subsides. “One of my patients said he had a persistent cough and could not attend meetings because of it.

“Patients also develop extreme weakness due to it,” said

Gupta.

Deswal cautioned against letting down guard at this time and said since viruses mutate over time, it is important to take precautions.

“Antibiotics are not effective in treating viral infections such

as H3N2 and can be harmful, so people should avoid taking them, especially if they have H3N2.

“The virus spreads through droplets and direct contact, so it is recommended to follow precautions such as avoid touching surfaces, wash hands, follow

Covid-appropriate behaviour, practice social distancing, wear masks, and avoid going out if experiencing viral symptoms.

Additionally, it is important for people to get vaccinated against influenza every year,” he said.

# No let up over Rahul, Adani row in Houses

From Page 1

The Government’s offensive against Rahul over his democracy remarks in London also came up for discussion at the meeting held in the chamber of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, sources said.

The TMC did not attend the meeting but its MPs staged a protest in front of the Gandhi statue in Parliament complex, asking the Government to stop “protecting” the Adani Group. TMC members held banners and placards saying “stop protecting Adani” and raised slogans against the Government.

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi also met senior leaders of the party at the Congress office in Parliament House to discuss the party’s strategy in the wake of the Government’s attack on Rahul.

Amidst stepped up Opposition demand for a JPC into the Adani issue, Congress leader

Rahul levelled a slew of allegations against the Modi Government on its foreign policy and claimed that it is aimed at benefiting the Adani Group. “Is the objective of India’s foreign policy to make Adani richer? In the last nine years, Modi has kept India in ‘bhrām (misled)’ and Adani in ‘vishwa bhrāman (global travel)’ along with him,”Rahul alleged in a video in Hindi. Congress member in Rajya Sabha Shaktisinh Gohil and Shiv Sena MP in RS Priyanka Chaturvedi charged that the Government for trying to protect the Adani Group and asked why it was shying away from a discussion and a JPC probe into the matter.

Both alleged that the Government was mis-using probe agencies to target Opposition leaders. While AAP’s Sanjay Singh alleged that probe agencies had become partners of the Government in targeting Opposition leaders. K Kesava Rao of the BRS also spoke on similar lines.

# Judge injured during robbery in Delhi...

From Page 1

Two persons on a motorcycle snatched the woman judge’s bag, which contained around Rs 8,000 in cash, some documents and an ATM card. The goons pushed her during the snatching attempt, resulting in the victim suffering injuries to her head, the complainant alleged.

A case was registered under sections 394 (voluntarily causing hurt in committing robbery) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code and an

investigation taken up, the police said.

With the help of technical surveillance and human intelligence, a Gulabi Bagh police station team apprehended the accused Dilshad and Rahul, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi.

Dilshad was found involved in 10 criminal cases, including robbery and snatching, while Rahul is a first-time offender, he said.

The police also seized the motorcycle used in the crime and recovered the ATM card

and Rs 4,500.

With the duo’s arrest, the police claimed to have solved six cases.

Reacting to the incident, Delhi Commission for Women chief Swati Maliwal tweeted in Hindi, “Crime in Delhi has increased to such an extent that now every man or woman walking on the road is unsafe. It is very shameful to have a scuffle with a woman judge in Delhi.

Those who have the responsibility of providing security to women spend time on how to troll women.”

# SC junks Govt plea for more aid...

From Page 1

No such fraud has been pleaded by the Centre and their only contention relates to a number of injuries and costs that were not contemplated at the time of the settlement. It was known that medical facilities would have to be extended to rehabilitate people and there was bound to be environmental degradation. In fact, it is UCC’s allegation that the Union of India and the state did not proactively detoxify the site. In any case, this cannot be a

ground to seek annulment of the compromise,” said the Bench also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Abhay S Oka, Vikram Nath and JK Maheshwar.

“We are equally dissatisfied with the Union of India for being unable to furnish any rationale for raking up the issue more than two decades after the incident. Even assuming that figures of the affected victims turned out to be larger than expected, an excess amount of funds remain available to satisfy

such claims. ...We are of the view that curative petitions cannot be entertained,” the bench said.

The Centre wanted another Rs 7,844 crore from the UCC’s successor firms over and above the USD 470 million (Rs 715 crore) it got from the American company as part of the settlement in 1989. A curative petition is the last resort for a plaintiff after an adverse judgment has been delivered and the plea for its review is rejected. The Centre had not filed a

review petition for rescinding the settlement which it now wants to be enhanced.

On January 12 the successor firms of UCC told the top court that the depreciation of the rupee since 1989, when a settlement was arrived at between the company and the Centre, cannot be a ground to now seek a top up of compensation for the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy. The UCC is now owned by Dow Chemicals.

The then UCC chairman Warren Anderson was the

prime accused in the case but did not appear for the trial. On February 1, 1992, the Bhopal CJM court declared him as an absconder. The courts in Bhopal had issued non-bailable warrants against Anderson twice in 1992 and 2009 before his death in September 2014.

On June 7, 2010, after more than 25 years, a Bhopal court convicted eight persons to two years of jail term along with fine (under section 304A IPC - Punishment for culpable homicide not amounting to murder

). Union Carbide’s India partner and Mahindra Group’s chairman Keshub Mahindra was also convicted among the eight persons. Others found guilty were Vijay Gokhale, the then managing director of UCIL, Kishore Kamdar, the then vice president, J N Mukund, the then works manager, S P Choudhary, the then production manager, K V Shetty, the then plant superintendent and SI Quereshi, the then production assistant. However, all the eight convicts were granted bail.



# Delhi’s power demand may peak to 8,100 MW

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhis peak power demand may cross the 8000 megawatt (MW)- reaching up to 8100 megawatt (MW ) - for the first time in late June or early July during this summer. Earlier, in 2021, Delhi’s peak power demand had clocked 7323 MW, 6314 MW in 2020 and 7409 MW in 2020.

Delhi Power Minister Atishi reviewed the Delhi Governments “Summer Action Plan for uninterrupted power supply during the peak season on Tuesday. According to power discoms, peak power demand in BRPL area of South and West Delhi, which had clocked 3389 MW and 3118

## Atishi reviews Summer Action Plan



MW during the summers of 2022 and 2021 respectively, is expected to reach around 3570

MW during the summers of 2023. On the other hand, in BYPL area of East and Central

Delhi, the peak power demand, which had reached 1752 MW and 1656 MW during the summers of 2022 and 2021 respectively, is expected to touch around 1880 MW this year.

According to Bombay Suburban Electric Supply (BSES) officials, the discoms — BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) — are geared-up to source adequate electricity to meet the power demand of over two crore residents in the city.

These arrangements include long term PPAs and banking arrangements with other states including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, and

Uttarakhand. BSES discoms will get up to 630 MW (BRPL upto 330 MW, BYPL upto 300 MW) of power through banking arrangements, officials said.

Additionally, BSES Rajdhani will also procure upto 500 MW through bilateral contract. In case of any unforeseeable contingency, BSES discoms will buy short-term power from the exchange, depending on the time-slot.

Adding to these efforts are the advanced load-forecasting statistical and modeling techniques, which use Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to help the discom accurately forecast the power demand. Interestingly, over

1500 megawatt will come from green energy which includes around 888 MW of solar power from Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), 486 MW of wind power, 40 MW from Waste-to Energy. BSES efforts in ensuring reliable power are also being helped by 130 MW + of roof-top solar installed on roof-tops in South, West, East and Central Delhi.

Delhis peak power demand had breached the 7000 MW for the first time – peaking at 7016 MW in 2018. This expected peak power demand of around 8100 MW is an increase of around 280% over the peak power demand of 2879 MW in 2002. In a related development, Delhi Power Minister

Atishi reviewed the Delhi governments Summer Action Plan for uninterrupted power supply during the peak season on Tuesday. During the meeting, officials informed her that peak power demand may reach 8100 MW this year and they are well prepared to meet the increasing power demand in the coming summer.

The meeting was attended by senior officials of the Power department and three DISCOMs, where officials briefed the newly appointed Power Minister about their preparation for the upcoming summer season.

Reviewing the plan, Atishi said that it is the Delhi governments priority to ensure

uninterrupted 24x7 power supply during the peak summer season to the people of Delhi.

The Delhi government is fully prepared to ensure that people get electricity without power cuts, even during the peak summer season. Like every year, we will follow the Zero Power Cut Policy this year too, she said.

Following the review, Atishi instructed the officials to tie up additional power with the power companies and ensure the maintenance and upgradation of power substations and power lines. This will help the government deal better during the peak load season and address the needs of people better.

# End traffic snarls on Chirag Delhi Flyover: Min to officials

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a serious note on massive traffic jam, Delhi PWD Minister Atishi on Tuesday convened a meeting with senior department officials to resolve the immense traffic jams on the Chirag Delhi Flyover causing a lot of inconvenience in the prime south Delhi colony areas that serve as the main arterial road. The traffic restrictions on the newly commissioned Ashram-DND flyover extension also came up for discussion.

Atishi directed the officials to identify alternative ways to decongest the flyover as soon as possible and complete the maintenance within a month.

In this regard, she instructed the officials that daily reports be made available regarding the same. This will ensure a fast pace of work.

Maintenance work is going on at the Chirag Delhi flyover and a part of the flyover has been closed for the same. According to PWD officials, it will take nearly 50 days for them to complete the maintenance work. PWD is responsi-



ble for the maintenance work of flyovers across the national Capital. The PWD minister instructed the officials that information about alternative routes should be disseminated among the commuters to avoid inconvenience to them.

Alternate routes for commuters using Chirag Delhi Flyover have been segregated like from IIT to Greater Kailash and Nehru Place commuters can take a left turn under the Panchsheel flyover and go to August Kranti Marg. After taking a right turn on Ring Road, they can go ahead from Moolchand via Lala Lajpat Rai Marg to GK or Nehru Place.

From the IIT flyover, commuters can go towards AIIMS

via Aurobindo Marg. From there, reach Moolchand via Ring Road and take a right turn at the red light and go towards Nehru Place or Greater Kailash via

From Nehru Place to AIIMS or Defence Colony commuters going from Nehru Place to IIT, AIIMS, Dhaura Kuan or Defence Colony, take a right turn from under the Nehru Place flyover to Lala Lajpat Rai Marg and reach Defence Colony via Moolchand.

Take a left turn from Moolchand red light and go towards AIIMS and Dhaura Kuan via Ring Road. From AIIMS, take a right turn on Aurobindo Marg and go

towards Hauz Khas or IIT. The PWD minister also discussed the matter of restriction on the movement of heavy vehicles on the newly constructed Ashram-DND Extension flyover. On this, the

## Delhi-Gurugram Road sees massive gridlock



officials said that due to the passing of high-tension electric wires over the flyover, the movement of heavy vehicles has been restricted as it can prove dangerous for such vehicles.

The PWD minister instructed the officials to shift these high-tension wires within month of March itself so that heavy vehicles can pass through here as soon as possible.

The Delhi-Gurgaon Road witnessed traffic snarls on Tuesday after the authorities closed one carriageway and created a diversion for construction on the Dwarka Expressway. Delhi Police said it received several calls on its helpline about heavy traffic in the area. The police on Monday issued a traffic advisory on

diversions in connection with the 90-day closure of a section of the Delhi-Jaipur Highway (NH-48) between Rangpuri and Rajokari.

According to the advisory, the National Highways Authority of India is constructing the Dwarka Expressway under the Bharat Mala Project from Dwarka Link Road near Shiv Murti on the National Highway (NH)-48. Under this project, two underpasses and an elevated section will be constructed on NH-48. To execute the work, both carriageways of NH-48 between Rangpuri and Rajokari will be closed, it stated. Several commuters shared updates on the traffic situation on Twitter.

One user said tweeted about being stuck between Mahipalpur and Dhaura Kuan, where the traffic was crawling, for one-and-a-half hours.

# Mayor Shelly convenes emergency meeting on stray dog menace

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Taking a serious note of two brothers mauled to death, allegedly by stray dogs in Vasant Kunj area, Delhi Mayor Dr Shelly Oberoi on Tuesday called an emergency meeting with officials to handle the menace of stray dogs in the national capital and directed them to come up with an action plan within seven days.

She has also called a meeting with non-governmental organization (NGOs) veterinary experts and gaushala owners to discuss the issue on Wednesday. Dr Oberoi has directed the department to submit daily reports on dog and cattle catching efforts of the department.

“Mayor Shelly Oberoi holds emergency meetings with officials to prevent incidents caused by stray dogs. Oberoi called an emergency meeting after the incident of dogs biting children in Vasant Kunj,”

Officials said. “The mayor asked the officials to prepare an action plan within a week on the issue of saving Delhiites from stray dogs. On this issue, the Mayor has called a meeting of NGOs related to animals, Gaushala operators and veterinary experts on Wednesday,” they added.

During the meeting, the officials informed the Mayor about efforts which have been made to control the dog population. It was informed that MCD works with various NGOs to control the population of stray dogs.

# Teachers meet Edu Min over delay in forming colleges’ governing bodies by V-C

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Holding Delhi University’s Vice-Chancellor responsible for delay in governing bodies of 28 State Governments funding colleges, a teachers body affiliated with the ruling AAP, met Higher Education Minister Atishi on Tuesday and apprised her that these colleges are struggling in administrative due to this.

A delegation of AAP teachers organisation (AADTA) met Delhi Education Minister Atishi and apprised her about the “delay” in the formation of governing bodies in 28 Delhi Government-funded colleges by the Vice Chancellor of Delhi University. “The teachers also informed the education minister that this politically motivated step of the V-C is impacting the administrative functioning of the colleges severely,” the Kejriwal Government said in a statement. “The Delhi Government wants that there should not be any interviews in these 28 colleges without the formation of their governing body, because the Delhi government intends to create a sys-

tem that will give priority to the absorption of existing ad-hoc teachers,” the statement said. The Kejriwal government has written to DU in the last several weeks regarding the matter. A week before the Executive Council meeting in DU on February 3, the then Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had sent a list of names for the governing bodies of 28 colleges. But despite this, these names were not considered, the AADTA has claimed.

During the meeting, the president of the association, Professor Aditya Narayan Mishra, claimed that the appointment of any employee at government-funded colleges in the absence of a governing body is illegal.”

The list was sent by the Delhi Government to the VC’s office on January 28, and in this regard, a reminder was also sent to him on February 21 by Sisodia, officials said. Professor Mishra claimed that the intention behind the “delay” in formation of the governing body in colleges was to overturn Delhi Governments decision to absorb ad-hoc teachers.

# Sachdeva: Kejriwal can’t shun responsibility in excise scam

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP fired a fresh salvo at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday, saying he cannot escape responsibility for the “liquor scam” under his government.

Delhi BJPs working president Virendra Sachdeva said Kejriwal never cared to reply to the “grave questions” raised by the saffron party over the “liquor scam” and defended former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who is currently in jail in connection with a case pertaining to alleged irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the excise policy for the national capital.

Sachdeva asked Kejriwal why the wholesale liquor business in Delhi was handed over to private players, despite a technical committees recommendation that it should be handled by the government.

Why was the commission of wholesalers raised from 5 per cent to 12 per cent against the recommendation of the committee, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader asked. “Kejriwal is the mastermind of



the liquor scam and he cannot escape the probe,” he said, citing a statement of Sisodias personal assistant that the decision to raise the commission was taken at a meeting at the chief ministers residence.

Sachdeva also sought Kejriwals clarification on whether an amount of Rs 100 crore earned from the “scam” was used by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Goa Assembly polls held last year and the partys connection with a private media company.

No immediate reaction of the AAP was available to the charges levelled against it by the

BJP. The BJP has mounted a sustained attack on the AAP and the Kejriwal government over the alleged “scam” related to the Delhi Excise Policy for 2021-22.

The policy was withdrawn by the AAP government last year after Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena recommended a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into alleged irregularities in its implementation. Sisodia, one of the accused in a case registered by the CBI in connection with the excise policy, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) last week.

## Head of Bohra Muslims is new Jamia Chancellor

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, Shead of the Bohra Muslim community, has been elected as the chancellor of the Jamia Millia Islamia for a five-year term effective Tuesday. Saifuddin has been the head of the one-million-strong global Dawoodi Bohra Muslim community since 2014. He succeeds Najma Heptulla, who completed her five-year term as chancellor of university last year.

“Members of the court (anjuman) of the Jamia Millia Islamia have unanimously elected Saifuddin as the chancellor of the university for a period of five years with effect from 14th March, 2023,” a university official said.

The official added that the election of Saifuddin, who has featured in the list of 500 most-influential Muslims, happened at a meeting of the court on Monday.

The university said in a statement Saifuddin “leads by his exceptional examples” and has dedicated his life to the betterment of society with special focus on education, the environment, socio-economic aspects and so on.

The global programmes overseen by Saifuddin include Saifee Burhani Uplift Project, Turning the Tide, Project Rise, FMB Community kitchen work towards eradication of hunger, reduction of food waste, protecting the environment and so on, the university added.

A citation was read in the celebration of his contributions in US House of Representatives and he has been received as a reverent state guest in several countries, according to university. He is an alumnus of Al-Azhar University and Cairo University, Egypt.

He also inaugurated a new campus of Al-jamia-tus-saifiya in Mumbai on February 10. He has been doing philanthropic work in country and across the world. He introduced sustainable agricultural systems, enhancing local infrastructure and providing equal access to education to both girls and boys in Yemen, the statement added.

## Man alleges assault by MCD Councillor

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A man was allegedly assaulted by MCD councillor Nikhil Chappana and others in Jaitpur following which a case has been registered, police said on Tuesday. An immediate reaction was not available from Chappana. Jaitpur resident Dheeraj Kumar claimed that he was assaulted by the accused after he livestreamed a video about a sick cow and alleged that the AAP councillor was not taking any action to remove it from the area.

In his complaint, Kumar alleged that Vishal, a man associated with Chappana, took him to the councillors office on the pretext of helping him register a complaint.

# Expedite desilting of 200 km sewer: LG to DJB



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena on Tuesday directed the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to expedite desilting of the entire 200 km length of trunk / peripheral sewer lines; desilting of 90 kms sewer lines to be completed by June, 2023. At the third High Level

Committee (HLC) chaired by the Lt Governor for the rejuvenation of Yamuna river, officials told that proper desilting of around 200 kilometres of Delhis sewer line network is the biggest challenge being faced in the cleaning of the Yamuna. The HLC was formed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). While work on various


fronts has been undertaken in a time-bound manner with the goal of concrete achievements by June 30, when the NGT will take stock of the progress, the biggest “road block and challenge” being faced is the desilting of approximately 200 kilometres of trunk and peripheral sewer lines, according to an official statement. “Gross inaction and neglect on the part of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), which had not undertaken any desilting work for the past 8-10 years, had resulted in the sewer lines getting choked.

The sewer lines were choked up to 80-90 per cent with not only sewage but also boulders and municipal solid waste, the statement said. While 90.34 kilometres of

sewer lines were projected to be cleaned by June, the remaining 110 kilometres were expected to be cleaned by September. The LG directed officials to take up the desilting work on a mission mode and complete it within the stipulated time frame, the statement said.

It was pointed out at the meeting that the level of pollution in the Yamuna on various perimeters has gone down in the last two-three months, especially due to interventions in the Najafgarh Drain, the statement added.

Addressing officers, the Lt. Governor said that, it was owed to the future generations that we handed over a clean Yamuna to them, a Yamuna that our forefathers had inherited.



MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI

75th Anniversary  
Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

OFFICE OF THE SUPDTG. ENGINEER (DEMS) HQ-II  
19th FLOOR, DR. SPM CIVIC CENTRE  
JLN MARG, DELHI-110 002  
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Municipal Corporation of Delhi at present collects approx. 11000 MT of municipal waste daily from its twelve zones out of which 4400 TPD (40%) is wet waste and 6600 TPD (60%) is dry waste. Wet waste coming mainly from kitchens, restaurant, vegetable / whole sale market, parks and lawns is being processed in various decentralized or centralized waste processing facilities. MCD has established brick work or wire mesh composting units at various location with daily processing target of 50 TPD per zone. So far, 211 no. of decentralized compost units have been setup in different wards with processing capacity of 543 TPD.

In order to make the existing decentralized composting units more effective and sustainable, MCD intends to provide an opportunity to private agencies to come up with different business models for operation and maintenance of existing local composting units. The work shall be undertaken in consonance with the best environmental practices to carry forward the vision of optimal use of resources.

In view of the above, MCD invites all Stakeholders, NGOs, Start-Ups, Concessionaires, Consultants, Private Agencies, who are willing to participate in such projects or activities to attend an advance pre-bid meeting on 23.03.2023 at 3:00 PM in the Chamber of Superintendent Engineer-II (DEMS)/HQ at 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, Dr. S.P.M. Civic Centre, JLN Marg, New Delhi-110002.  
R.O. No.76/DPI/MCD/2022-2023



# Naxal violence fell 77% in 12 yrs: MHA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Ministry on Tuesday informed Lok Sabha that the Naxal violence in India has decreased by 77 per cent over the past 12 years and the number of deaths in related incidents has also reduced by 90 per cent during the same period.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said the geographical spread of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) related violence has significantly reduced and only 176 police stations of 45 districts reported related violence in 2022. In 2010, at least 465 police stations of 96 districts had reported LWE-related violence.

Replying to a written question, Rai said the number of LWE-related deaths (security forces and civilians) has reduced from an all-time high of 1005 in 2010 to just 98 in



2022. Minister said the decline in geographical spread of violence is also reflected in the reduced number of districts covered under the security related expenditure (SRE) scheme.

He said 126 districts were covered under the SRE scheme in 2010 but that number came down to 90 in April 2018 and further to 70 in July 2021. Rai said the security situation in Jharkhand has improved considerably and the existing secu-

city vacuum in the state has been almost filled. Places like Burha Pahar, tri-junction of West Singhbhum, Saraikela-Kharsawan and Khunti, and Parasnath Hills have been freed from Maoists through establishment of camps and sustained operations by security forces, he said.

The number of violent incidents in Jharkhand reduced by 82 per cent from a high of 742 in 2009 to 132 in 2022, Rai added.

# Stop propagating lies against Rahul, Sam Pitroda tells BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a political storm over Rahul Gandhi's "democracy under attack" remarks made in the UK, Indian Overseas Congress chief Sam Pitroda on Tuesday said the former party president never asked any foreign country for help and was being subjected to a "well-orchestrated" personal attack based on "lies and misinformation".

Rahul Gandhi's remarks during his recent trip to the United Kingdom have rocked Parliament, with both Houses failing to transact any significant business on the first two days of the budget session's second half.

A number of Union ministers have led the charge against the Congress leader, demanding an apology, while the opposition party has countered it with its demand for a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe into the Adani issue.

Pitroda, who was present during Rahul Gandhi's interactions in the UK, mounted a strong defence of the comments made by the former Congress chief in a series of tweets. "Please stop promoting and propagating lies about what Rahul Gandhi said in London. Were you there? Did you see the video? Do you really know what he said? In what context? What was the main message? For clarification, please note that Rahul Gandhi basically said the following: 1. Indian Democracy is Global Public Good. 2. The state of democracy in India is of con-



cern. 3. It is an Indian problem, and we will deal with it," Pitroda said. The former Congress chief never asked any foreign country for help, he asserted. "I was there as an Indian professional with a logical, rational and open mind, eyes, and ears," said Pitroda, who is credited with leading the country's telecom revolution during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as prime minister. "What is the sense in launching a well-orchestrated and well-organised personal attack based on lies and misinformation through elected leaders in collaboration with the media? Is this what Indian democracy is all about? Is there some decency left in political discourse?" he asked. Why are some people so agitated and have ganged up in promoting lies, and are attacking Rahul Gandhi all the time, Pitroda asked.

There are more important things to do in India, such as creating job opportunities, improving the economy, checking incidents of violence, improving the environment, education and health services, he said. "Why is national TV media spending so much time, money and energy on this? Why are they always quick to jump on Rahul Gandhi without checking their own facts? What

are they all trying to accomplish? Is this fair?" he asked.

"I am simply astonished. I would expect a little better sense and response from Indian media.... May I request that before responding to these tweets, please take a deep breath and think before saying anything? Be respectful, dignified, truthful, factual, responsible and a little generous. We need love and not hate," Pitroda said.

He stressed that "we need understanding and not misunderstanding". "We must unite to take India forward for all the people -- especially the poor, hungry, homeless, unemployed and young," he added.

Hitting out at Pitroda, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla wrote on Twitter: "Dear Uncle Sam, the entire media and nation has seen Rahul Gandhi's video and how he was asking for action from US, Europe into Indian affairs.

Since you seem disconnected with realities and perhaps living in a 'hua to hua' world, here is also what Rahul Gandhi and his ilk have done in the past -- Rahul sought Nicholas Burns' intervention too, Mani Aiyar sought Pakistani intervention."

"When it comes to undermining national sovereignty, Rahul is a serial offender," he alleged. Rahul Gandhi's remarks triggered a political slugfest, with the BJP accusing him of maligning India on foreign soil and seeking foreign interventions, and the Congress hitting back at the ruling party by citing instances of Prime Minister Narendra Modi raking up internal politics abroad.

# India among top 10 most polluted countries in 2022: World Air Quality Report

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

India was ranked eighth on the list of most polluted country in 2022, dropping three places from the previous year, with Chad, Iraq, Pakistan, Bahrain, and Bangladesh being the five most polluted countries in the world.

Interestingly, as per Swiss firm IQAir in its 'World Air Quality Report', released on Tuesday, there are six Indian cities in the top 10, 14 in the top 20, 39 in the top 50, and a staggering 65 in the top 100 up from 61 in the previous year.

In the list, Lahore in Pakistan and Hotan in China is the top most polluted cities followed by Rajasthan's Bhiwadi is in third place and Delhi ranked fourth. According to report, Delhi's PM2.5 level is almost 20 times the safe limit.

Among the other metros, Kolkata is the most polluted after Delhi, but by a wide margin. Chennai is relatively the cleanest with pollution 'just' 5x the WHO's safe level. In fact, the only metros where pollution levels saw an uptick over the average since 2017 are Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

The annual average PM2.5 level, as per the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, should be 5 µg/m3 or less but India's annual average PM2.5 level in 2022 was 53.3 µg/m3, more than 10 times the safe limit and only slightly lower than the 2021 average of 58.1. Rajasthan's Bhiwadi was the most polluted city in India, with annual PM2.5 levels of 92.7 µg/m3, and 60 per cent of



Indian cities included in the report experienced at least seven times higher annual PM2.5 levels than the WHO guideline.

Delhi and New Delhi are both in the top 10, based on a new classification. The ranking is based on the level of PM 2.5, a pollutant closely tracked by scientists and health experts. The data from 131 countries is taken from over 30,000 ground-based monitors, either government or non-government operated.

As per the report, in India, the transportation sector causes 20-35 per cent of the PM2.5 pollution while other sources of pollution are industrial units, coal-fired power plants and biomass burning.

Delhi has so far been the most polluted capital in the world and the report made a distinction between 'greater' Delhi and New Delhi capital. Both are in the top 10 and the infamous distinction of being the world's most polluted capital goes to Chad's N'Djamena. National Capital's peripherals - Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurugram and Faridabad have seen a decline in pollution levels.

# IAF to open 39 military airports, 9 landing grounds for civilians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As domestic air travelers trending upwards after the COVID pandemic, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has decided to open up 39 military airports and nine advance landing grounds for civil usage. The move will help to enhance the connectivity to far-flung areas considered as remote for civilian usage but also help to promote tourism.

"Towards the common good envisaged by enhanced regional connectivity, the IAF has earmarked 39 military airfields and 9 Advance Ldg Grounds for use by civil aircraft. This Joint User Airfield scheme now gives access to areas that were earlier considered remote," said IAF in a tweet on Tuesday.

According to officials, the AAI will utilise these IAF airfields to operate civil flights under the RCS UDAN scheme. The MoD is handing over approximately 40 acres of land for development of civil terminals and necessary airfield infrastructure for commencing



RCS flights, said the MoD. As many as 23 airports regularly used by civil airlines, are IAF or Navy bases.

Landing in Pune, Goa, Srinagar or Chandigarh, even frequent fliers seldom realise they are at a military base, even if they notice IAF fighters parked at a distance.

Their plane parks in what is called a "civil enclave", where passenger facilities like check-in counters and baggage collection are located.

Earlier in June last year, the IAF announced that seven more military airports would increase their contribution to civil aviation by giving working

assistance and land to the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Accordingly, the IAF provided permission and handed over the defense land operated by the Ministry of Defence to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) at seven locations in Bagdogra, Darbhanga, Adampur, Utarlai, Sarsawa, Kanpur, and Gorakhpur.

With international air travel to and from India on a path of swift recovery, Indian carriers are cashing in, expanding their collective market share — by passengers — to a seven-year high, shows an analysis of data for the December quarter (October-December 2022), released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The cumulative market share of Indian carriers by passengers carried on international flights was 43.5 per cent in October-December 2022 up from 39.2 per cent in the corresponding period of 2019, the last full quarter of regular operations before Covid froze the aviation industry.

# MHA seeks suggestions on criminal law reforms from CMs, MPs, judges

New Delhi: The Ministry of Home Affairs has sought suggestions from all stakeholders, including chief ministers, judges of the Supreme Court and high courts, and MPs for the comprehensive amendments in criminal laws.

Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra said in Lok Sabha that a committee had been constituted under the chairpersonship of the vice-chancellor of National Law University, Delhi to suggest reforms in the criminal laws - the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has also sought suggestions from Governors, Chief Ministers of states, Lieutenant Governors and administrators of Union territories, Chief

Justice of India, Chief Justices of various High Courts, Bar Council of India, Bar Council of various states, various universities, law institutes and all MPs regarding comprehensive amendments in criminal laws, he said in reply to a written question.

The MHA said the government is committed to bring out a comprehensive legislation taking into account the recommendations of the committee and the suggestions received from all the stakeholders.

The legislation of such laws is a complex and lengthy exercise given the spectrum of divergent views of stakeholders and the entire procedure is a long drawn out one and no time limit can be fixed or given for this legislative process, said Minister.

# CDS: India emerged as first responder in disaster relief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has emerged first responder in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) at the global level, said Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on Tuesday, in his virtual message to a workshop on Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Relief, Risk Mitigation and Disaster Resilience.

The workshop was organized as part of India's Chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and was attended by speakers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Belarus, Mongolia, Pakistan and China along with speaker from Russia in the virtual mode. "In keeping with our cultural beliefs of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - the whole world is one family,

India has been playing an important role in providing HADR in the region and beyond", he added, citing the instances such as Operation Maitri - rescue operations during earthquake in Nepal, Assistance to Sri Lanka in 2016 during Cyclone Roanu, earthquake in Indonesia in 2018, flooding in Madagascar in January 2020 and supply of Vaccines during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Chauhan also said timely launch of Operation Dost following the recent earthquake in Türkiye is a testimony to India's willingness to extend help to all possible corners of the globe.

The CDS said collective approach is essential to mitigate the consequences of disasters and with this objective India has been holding multilateral exercises with various countries and multi-lateral organisations

such as the HADR exercise PANEX 21 for BIMSTEC members at Pune in 2021 and SMANVAY 22 for ASEAN members at Agra in 2022.

"By strengthening multi-lateral partnerships through engagement via regional mechanisms, improved interoperability, and faster response, we have played our role as the first responder in the region" he said. Chauhan said Armed forces along with dedicated organizational structure are often the first responders in the event of any disaster. The ability to work in hostile environment, organizational skills and logistics know-hows make the Armed Forces most suited for HADR operations.

Air Marshal BR Krishna, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee inaugurated the workshop.

# Lakhimpur violence: SC asks Sessions Judge to apprise it of future developments in trial

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the trial in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, in which Union Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish is among those facing prosecution, is not "slow paced" and directed the concerned sessions judge to keep apprising it about the future developments of the trial.

The Bench of Justices Surya Kant and J K Maheshwari observed though it is not monitoring the trial but it is having an "indirect supervision" on it.

A Bench said the interim direction contained in its January 25 order, by which it had granted eight-week interim bail to Ashish Mishra in the case, shall continue to operate. Advocate Prashant Bhushan,



representing the victim families, told the Bench that about 200 prosecution witnesses have to be examined and he is concerned about the "slow pace of the trial".

"The trial is not slow paced. We have received three letters from the trial judge," the bench observed, adding it had gone through the contents of the letters received from the First Additional District and Sessions Judge, Lakhimpur Kheri. The top court said as per the letters, examination of three

witnesses is over while cross-examination of one of them is going on. "We are not using the word monitoring but we are having indirect supervision on the trial and we will do that," it said, adding, "Let us continue with the same status for some more time."

On October 3, 2021, eight people were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri district's Tikunia after violence erupted when farmers were protesting against the then Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's visit to the area.

According to the Uttar Pradesh Police FIR, four farmers were mowed down by an SUV in which Ashish Mishra was seated.

Following incident, the driver of SUV and two BJP workers were allegedly lynched by angry farmers. A journalist also died involuntarily.

# Pak rakes up Kashmir issue in Inter-Parliamentary Union, India says it has no locus standi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking exception to reference to Kashmir, India has severely criticised Pakistan terming it an "exporter of terrorists" and maintaining that it has no locus standi on Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

This strong rebuttal came on Monday by Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra when Pakistan representative raked up the Kashmir issue in its habitual manner at the 146th Inter-

Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Bahrain. Countering Pakistan charge, Patra used Right of Reply and termed the neighbouring country an "exporter of terrorists".

In his speech, he said, "It is unfortunate that Pakistan has chosen once again to misuse the august platform by mentioning in their statement about Jammu and Kashmir which is an integral part of India. This mentioning is completely unacceptable." Patra further said, "The Union Territories of

Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have been and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India. No amount of rhetoric and propaganda from any country can override this fact.

Pakistan has no locus standi to comment on India's internal affairs. We have repeatedly called upon it to vacate Indian territories under its illegal and forcible occupation with immediate effect. It is ironic that a country, which is a known exporter of terrorists,

and responsible for inflicting countless cross-border terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir is claiming to champion the cause of human rights." Earlier in March, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ruchira Kamboj, had termed frivolous, baseless and politically motivated remarks made by Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir during a debate on 'Women, Peace and Security', at the UN Security Council.

# Sonowal urges corporate houses to set up Yoga cells

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Noting that corporate employees suffer from health issues such as depression, hypertension, obesity and general anxiety because of high stress levels, Union Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has exhorted all corporate houses to set up a "Yoga Cell" at their offices to maximize efficiency of their staff.

He said this after inaugurating the three-day Yoga Mahotsav 2023 on Monday to commemorate 100 days countdown to International Day of Yoga.

In his inaugural address, the minister talked about how the promotion of yoga and its widespread acceptance has positioned India as a leader in the global health and wellness industry.

Sonowal had also launched a one-minute video on "Y" Break Yoga for enabling larger masses, particularly for workaholics, to include Yoga in their lifestyle.

"Through the promotion of yoga and its widespread acceptance, India is positioning itself as a leader in the global health and wellness industry.

# Covid can cause recognition, navigation problems: Report

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In three years since the Covid-19 swept the world, but new signs of medical problems due to the virus continue to emerge with a team of researchers in a latest study now saying that the infection can cause "prosopagnosia," also known as face blindness i.e. difficulty in recognising faces and navigational problems.

The study, published in the journal Cortex, is the first to report "prosopagnosia," following symptoms consistent with a range of neurological problems. Normally, Prosopagnosia can result from stroke, traumatic brain injury



(TBI), or certain neurodegenerative diseases. Some cases are congenital or present at birth, in the absence of any brain damage. However, the researchers at the Dartmouth College in the US study has found that if Covid can cause a range of neurological problems, including the loss of

smell and taste, and impairments in attention, memory, speech, and language, known as "brain fog," it can also cause face blindness. The researchers happened to investigate the case of a 28-year-old Annie, a customer service representative and a part-time portrait artist. They noted that Annie, who

was diagnosed with Covid in March 2020 and suffered a symptom relapse two months later, was having difficulty with face recognition and navigation. "When I first met Annie, she told me that she was unable to recognise the faces of her family," said lead author Marie-Luise Kieseler, a graduate student in the department of psychological and brain sciences and member of the Social Perception Lab at Dartmouth.

Annie now relies on voices to recognise people that she knows. She also experienced navigational deficits after having Covid. "The combination of prosopagnosia and navigational deficits that Annie had

is something that caught our attention because the two deficits often go hand in hand after somebody either has had brain damage or developmental deficits," said senior author Brad Duchaine, Professor of psychological and brain sciences and principal investigator of the Social Perception Lab at Dartmouth.

"That co-occurrence is probably due to the two abilities depending on neighbouring brain regions in the temporal lobe." To determine if other people have experienced similar problems due to long Covid, the team obtained self-reported data from 54 individuals who had long Covid

with symptoms for 12 weeks or more; and 32 persons who had reported that they had fully recovered from Covid-19. "Most respondents with long Covid reported that their cognitive and perceptual abilities had decreased since they had Covid, which was not surprising, but what was really fascinating was how many respondents reported deficits," Kieseler said.

"One of the challenges that many respondents reported was a difficulty with visualising family and friends, which is something that we often hear from prosopagnosics," Duchaine. "Our study highlights the sorts of perceptual

problems with face recognition and navigation that can be caused by Covid-19 -- it's something that people should be aware of, especially physicians and other healthcare professionals," Duchaine noted.

According to health experts, Prosopagnosia isn't curable directly. "However, some of the causes of acquired prosopagnosia are curable. Resolving those problems might help with this condition. Prosopagnosia is usually permanent, and these recoveries aren't common. Ultimately, healthcare providers will show the ways to work around the patient's condition, limiting its impact on his/her life.



# Mamata cries for those losing jobs in SSC recruitment scam

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Looking defensive and anxious as never before, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday nearly broke down in a Government programme and begged reprieve for those thousands of people who had illegally obtained jobs in lieu of cash in Government schools and were getting the pink slip in hordes following High Court (HC) orders.

A special judicial team appointed by the Calcutta HC has found direct complicity of senior TMC functionaries including Ministers and Government staff in creating the job rackets that provided appointments to a whopping about 40-50,000 people over the past several years.

"Every day I am hearing that the jobs of 3,000-4000 people are being terminated. Representing a democratic party I cannot take

this pitiable condition of these people. My point is if I cannot provide jobs I have no right to take them away," a visibly morose Banerjee, usually known for stamping up and down the stage during her speech said in a programme at Alipur Court. The function was attended by judges of Calcutta HC and a bevy of senior advocates.

"There may have been some irregularities ... some people down there may have erred in providing these jobs ... but should they be terminated like this," Banerjee known for fiery speeches told the gathering with tears in her eyes. About five to six thousand people have already lost their jobs following Calcutta HC and the names of many more thousands were up for judicial scrutiny.

Experts would not see Banerjee's tears and the ED's claims separately.

"Mamata Banerjee would



not bend back very often ... there is something wrong ... she has information ... which is why they is beginning to crawl," said a political analyst from Jadavpur

University.

Referring to the ongoing Dearness Allowance (DA) stir which has seen the State Government employees descend

on the streets demanding DA on par with their Central Government counterparts Banerjee said the capacity of her Government was limited as unlike the Centre it neither controlled the RBI not the GST regime.

"I don't have a mint like the RBI which is controlled by the Centre, the Centre takes away the GST and does not give us our dues ... on the other hand we have to run a host of welfare schemes like Kanyashree, Laxmir Bhandar, pension schemes and so on ... so where do we get the money to pay DA ... Besides, the employees should also consider that the central government and state government jobs are different and so their DA is also different," she said literally transferring the DA onus on the Centre.

Reacting to the Chief Ministers speech seeking leniency for the SSC employees who

had purchased their employments depriving thousands of eligible candidates who had been agitating on the Kolkata streets BJP leader Rahul Sinha said, "Mamata Banerjee's Tuesday's speech has completely exposed her ... it has proved her connivance in the SSC scam ... she is crying for the terminated candidates who had obtained their jobs in lieu of Rs 10-20 lakhs because they will now catch the collar of the TMC ministers."

CPI(M) Rajya Sabha MP and senior counsel Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya who had been spearheading the SSC case said, "it is strange argument given by a Chief Minister to plead for the guilty who had robbed the jobs of others and were being paid by tax-payers money ... does she want lakhs of school students to be taught by incompetent teachers ... the people will give her the reply."

## Will send Pishi-Bhaipo to garage, says Suvendu

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari on Tuesday said that the days were not far when "the topmost leaders of the TMC would be in jail."

Speaking at a rally at Nandigram on the anniversary of Nandigram Diwas Adhikari who had once been the Man Friday of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during her land movements said "a number of senior TMC leaders have gone to jail for their roles in a number of scams ... we have already pushed the Pishi-Bhaipo to the back foot ... in a year's time you will see them in the garage (read jail)." Bengal

Chief Minister is the Pishi (aunt) of TMC MP and party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee also referred to as Bhaipo.

Bengal Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya immediately hit back saying Adhikari should better mind his own business because "who knows who will be in jail in times to come." Another TMC leader and Minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay said that Adhikari should better be cautious about making his statements.

"He should bat with a bit of caution because tomorrow a day may come when he has to join the TMC," Chattopadhyay said.

# Historic T5 Panthyal tunnel to open today

Many have died due to falling of stones on the treacherous J&K NH stretch

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU



Safety Valve! As the clock ticks down, witness the drive that captures mopping up works inside Tunnel T-5. With this diversion, Panthyal's treacherous stretch will be omitted forever. Put your hands together for the brave men-at-work."

"800-metre-long T5 tunnel on Panthyal stretch of the highway is set to be thrown open by March 15 while Kunfer tunnel is also expected to be completed by March 31, besides double lane of Ramban flyover and Banihal bypass to be completed by April 15 this year," official sources said.

According to the NHAI, "Pavement Quality Concrete work has started in the 925 meter long Tunnel T1 from Peerah to Kunfer in Udhampur-Ramban section of NH-44 in J&K. The tunnel will reduce the distance of this section by 2.98 km and is expected to be commissioned by March 31."

All these tunnels are a part of the highway realignment project, which would put an end to the ghost of shooting stones and disruption of traffic.

muters also faced many hardships due to prolonged delays on account of massive mudslides and frequent disruption of traffic.

Ramban Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mussarat Islam on Tuesday in a tweet said, "Panthyal's critical stretch on National Highway-44 will be diverted through Tunnel T-5 tomorrow. Quite historic".

Acknowledging the efforts of engineers and workers who labored hard 24x7 to ensure timely completion of the construction work Mussarat Islam posted another tweet after inspecting the construction site, "National Highway-44's

# Raj PFI case: NIA chargesheets two

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday said it has filed a chargesheet against two arrested members of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) in a case related to activities and agenda of violent extremism by the outfit being pursued in Rajasthan.

Mohammad Ashif alias "Asif" of Kota and Sadiq Sarraf of Baran in Rajasthan were charged under various Sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in a special court here on Monday, the agency said in a statement.

This was the first chargesheet filed by the agency in the case which was initially registered on September 19 last year at NIA headquarters here. "This case was registered in September 2022 to probe the criminal conspiracy, which had been hatched by PFI leaders/cadres with the aim of driving a wedge between different

communities in India through radicalisation and arms-training of gullible Muslim youth, training them in handling of weapons and explosives, and raising funds for carrying out acts of terror and violence with the ultimate objective of establishing Islamic Rule in India by 2047," it said.

Besides Ashif and Sarraf, PFI member Mohammad Sohail of Udaipur has already been arrested in the case.

"They (Ashif and Sarraf) are trained PFI members who were involved in recruitment and radicalisation of impressionable Muslim youth for the PFI for committing violent acts. They were also found involved in organising training camps in handling of weapons and explosives, instigating PFI cadres to pick-up arms and raising funds for carrying out violent activities. The men radicalised gullible Muslim youth by brainwashing them into believing that Islam was in danger in India," it said.

## Protests over toll on new B'luru-Mysuru Expressway

PTI ■ RAMANAGARA (K'TAKA)

Two days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway, several outfits staged protests at a toll plaza near here on Tuesday, opposing the National Highways Authority of India's (NHAI) decision to levy charges without proper service roads and passes for local residents. Opposition Congress workers too joined the protesters and held demonstrations.

The protesters are opposed to collecting toll fees until the entire project is completed. They have also expressed reservations regarding service roads not being built, and the toll rate being too high. Amid heavy presence of police personnel, protesters shouted slogans demanding justice and also criticised the Government, while some even threatened to destroy the toll plaza.

# No waste processing facilities at Brahmapuram plant: Panel

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The 'Queen of Arabian Sea' is no more a safe place to be in the backdrop of the fire and smoke that engulfed the metropolis for the last 13 days, according to the report submitted by the High Court (HC)-appointed expert committee to study the impact of the mishap that occurred in the Brahmapuram Waste Processing Plant in the city's suburbs.

The expert committee that held an on-the-spot study at Brahmapuram was agast to find that there are no waste processing or handling facilities

in the 70 acre plot. "It is a waste dumping yard and nothing more than that. There is no waste processing equipment and facility in this dumping yard. There is no fire-fighting equipment anywhere near the yard and the company that has been given the contract for waste processing has no technical know-how or machineries," said the report which was submitted to the HC on Tuesday.

The committee comprised the Chief Engineer, Local Self Government Department; Director, Solid Waste Management Swachhatha Mission; the Ernakulam

District Collector, the joint chief environmental engineer, KSPCB, secretary, Kochi Municipal Corporation and Secretary, District Legal Services Authority.

The HC is hearing a suo motu case filed based on a letter written by Justice Devan Ramachandran, a widely respected judge of the court to the Chief Justice drawing the latter's attention towards the callous approach of the Kerala Government towards the fire caused by the burning of plastic waste which has led to the whole of Kochi being covered in a haze of toxic smoke for the last two weeks.

## ED raids 10 spots in J&K over admissions to Pak colleges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday said it has carried out search operations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at 10 locations in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) in an investigation relating to the involvement of conspirators who were hand-in-glove with some educational consultancies manipulating or arranging admission of Valley students in various profession-

al courses, including MBBS in Pakistan-based colleges, institutions and universities.

The searches were conducted in Srinagar, Budgam, Kupwara and Anantnag districts of the Union Territory, the ED said in a statement.

The ED initiated investigation on the basis of an FIR registered under various Sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Indian Penal Code and chargesheet filed by Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK),

Srinagar against various people.

Those chargesheeted by CIK were Mohd. Akbar Bhat alias Zaffar Bhat, Fatima Shah, Altaf Ahmad Bhat, Qazi Yasir, Mohd. Abdullah Shah, Sabzar Ahmad Sheikh, Manzoor Ahmad Shah, Mohd. Iqbal Mir, Syed Khalid Geelani alias Khalid Andrabi, for their involvement in accumulating funds for terror activities on the pretext of admission of J&K students in various professional courses in Pakistan-based institutions.

## 18L Maha Govt staff on strike to press for OPS

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what may prove to be a Imajor challenge for the nine-month Shinde-Fadnavis government, nearly 18 lakh Maharashtra government employees – working at the state secretariat in south Mumbai, Zilla Parishads, municipal bodies, hospitals, teachers and non-teaching staff – went on an indefinite agitation from Tuesday to demand re-induction of Old Pension Scheme (OPS).

Defying the warning of action issued by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, the state government employees owing allegiance to the Government Employees Unions Steering Committee struck work taking the Shinde-led Sena-BJP alliance government by surprise. Shinde had on Monday said that the state government would constitute an adminis-




trative committee of top officers to study the OPS and other demands of the employees. "The committee would submit its report within a given time-frame," he said.

In the normal course, the state government employees were to go on strike from March 28. While warning the employees not to go on strike, the state government had earlier assured them that it would look into their demands, including the re-introduction of the OPS after

studying the financial implications of the move. However, the striking employees are rooting immediate re-introduction of OPS which was discontinued in the state in 2005.

Talking to media persons here in the evening, the Government Employees Unions Steering Committee Convenor Vishwas Katkar said: "A majority of the state government employees across departments have joined the strike and will continue till we succeed."




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

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
2.	Bronia Bassi, Luv Bassi, House No.87, Sector-17, Panchkula, Haryana, Panchkula 134109, A/c No: LBPNC00001854102	Flat No-KU4-2803, Kube Apartment, Jaypee Greens, Sector-128, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	14/01/2023 Rs. 38,12,241/-	11/10/2022
	Bronia Bassi, Luv Bassi, House No.87, Sector-17, Panchkula, Haryana, Panchkula 134109, A/c No: LBPNC00001861851	Flat No-KU4-2803, Kube Apartment, Jaypee Greens, Sector-128, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	14/01/2023 Rs. 1,01,184/-	11/10/2022

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

**Date : March 15, 2023**  
**Place : Fazilpur & Noida**  
**Authorized Officer**  
**ICICI Bank Limited**



**PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE**  
Registered office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051

**Corporate Office:** ICICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400059  
**Branch Office:** 1st floor, no.159/20, Sudha Complex, Atlas Road, Near Subhash Chowk, Sonipat- 131001 Whereas


The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower/ Demand Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Joginder Singh Malik (Borrower), Seema Rani (Co-Borrower), LHSNP00001341764.	N House/ Plot No.420 Sectors 65 Huda Faridabad Haryana Na Faridabad-121001. Bounded By- North: Plot No.419, south: Plot No.421, East: Others Vacant Plot, West: 20 Ft Road./ Date of Possession- 11-Mar-23	12-12-2022 Rs. 24,81,981/-	Sonepat-B
2.	Joginder Singh Malik (Borrower), Seema Rani (Co-Borrower), LHSNP00001341765.	N House/ Plot No.420 Sectors 65 Huda Faridabad Haryana Na Faridabad-121001. Bounded By- North: Plot No.419, South: Plot No.421, East: Others Vacant Plot, West: 20 Ft Road./ Date of Possession- 11-Mar-23	12-12-2022 Rs. 95,956/-	Sonepat-B

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

**Date : March 15, 2023**  
**Place: Faridabad**  
**Authorized Officer**  
**ICICI Home Finance Company Limited**



**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

**A) Short Term Fresh-Tender Work:-**

S. No.	Jobs No	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1.	69/DGM/SM (WC - 10) / ET/2022-23.	D/o & M/o Noida-Greater Noida Expressway (C/o Flowers Beds on Noida-Greater Noida Expressway at Ch.0.00km to 20.00km LHS), Noida.	89.37
2.	70/DGM/SM (WC - 10) / ET/2022-23.	D/o & M/o Noida-Greater Noida Expressway (C/o Flowers Beds on Noida-Greater Noida Expressway at Ch. 0.00km to 20.00 km RHS), Noida.	89.37

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 23.03.2023 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 24.03.2023 at 11.00 AM.

**B) Fresh-Tender Work:-**

S. No.	Jobs No	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
3.	51/DGM/SM (WC-2)/ 2022-23.	D/o Sector-51(C/o Road & drain for 5% abadi plot in Block-D of sector-51), Noida.	48.08
4.	53/GM/SM (WC-2)/ 2022-23.	Strengthening of road (P/L DBM & BC layer on the surface of road after laying sewer line in B-Block, Sector-31), Noida.	57.79

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 28.03.2023 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 29.03.2023 at 11.00 AM.

**C) Re-Tender Work:-**

S. No.	Jobs No	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
5.	47/GM/SM (WC-2)/ 2022-23.	M/o Road (M/o Underpass & flyover, contruction of RCC wall in place of Brick work beautification in Underpass at sector-18 on MP-2 road), Noida.	55.51
6.	51/DGM/SM (WC-2)/ 2022-23.	Strengthening of road (P/L DBM & BC due to laying of sewer line in A,B & C Block sector-19), Noida.	80.72
7.	75/DGM/SM (WC-9)/ ET/2022-23.	D/o Expressway (Annual Maintenance for misc. Civil Work & Painting work both side of Noida Greater Noida Expressway Ch.0.00 km to 10.00 km), Noida.	64.23
8.	70/DGM/SM (WC-9)/ ET/ 2022-23.	M/o Drain (Repair & covering of drain and laying & re-laying of inter locking tiles on side pateris of LIG flats in sector 135) Noida.	76.99

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 21.03.2023 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 22.03.2023 at 11.00 AM.

**Dy. General Manager, NOIDA**  
**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Relief to Govt

The SC verdict in the review of Bhopal gas case has gone against Govt, but it has brought the much-needed closure

The Supreme Court's verdict on the petition seeking more compensation from Union Carbide for the 1984 Bhopal Gas Case may be seen as a setback for the Centre, but in reality it is a much-needed closure to the huge human tragedy in India. The fact that it took almost four decades to reach a closure speaks volumes about not just the infamously tardy pace of the judicial process but also the institutionalised anti-business narrative and Leftist biases of public discourse. The SC pointed out that a settlement can be set aside in cases where it is vitiated by fraud. But "no such fraud has been pleaded by the Union of India. And their only contention relates to a number of victims, injuries caused... not contemplated at the time the settlement was affected." Much has been said and written about the criminal negligence by Union Carbide that resulted in the gas leak which killed thousands of people and adversely affected the health



of tens of thousands. The criticism is much deserved. Had the bosses of the American multinational corporation behaved responsibly, the tragedy could have been averted. In June 2010, a Bhopal court convicted all the eight accused guilty under Sections 304-A (causing death by negligence), 304-II (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 336, 337 and 338 (gross negligence) of the Indian Penal Code. Chairman Warren Anderson escaped; his escape is still shrouded in controversy. But the eight persons who were convicted included former Union Carbide chairman Keshub Mahindra, managing director Vijay Gokhle, vice-president Kishore Kamdar, works manager JN Mukund, production manager SP Choudhary, plant superintendent

KV Shetty, and production assistant SI Quershi. But what about the culpability of the politicians and bureaucrats who didn't enforce safety precautions on Union Carbide?

It is instructive to note that the Manmohan Singh government, which was forced to follow the agenda of Left-leaning activists, had set up a ministerial panel in the wake of the verdict. These activists and others appear to speak for the poor, victims of the system, etc., but their ulterior motive is a persistent jihad against businesses, especially foreign companies. Unsurprisingly, the Congress-led and Left-inspired United Progressive Alliance government demanded not action against the guilty government officials concerned but the extradition of Anderson. It wanted the case to be reopened and Union Carbide's successor companies made to pay an additional Rs 7,844 crore to the victims since, it argued, the scale of damage to human lives and the environment could not be estimated properly at the time of the settlement in 1989. The constitutional Bench of the apex court rightly said, "If it is reopened, then it may open a Pandora's Box and will be detrimental to the claimants." The review petition by the UPA regime was a painful legacy for the Modi Government, just like retrospective taxation. Thankfully, the SC has removed it.

### PICTALK



Tourists take a 'shikara' ride across the Dal Lake, in Srinagar

PTI

## Ethics, yoga are must for holistic growth

Moral education and yoga are great way to lay the foundation of good and purposeful life

Most social thinkers, educationalists, spiritual leaders and even parents now realize across the globe that moral education should be one of the most essential parts of the educational curriculum. Moral education helps children acquire the virtues or habits that help them live a good life and at the same time become constructive and productive for society. In this way, moral education should contribute not only to the students as individuals but also to social cohesion. Now amid growing tensions, children need to learn how to live harmoniously in society.

Hence, the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 provides for ethical reasoning, traditional Indian values and all basic human and Constitutional values such as seva, ahimsa, swachchhata, satya, nishkam karma, shanti, sacrifice, tolerance, diversity, pluralism, righteous conduct, gender sensitivity, respect for elders, respect for all people and their inherent capabilities regardless of background, etc.

The National Curriculum



Framework (NCF), 2005, developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), also sets the guidelines and direction for the development of syllabi and textbooks at all the school stages, emphasizes on ethical development, inculcating the values, attitudes and skills such as human rights, justice, tolerance, co-operation, social responsibility, non-violence and respect for cultural diversity, etc. required for living in harmony with oneself and with others.

The NCERT textbooks, developed on the basis of NCF, 2005, prescribe and integrate themes and examples related to moral conduct across the subject areas and across the various stages of

school education in the syllabi and textbooks for classes I-XII.

University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched a policy framework- "Mulya Pravah - Guidelines for Inculcation of Human values and Professional Ethics in Higher Educational Institutions". It emphasizes that stakeholders of an institution, be they faculty, students, administrators or others, should be guided by the core values like integrity, dedication, trusteeship, sustainability, inclusiveness, commitment, respectfulness, harmony and belongingness.

Moreover, education is a subject in the concurrent list of the Constitution and the majority of schools are under

the jurisdiction of State/Union Territory (UT) Governments, it is for the respective State/ UT government to take appropriate action to impart the moral education to the students of their schools.

The ministry had constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Prof. H.R. Nagendra on 15th January 2016 for making recommendations on Yoga Education in Universities to give the students a calming feeling while studying. The committee submitted its report in April 2016 and prescribed a curriculum for Yoga courses in its recommendations.

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(The writer is a senior Journalist)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

foundation of good and purposeful life

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# AAP Govt pushing Punjab into debt

Punjab Budget fails to stem the state's slide to financial bankruptcy



TARUN CHUGH

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) came to power in Punjab by promising the moon to the people. The Arvind Kejriwal-led political outfit has earned the tag of a party of freebies from economic commentators. The Punjab Budget presented by Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema fails to stem the slide of the state to financial bankruptcy.

Cheema has tried his best to play to the gallery by proposing a budget of Rs 196,462 crores while stating that it's 26 more than Rs 1,55,869 crores in the financial year 2022-23. The proposed expenditure expansion is not backed by revenue growth. The AAP-led government is further pushing Punjab into debt through increased borrowing. Punjab is already deep into debt. The Reserve Bank of India in its report on the state of the financial health of a few states has expressed concerns about the prevailing situations.

This is captured in the official data, as the revenue deficit has spiked from 1.99 per cent in 2022-23 to 3.32 per cent. Consequently, the fiscal deficit has zoomed from 3.78 per cent in 2022-23 to 4.98 per cent proposed for the 2023-24 fiscal. The situation has further aggravated the financial situation of Punjab, as the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections remained at Rs 19,000 crore against a target of Rs 20,550 crore in the current fiscal. This accounts for a shortfall of Rs 1,500 crores.

Punjab is yet to come out with an industrial policy as promised by the AAP government even while industrialists are visiting Uttar Pradesh and other states in search of alternative investment opportunities. Economic activities seek peace and tranquillity as a precondition. But the Punjab government's evident neglect of the law-and-order situation is making a negative impact on economic activities. This has been captured by the state government missing out on achieving the targeted GST collections.

The poor track record on the revenue front has been



documented by the state Budget. Against the target by the state government of Rs 95,378 crores in revenue receipts, Punjab could manage just a net of Rs 93,563.21 crores. This is being bridged by additional borrowings. The Central government has already flagged that Punjab's debt situation is worrisome. Independent economists have for years been calling for corrective measures. But the incumbent Punjab government is paying the least regard to the well-being of the future generations of Punjab by pushing the state further into a debt trap.

The ability of state agencies to collect revenue is under severe stress. This can be seen in the performance of the transport department. Punjab Roadways could earn only Rs 90 crores against a target of Rs 335 crores set by the state government. Similarly, urban development revenue is also short by Rs 69 crore as the government could collect only Rs 200 crore.

The total debt of Punjab in the 2022-23 fiscal was pegged at Rs 3.112 lakh crores. Punjab's debt has now zoomed to an estimated Rs 3.47 lakh crores. The state



THE TOTAL DEBT OF PUNJAB IN THE 2022-23 FISCAL WAS PEGGED AT RS 3.112 LAKH CRORE. PUNJAB'S DEBT HAS NOW ZOOMED TO AN ESTIMATED RS 3.47 LAKH CRORE

debt is close to 180 per cent of the annual budget of Punjab. This makes the financial situation scary for Punjab, and the state government may soon begin defaulting on its obligations, while also compromising the aspirations of the people to create assets in education and health for better prospects for the future generations of the state. Already, the youth in Punjab are battling an extraordinary unemployment situation, making them vulnerable to falling victim to drug cartels and organized armed gangs.

This is being reflected in the state of education as the state against the promise of enhancing 100 schools to the status of institutions of eminence has just added 13 more numbers, while the actual world could take place only in the case of four schools in the last year. It must be stressed that the AAP is running the government in Punjab now for almost one year.

On the health front, the Punjab Budget has made attempts to be clever by repackaging the Central government's 'Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres' into 'Mohalla Clinics'. The

state government is just trying to be clever to misguide the people in the state. The status of Punjab being a debt-laden state has begun showing the impact on several fronts. The state is not able to modernize the police. The organized armed gangs are equipped with automatic assault rifles. The police step back from the gangs whose writ run large in the state.

In a survey of 30.46 lakh beneficiaries in Punjab conducted by the Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development, it was found that the number of beneficiaries dipped by a whopping 90,248. The state government failed to undertake the construction of houses for the economically weaker sections last year. But that has not stopped the AAP government from making a promise to build 10,000 houses in this fiscal. The performance of the state government on environmental management, solid waste management and several other areas remains abysmal, making the state cut a sorry figure on the national stage.

(Author is the national general secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MIND YOUR LANGUAGE!

Sir — It was a gentle breeze of fresh air when BJP MP Arvind did not take Bandi Sanjay's remarks on Kavitha, BRS MLC, lightly, notwithstanding the fact that he himself is often criticised as a bad-mouthed politician. He was perhaps trying to salvage the sagging image of the party as a result of this unwarranted and on-the-spur comment made by the President of the Telangana BJP party. Turn back 20-30 years, Bandi's remark would have gone unnoticed. But today we are in the digital world and are audible, visible at the drop of a hat. People have become sensitive and one has to be careful while airing on public platforms. Anything can become a political brownie or a casualty depending on who is commenting on whom.

Take the case of former Dy CM Rajaiah had to eat the humble pie for the sake of saving the BRS party's image. It is perhaps high time Legislators and Parliamentarians are given some orientation on gender issues more so keeping the present volatile digital world where social media appears to be the most anti-social though it does serve some good cause, albeit at a low level. Most SM users prefer to be silent and that is more dangerous than those making brazen remarks. SM users should express their views boldly.

D Nagarjuna | Hyderabad

### 'NAATU NAATU' ALL THE WAY

Sir — RRR's song Naatu Naatu has won the award for Best Original Song at the 95th Academy Awards. The song is composed by M.M. Keeravani with lyrics by Chandrabose and features the voices of Rahul Sipligunj and Kaala Bhairava. SS Rajamouli's RRR has made history as Naatu Naatu is the first Indian song to win the category. RRR's Naatu Naatu has landed a satisfying win at the Oscars 2023. The song was up against Applause from Tell It Like a Woman, Hold My Hand from Top Gun: Maverick, Lift Me Up from Black Panther: Wakanda Forever and This Is a

### Kohli scores 28th century



The long wait has ended. Three years and four months later, Virat Kohli has gotten the monkey off his back by scoring his 28th Test century in the fourth Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia. Virat Kohli replicates Gavaskar's surreal feat, ends 1205-day wait with first Test century in 3 years in a sleeping beau-

ty at Ahmedabad. Last year, Kohli snapped his century-less streak with a hundred each in T20Is and ODIs, and then added a 74th earlier this year against Sri Lanka in an ODI. And today, on a bright and sunny Day 4 of the Ahmedabad Test, Kohli finally buried the ghosts of his torrid run in Tests with a century that he will remember for a long time. he nudged a couple of singles to complete his 75th international ton, raise his bat, take his helmet off and soak in the electric atmosphere of the stadium electrifying. Kohli won the Man of the match award and Ashwin and Jadeja won the Man of the series. Thus, the R-R combination did the trick in the sporting field as well.

CK Ramanathan | Ghaziabad

Life from Everything Everywhere All at Once. RRR is one of three Indian films to be nominated at the Oscars in 2023. While All That Breathes did not win in the Best Documentary Feature category, The Elephant Whisperers won the Best Documentary Short category.

CK Ramani | Mumbai

### PM'S POTSHOTS AT RAGA

Sir —Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi took potshots at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi stating that people should not support those who make comments from London. The Prime Minister's statement was a direct jibe at Rahul Gandhi who said that Indian democracy is under attack and every institution of democracy is compromised while delivering a lecture at the Cambridge University. Rahul Gandhi also said in London that the voices of Opposition leaders are muzzled as mics of the leaders in Parliament are kept off. Rahul Gandhi never attacked India per se, what he said was only that democracy and constitutional values were being subverted and undermined in the country under PM Modi which is a cardinal truth. Interestingly, the PM said: "It is unfortunate that questions were raised on India's democracy in London".

But he forgets that in 2015 from Seoul to Toronto and Shanghai to Abu Dhabi, PM Modi through his pathetic diatribes against political opponents and previous governments (people said, 'don't know what sin we had committed to having been born in India. Is this country, is this a government, what kind of people... let's go somewhere else. And people used to leave. Industry people would say, 'We don't want to live here anymore') wherever he goes is making India into a laughing stock. Aam aadmi wants to know, isn't that insulting to the freedom fighters and every citizen who works hard to contribute to the nation-building process? It is with a profound sense of sadness that one is watching an Indian PM lowering the prestige of his country on foreign soil. Fully agree with PM Modi: "No power in this world can harm India's democratic traditions", but the way the country is run by the Modi government, does not bring back democracy in the country. It is a time-tested tactic of PM Modi to equate himself with the Nation to put down his opponents whenever he draws criticism.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

DIGITAL TRAINING IN HEALTHCARE IS VITAL

It can provide healthcare professionals with an evidence-based approach to patient care



DEEPAK SHARMA

With digital infrastructure continually developing in the healthcare space in the country, there has been an accompanying need to train the healthcare workforce adequately. Digital training of healthcare professionals has become increasingly important in recent years as the world strives towards achieving sustainable development goals. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established in 2015 as a universal call to action to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity. One of the key components of achieving these goals is to ensure access to quality healthcare for all. To ensure this, healthcare professionals must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to provide high-quality care.

Digital training of healthcare professionals can play a critical role in achieving the SDGs by increasing access to quality healthcare and pro-



moting health equity. Online courses, e-learning platforms, and digital training tools can support healthcare professionals' access to training and education regardless of their location or work schedule. This is important in rural areas where access to training resources may be limited.

**Bridging the urban-rural gap in healthcare**

Given the wide gap in healthcare infrastructure and service accessibility that exists between urban locations and the hinterland, digital training of healthcare professionals would help in narrowing the gap. The fact that the smaller towns and the countryside are not only deficient in supporting infrastructure but are also severely understaffed, needs a long-term resolution. Digital training would not only upgrade the skills of the existing under-trained and relatively inexperienced professionals but also add to the talent pool in smaller towns and villages. This in turn would improve the quality of care and patient outcomes in such places thereby fulfilling the principle of universal health coverage embedded in the SDGs.

**Improving knowledge and practices on women and child health**

Healthcare and related spheres have been one of the cornerstones of the UN-led initiative. Indeed, of the 17 SDGs, SDG 3 aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for people of all age groups. As an extension, there has been an emphasis on achieving universal health coverage (UHC) and access to quality health care leaving no one left behind. Some of the other key health-related objectives that SDG 3 seeks to achieve include the reduction of maternal mortality, ending all preventable deaths under five years of age, fighting communicable diseases, reduction of NCD-led mortality and promoting mental health, among others.

**Addressing emergency care gaps with life support training**

Shortage of emergency care facilities and skilled personnel results in the loss of golden hour leading to the loss of lives in emergency cases involving accidents, heart attacks, cardiac arrests and strokes etc. Despite the availability of emergency care manpower and services in urban areas, the lack of well-trained personnel affects the quality of administering life-saving treatment. Digital training can play a significant role in reducing the skill gap. Courses like Basic Life Support (BLS) comprising Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and related programs like Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) can prepare healthcare professionals at all levels.

**Improving healthcare quality and accessibility**

The lack of standardized healthcare practices hampers the objective of achieving SDGs which can lead to disparities in care and negative health outcomes. Digital training can provide healthcare professionals with a consistent, evidence-based approach to patient care. Digital training of healthcare professionals is an important step towards achieving the SDGs. Increasing access to quality healthcare education can play a critical role in achieving a more sustainable and equitable world. Investing in digital training programs for healthcare professionals can help to ensure that the SDGs are met and we are on track towards achieving our goals.

*(The writer is Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, MedLern)*

# RBI's fresh approach is promising

RBI is now making economic policies that are based on domestic realities. It is no longer towing the policies of central banks in the West



The US has once more bailed out a failed bank. Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) had about \$209 billion in assets. It was hailed as one of the best US banks. The California-based financial institution was known as a new-age banking institution with high technology quotient. Over a period, SVB drove the startups to dizzying heights with ease of access to funds, enabling venture capitalists to ride the bandwagon of a fast-paced capitalist play to chase the topline.

In 14 years, the US had to bail out another banking institution. The SVB collapse is stated to be the second biggest in US banking history and the first major collapse after the Lehman Brothers went broke. The principal reason for the SVB collapse is cited as the rush of the depositors to withdraw their money. The SVB had to sell its bonds at heavy discounts after taking major haircuts. The SVB collapse is linked to the rate hikes in the US.

The US Federal Reserve remains hawkish. The rate hikes have been aggressive, and the peak rate is now threatening to top six per cent in the US. The commentaries coming from the US Federal Reserve give hints of a long string of hikes in the next few months. The high rate regime makes the financial institutions vulnerable as the gaps between the deposit and lending rates become narrow while reducing margins for the banks to stay healthy.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has moved fast to check on the likely impact on the startups. Israel is a global startup leader. Union Minister for IT and Electronics Rajeev Chandrashekar has also said that he would take stock of the potential exposure of the Indian startup ecosystem to the failed SVB. Over time, we will know the full extent of the impact on the world economy and also India about the failure of the SVB to survive the rate hike spiral in the US.

In India, the immediate memory of a banking institution going broke is of the Yes Bank. The Reserve Bank of India and



THE US FEDERAL RESERVE REMAINS HAWKISH. THE RATE HIKES HAVE BEEN AGGRESSIVE, AND THE PEAK RATE IS NOW THREATENING TO TOP 6 PER CENT IN THE US

the government worked in tandem to stabilize the situation. The State Bank of India had stepped into the situation with equity and capital infusion to instil confidence among the customers of Yes Bank. Within a short period, Yes Bank is now looking healthy and is on the path to normalcy. But the Yes Bank had gone broke for reasons not associated with the SVB collapse.

The Indian parliament stepped in to establish a robust financial market regulatory architecture to build an ecosystem to ensure that there are no lapses on the part of the board of management to compromise on the banking principles. Satisfactorily, no banking institution after the Yes Bank has shown signs of distress even while there had been a few cases of the cooperatives. With the unveiling of the Ministry of Cooperatives and measures of the RBI, rural banking is also largely now in safe hands.

But it's worthwhile to examine and study if the monetary policy of India is indeed coming out with the right recipe to deal with the macroeconomic challenges faced by the country. The RBI is mandated by parliament to manage inflation. Under the amended law, the RBI is also mandated to ensure that inflation stays in a range, and the Central Bank is liable to inform parliament if the ceiling is breached for three successive months.

But the last two sessions of parliament didn't show any signs of the lawmakers being worried about the ability of the RBI to manage inflation within the mandated range. Winter and the first half of the budget sessions of parliament were largely washed out on account of the ruckus in the two Houses.

It's pertinent to ask the RBI to

offer empirical evidence that its stance of hiking rates is working to cool down inflation. There is ample evidence for a contrarian position that the monetary policy obsessed with hiking rates doesn't work. Some of the leading economic thinkers the world over have warned that the Central banks globally by sticking to their singular obsession to hike rates would take the people into a long spell of recession.

Europe is already in the grip of a recession. The US is almost at the stage of recession. India is the only economy growing at about seven per cent. China sunk to a three per cent growth rate. Can India afford to arrest its growth rate by squeezing out capital for businesses?

It's also worthwhile to ask why the RBI is part of the global herd mentality of the Central banks. Aren't the people who constitute the RBI monetary policy committee (MPC) still holding close to their hearts the 19th-century economic worldviews? Are the MPC members really on board with the government's resolve for a self-reliant India? Empirically, answers appear to be disappointing.

Medium and small enterprises (MSMEs) are facing the heat of capital inadequacy. Debt servicing is robbing them of their working capital. The appetite to take a fresh working capital loan is fast reducing. India certainly doesn't have the comfort of the developed world to compromise its growth prospects by blindly following the US Federal Reserve.

The old mindset among the people was to save for the future. Today's mindset is to spend and enjoy life. Unlike the popularity of the national savings schemes, Kisan Vikas Patra of the last century, the equity market, pension funds, and mutual funds are now

popular among most of the people in the country. The RBI MPC actions are completely opposed to the new-age investment and savings mantra of the people, which are also being encouraged by the new income tax regime. The RBI needs urgently to smell changes and breathe fresh air. The tightening of monetary policy is a surefooted recipe to arrest Indian growth. India's demographic dividend prospects may stand compromised.

The US and the developed world are guilty of taking the easy route to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. They resorted to printing money. They flooded their markets with cash. India treated the path of reason and maturity. We didn't print cash. We insulated the vulnerable from the risks of the pandemic with schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna. We came out with production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes to give a new direction to the economy. When we didn't copy the developed world in dealing with the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, why should we toe the line of their Central banks by raising the policy rates?

Now that the MPC of the RBI is now showing signs of an independent economic worldview it's incumbent upon parliament to discuss issues threadbare. Parliament must ponder why India lacks a 25-year plan for policy rates. Not only the small and marginal industries but also the middle class must be protected from the high-interest rate regime, which has already burdened them with high EMIs. The RBI MPC must not remain static in their ways. The world is changing fast. We must embrace agility. Smell the change, RBI!

*(The writer is a policy analyst)*

# Community radio is promoting local talent

Community radio is a great way to bring about sustainable social change and conserve local culture

Radio is an important medium that helps in fostering intercultural dialogues, ensuring plurality and creating a sense of belonging amongst the members of the Community. It is an effective means of creating a peaceful environment in societies. World Radio Day is celebrated every year by UNESCO on February 13, bringing together all stakeholders including the broadcasters and policymakers. This year, UNESCO decided to celebrate World Radio Day under the theme of "Radio and Peace" so that the radio stations- public, private and community radios- can effectively raise key issues in their local languages in the peace process and deliver crucial information to those who



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR

*(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman of the Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh)*

need it the most.

The World Radio Day celebration was also unique this year because India had assumed the Presidency of G20 and 6th Edition of The Radio Festival (TRF) which is organized by the NGO- Seeking Modern Applications for Real Transformation (SMART) was hosted in collaboration with the G20 Secretariat with the support of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Prasar Bharti, UNESCO, UNICEF and CEMCA. The Radio Festival included radio practitioners from all three sectors viz All India Radio (AIR), Commercial and Community Radios covering plenary, panel discussions and dialogues on various development issues. One

of the important themes of The Radio Festival was 'Preserving culture: Folk Music and Indigenous Languages'.

Community radios are more localized than AIR and Commercial Radios. They enable communities to become both producers and listeners of their content, generating programming that is more specific and relevant to the needs and interests of communities. Community radio is a significant medium because it functions as a dynamic archive of the cultural traditions of communities. It provides a platform for local artists to showcase their talent and promote and preserves local languages and indigenous traditions. In our world of pervasive globalised knowledge systems, community radio stations, embedded in the cultural landscape of the communities in which they operate, offer meaningful, localised ways of heritage conservation.

Garhwal, comprising seven districts of Uttarakhand, is known for its rich and diverse cultural traditions. In most villages, folk music traditions such as jagar (an all-night-long ritual performance accompanied by dhol damaun (used collectively, they are drums made from copper, wood and animal hide) and daunri thaali (a plate-like percussion instrument)), Bagadwali (a folk music tradition which chronicles the story of a local hero, Jeetu Bagadwal) and Pandwali (the music that

accompanies Pandav Nritya, a dance based on the story of the Pandavas in Mahabharata) are kept alive by dedicated artistes from the community. Despite possessing a lot of talent, due to economic constraints and lack of exposure, the local artistes were unable to reach out to an audience beyond their immediate community. This void was filled up by Mandakini ki Aawaz, which emerged as the first operational community radio from the Rudrapur district. Since its inception, Mandakini ki Awaaz was driven by the desire to give Garhwali artists, musicians and performers a platform that was easily accessible and one that would help them reach out to a larger audience.

Madhuri and many more artists like her in different parts of the country are the perfect examples of the roles played by community radios in nurturing local talent.

An avid singer, Madhuri was encouraged by community members to record something. She sang a few Garhwali songs. Her voice became popular among listeners in the radio's listenership area within a short span, transforming the young 13-year-old into a popular singer. Another artiste who could reach a wider audience through the radio station is Bhagirath Negi, a Bagadwali singer.

Despite his talent, he was not known outside his village. He got an opportunity of recording a few Bagadwali songs which were broadcast

on Mandakini ki Awaaz, after which he was invited to other villages to give performances. Now, he not only performs his music but also helps community members to organise Bagadwali performances.

For most of the operational community radios, the prohibitive fees are a deterrent to playing copyrighted music. However, this disadvantage has fostered a symbiotic relationship between local artists and the station: while the station relies on community members for producing content, local artists have an accessible broadcast medium that foregrounds their skills and talent.

*(This is the first part of a two-part series on radio. To be continued)*



# Imran tells party to continue struggle even if he is killed

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's ousted prime minister Imran Khan Tuesday asked his supporters to stand up for their rights and continue the struggle even if he is killed or arrested, hours after clashes erupted between the police and his party workers who gathered outside his residence here to foil his arrest in the Toshakhana case.

Khan's video message was released by his party on social media as police arrived at his Zaman Park residence to arrest him. Police fired tear gas and used water cannons to disperse Khan's supporters, who reportedly hurled stones at policemen, resulting in injuries.

In the video message, Khan urged his supporters to come out for real freedom as police arrived to arrest him. "They think that after my arrest, the nation will fall asleep. You have to prove them wrong," 70-year-old Khan said in the video.

"God has given me everything, and I am fighting this battle for you. I have been fighting this battle all my life, and I will continue to do so," he said.

"If something happens to me and I am sent to jail or if I am killed, you have to prove that you will struggle without Imran Khan and not accept the slavery of these thieves and of the one person who has been making decisions for the country," he said.

A senior police officer of Islamabad police said that his team has come here to arrest the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman in the Toshakhana case. Khan has been in the crosshairs for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana and selling



## NBAW against Khan suspended

**Islamabad (PTI):** An Islamabad court on Tuesday suspended till March 16 a non-bailable arrest warrant against former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan for threatening a woman magistrate while addressing a public gathering here last year.

The Islamabad district and sessions court on Monday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Khan for using threatening language against Additional District and Sessions Judge Zeba Chaudhry and the Islamabad police officials. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief subsequently challenged Monday's order and Additional Sessions Judge Faizan Haider Gilani after hearing arguments suspended the arrest warrants till March 16 when the next hearing has been scheduled. Khan's counsel contended that "due to

security threat to the life of petitioner, the petitioner could not appear before the learned trial court", Khan, the 70-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician, who has been recovering from a gunshot injury from an assassination attempt in Wazirabad last year, has skipped indictment hearings in these cases.

"Now to come up for arguments on March 16. In the meanwhile, operation of the impugned order is hereby suspended till the next date," the court maintained. Lawyers Naeem Panjotha and Intizar Panjotha appeared in court in Tuesday's hearing, where Panjotha argued that all the sections invoked against the PTI chief were bailable to which the judge asked if non-bailable arrest warrants had been issued for Khan earlier as well.

them for profit.

TV footage showed police slowly approaching the Zaman Park residence of Khan behind an armoured vehicle that was dispersing his supporters with a water cannon. Khan's supporters, who had covered their faces

with pieces of cloth, pelted stones at policemen. According to reports, Islamabad Deputy Inspector General (Operations) Shahzad Bukhari, who was leading the police team, was injured. He was seen walking with the help of two officials. Both Khan's

supporters and policemen were injured in the clashes.

PTI leader Shireen Mazari shared a video in which tear gas could be seen entering Khan's residence. "They're shelling Imran Khan's house too, a leader who requested everyone to stay peaceful and patient. Democracy seems to be suspended in the country, no?" the official Twitter handle of the party tweeted.

Meanwhile, the party's deputy leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that the PTI leadership is ready to find out a "possible way out" to avert bloodshed. "Show me the warrant. I will first read and understand it. Then, I will speak to Imran Khan and my lawyers," he told the police.

Khan's party moved the Islamabad High Court against the arrest warrants issued in the Toshakhana case. Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq fixed the hearing for Wednesday while rejecting the party's request to conduct the hearing today. The plea has been fixed for hearing tomorrow (March 15) despite the objections raised by the registrar's office, Khan's lawyer Ali Bukhari said.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, however, said that officials would arrest Khan in accordance with the court's directives and produce him in court. The official Twitter handle of the party earlier urged supporters and workers to gather outside the residence and 'remain peaceful'. A large number of PTI workers equipped with clubs and sticks were present outside Khan's residence to resist the police action. The police blocked all roads leading to the house of the PTI chairman by placing containers and riot personnel took positions to launch the operation.

## Maryam: IMF treating Pak like a colony

**Lahore (PTI):** Pakistan is a "hostage" to the IMF which is treating the cash-strapped country like a "colony", senior leader of PML-N Maryam Nawaz has said while lambasting former prime minister Imran Khan for flouting the previous agreements with the global lender. Pakistan's economy is in dire straits. The country is awaiting a much-needed USD 1.1 billion tranche of funding from the Washington-based International Monetary Fund (IMF). "The IMF is not ready to trust us. Pakistan is a hostage to the IMF and it is treating the country like a colony. Even if we try to come out of its clutches, we can't," Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML-N) leader Maryam said while addressing the youth and social media activists in Model Town here on Monday. She castigated Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chairman Imran Khan for flouting the previous IMF agreement, the Dawn newspaper reported.

"Because of this today we are begging for Rs 1 billion," the 49-year-old leader said. She drew the comparison of her father Nawaz Sharif's government with that of Khan, saying the cricketer-turned-politician was "launched to destroy the country".

Maryam, who is the daughter of former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif, has launched several attacks on Khan for selling off gifts presented to him when he was the prime minister and has accused him of pushing Pakistan to the brink of default.

She also said Imran should be arrested. "Why is he hiding behind the party workers? He again wants to become the prime minister. I ask what he has done that they make him PM again.

## Russian missile hits Ukrainian apartment building; 1 killed

AP ■ KYIV

A Russian missile struck an apartment building in the centre of Kramatorsk on Tuesday, killing at least one person and wounding seven others in one of Ukraine's major city strongholds in its eastern Donetsk region as it fights against Moscow's invasion, officials said. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted a video showing gaping holes in the facade of the low-rise building that bore the brunt of the strike. The Ukrainian general prosecutor's office and regional Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko also reported on the attack, posting photos of the building with mounds of rubble in front of it. The impact damaged nine apartment blocks, a kindergarten, a local bank branch and two cars, Kyrylenko said. The war, which erupted after Russia's launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022, has brought

heavy civilian casualties. Tuesday's victims were among at least seven civilians killed and 30 wounded in 24 hours, Ukraine authorities said. They included a 55-year-old woman killed when a Russian shell hit her car Tuesday in a border town in northeastern Ukraine. "Russian troops are striking residential buildings, schools and hospitals, leaving cities on fire and in ruins," Kyrylenko, the regional governor, said on Ukrainian television.

"The Russians mark each metre (yard) of their advance in the region not only with their own blood, but also with the (lost) lives of civilians," Kramatorsk houses the local Ukrainian army headquarters. Ukrainian authorities say it has been regularly targeted by Russian shelling and other attacks in the past.

A missile strike on the city's train station last April, which Kyiv and much of the

international community blamed on Moscow, killed several dozen people and wounded more than 100.

Russia had welcomed a Chinese peace proposal to end the fighting, but Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that Kyiv's refusal to have talks leaves Moscow with only military options. Beijing has said it has a "no limits friendship" with Russia and has refused to criticize Moscow's invasion, or even refer to it as an invasion. "We must achieve our goals," Peskov told reporters.

"Given the current stance of the Kyiv regime, now it's only possible by military means." However, Moscow's pursuit of its goals in Ukraine has been slowed by poor war management and short resources after being beaten back at the end of last year in a Ukrainian counter-offensive, military analysts say.



Britain's Camilla, The Queen Consort meets students during a visit to Elmhurst Ballet School to celebrate the school's centenary with current students, staff and alumni, in Birmingham, England on Tuesday. The Queen Consort, who as The Duchess of Cornwall became Patron of the school in 2006, will attend a special centenary performance and hear about recent developments in ballet teaching being spearheaded by the school. AP/PTI

## Meta to lay off another 10k staff

AP ■ NEW YORK

Facebook-parent Meta on Tuesday said it will lay off another 10,000 workers and will not fill another 5,000 positions, announcing the second round of significant job cuts by the tech major in four months. The latest move comes after Meta slashed approximately 13 per cent of its workforce, or 11,000 jobs in November last year, in the single largest round of cuts in the company's history.

In a Facebook post on Tuesday, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said the job cuts will take place "over the next couple of months." "We expect to announce restructurings and layoffs in our tech groups in late April, and then our business groups in late May," he wrote. In a "small number of cases, it may take through the end of the year to complete these changes," he said. The grim news for the tech industry came days after the Silicon Valley Bank, which catered to start-ups, collapsed. "Overall, we expect to reduce our team size by around 10,000 people and to close around 5,000 additional open roles that we haven't yet hired," Zuckerberg said.

As of September 2022, Meta reported a headcount of 87,314, per a securities filings. With 11,000 job cuts announced in November and the 10,000 announced on Tuesday, it would bring the firm's headcount down to around 66,000, according to CNN.

Meta is among the big tech companies to undergo layoffs amid higher inflation, recession fears and pandemic-induced demand. Earlier this year, Amazon, Google-parent Alphabet and Microsoft have announced major job cuts impacting tens of thousands of tech workers across the globe. Shares of Meta rose more than 6 per cent in early trading on Tuesday following the announcement.

## UK Govt's aid watchdog critical of 'fragmented' approach to India funds

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK government's independent aid watchdog on Tuesday delivered a strong critique of the country's "fragmented" approach to the development assistance for India over recent years, which amounts to GBP 2.3 billion between 2016 and 2021 and makes India a "substantial recipient" of bilateral aid.

The Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI), which is tasked with the scrutiny of the UK government's official aid to countries, notes in its India Country Portfolio Review that it would be a surprise to many to see UK aid to India continuing at a high level despite a shift in the relationship in 2015 - in keeping with the Indian government's preference for a partnership of equals, rather than a traditional donor-recipient relationship. According to the ICAI assessment, India remains the largest recipient of UK development investment in

the form of loans and equity investments into the private sector that aim to achieve development impact alongside a modest financial return. "The UK's aid to India is now very different to that provided a decade ago. The UK no longer offers financial support to the government, nor does it fund direct poverty reduction interventions in the poorest states," notes the ICAI review.

"India is nonetheless still a substantial recipient of UK bilateral aid, ranking 11th in 2021.

When BII [British Investment International] investments are taken into account, we estimate that India received approximately GBP 2.3 billion in UK aid between 2016 and 2021 although it should be noted that the GBP 129 million of Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) investments within this figure have generated some returns to the UK taxpayer," it reads.

## US President expected to sign new order on gun control

**San Diego (AP):** President Joe Biden is expected to sign an executive order on Tuesday aiming to increase the number of background checks to buy guns, promote better and more secure firearms storage and ensure U.S. law enforcement agencies are getting the most out of a bipartisan gun control law enacted last summer. The Democratic president plans to unveil his latest efforts at curbing gun violence in a speech from Monterey Park, California, said a senior White House official, who discussed the order ahead of its signing on the condition of anonymity. In January, a gunman stormed a dance hall in the community near Los Angeles and shot 20 people, killing 11, following a Lunar New Year celebration.

Biden's rhetoric has only grown stronger around guns — he calls for banning so-called assault weapons routinely in his speeches — and Democrats didn't push such a vocal anti-gun platform even during the Obama administration, when Biden was vice-president.

## Biden seeks to show stability in bid to avert banking chaos

AP ■ WASHINGTON

In 2016, Vice President Joe Biden warned against efforts to unravel banking regulations that Democrats had fought to implement following the nation's financial crisis, just as the emerging Trump administration was determined to loosen those strict banking rules. Biden argued that without the far-reaching 2010 banking overhaul known as Dodd-Frank, financial institutions would continue to gamble with consumers' cash and ultimately hurt the middle class.

"We can't go back to the days when financial companies take massive risks with the knowledge that a taxpayer bailout is around the corner when they fail," Biden said in a speech at Georgetown University in the waning days of the Obama administration. Now there's a banking crisis on his watch as president, and Biden is moving aggressively to assure the public that it is contained, bank executives will be fired, deposits are safe and taxpayers aren't on the hook —



US President Joe Biden attends a press conference after a trilateral meeting with Australian PM, British PM at Point Loma naval base in San Diego, US on Monday

measures also designed to calm jittery financial markets.

As he contemplates an announcement for a second term, Biden's ability to avert a contagion among financial institutions will test his contention that his administration represents competence and stability in contrast to the chaos of the Donald Trump years.

His call for additional regulation, though, is likely to run

into stiff resistance in the Republican-controlled House and even among some moderate Democratic lawmakers who joined Republicans to loosen some rules in a 2018 law — not to mention criticism from the still-forming 2024 Republican field that has already labelled his actions a bailout by just another name. Privately, Biden has been adamant that the government's intervention would not be

like that of 2008, when Congress authorised billions in taxpayer cash to rescue financial institutions that were deemed too big to fail. That's according to a senior White House official, who was not authorized to describe private discussion by name. But administration officials believe that this time they had to act substantively despite bad decision-making by bank executives, given the economic risks and the potential impact on customers who did nothing wrong. Unlike in 2008, Biden was insistent that bank executives had to pay a price, said the official, granted anonymity to discuss internal White House deliberations. "The management of these banks will be fired," Biden declared Monday. If an institution is taken over by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., "the people running the bank should not work there anymore." On Monday, Biden also stressed that taxpayers will not bear the cost of his administration's penalties on the two failed banks, instead tapping into an insurance fund that is paid for by bank fees.

## Hate crime in US increased by 12 per cent in 2021: Report

AP ■ LONDON

Hate crimes in the US increased by about 12 per cent in 2021, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has said, highlighting that 64.5 per cent of victims were targeted because of race or ancestry bias.

In an update of its annual report issued on Monday, the FBI also said that 43.2 per cent of the total crimes recorded were related to intimidation.

"Nationally, reported hate crime incidents increased 11.6 per cent from 8,120 in 2020 to 9,065 in 2021," the FBI said, adding that the updated dataset for 2021 includes all law enforcement agency hate crime incident reporting.

The updated hate crime dataset reports involve 10,840 incidents and 12,411 related offences. Over 10,500 single-bias incidents involved 12,411 victims, the report said. A per cent distribution of victims by



bias type shows that 64.5 per cent of victims were targeted because of the offenders' race/ethnicity/ancestry bias, 15.9 per cent were targeted because of offenders' sexual-orientation bias and 14.1 per cent were targeted because of the offenders' religious bias, the report said. There were 310 multiple-bias hate crime incidents that involved 411 victims. Of the 8,327 hate crime offences classified as crimes against persons in the updated

2021 dataset, 43.2 per cent were intimidation, 35.5 per cent were simple assault, and 20.1 per cent were aggravated assault. Nineteen rapes and 18 murders were reported as hate crimes. The remaining 70 hate crime offences classified as crimes against persons were reported in the category of other. Of the 3,817 hate crime offences classified as crimes against property, 71.2 per cent were acts of destruction/damage/vandalism, it said.

## Murugan's novel 'Pyre' longlisted for Booker Prize

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian author Perumal Murugan's Tamil novel 'Pyre' is among 13 books from across Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America to make it to the longlist of the International Booker Prize 2023, announced by the Booker Prize Foundation here on Tuesday.

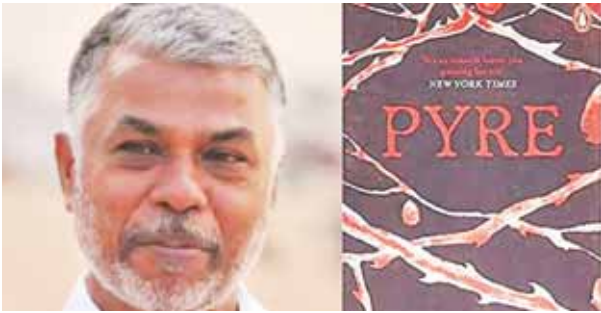
Murugan, 56, makes it to the prestigious list with his 2016 book "Pyre", translated from Tamil by Aniruddhan Vasudevan, becoming the first Tamil writer to make it to the longlist of 13 works.

"Pyre", tells the tale of an intercaste couple who elope, setting in motion a story of terrifying foreboding. The coveted literary prize, won last year by Geetanjali Shree and translator Daisy Rockwell for the first-ever Hindi novel 'Tomb of Sand', is awarded annually for a work of fiction written originally in any language, translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. The GBP 50,000 prize money is shared between the writer and translator of the winning work, which will be

declared this year on May 23.

Murugan, based in Salem in Tamil Nadu, described 'Pyre' as a very important book of his. "Just a few minutes back someone broke the news to me. I am very happy, and this is a great acceptance of my writing... 'Pyre' deals with honour killing. Honour killing is a very big problem in our country. I hope more people get to know about this issue after this recognition," Murugan told PTI over the phone.

The Tamil Nadu-born author, scholar and poet has written 10 novels, five collections of short stories and four anthologies of poetry. He won the Sahitya Akademi's Translation Prize for his novel 'Madhorubhagan', translated by Vasudevan as 'One Part Woman'. "Perumal Murugan is a great anatomist of power and, in particular, of the deep, deforming rot of caste hatred and violence. With flashes of fable, his novel tells a story specific and universal: how flammable are fear and the distrust of others," Booker's prize judging panel noted.



In 2015, Murugan declared himself "dead" and announced his retirement from writing following protests, litigation and the burning of this later award-winning work. At a court case in 2016 centred on the book, the judge ruled, "Let the author be resurrected to what he is best at Write." For Murugan, the statement was both "a command and a benediction" to resume writing, the Booker Prize judges note. The 13 Booker longlisted works originate in 12 countries and are translated from 11 languages. The subject matter covered includes the elements of Indian melodrama, Korean fairy tale, French horror, Caribbean gospel and Scandinavian saga.

"What was very rewarding about this experience was reading books from all over the world, with an extraordinary variety of form and content. Each of the judges had different tastes, and that is what we have tried to reflect in this list," said French-Moroccan novelist Leïla Slimani, the Chair of judges for the International Booker Prize 2023.

"It celebrates the variety and diversity of literary production today, the different ways in which the novel can be viewed. We wanted to give the reader the chance to discover this and to find something that will move or disturb them," Slimani added. The list, she said, is a celebration of the power of language and of authors who wanted to push formal enquiry as far as possible. Maryse Conde, the oldest writer ever to be longlisted for the prize at the age of 86, dictated her nominated novel 'The Gospel According to the New World' to her husband and translator Richard Philcox.

The two are the first wife-and-husband author-translator team to be longlisted for the award. Others on the longlist include Ukrainian writer Andrey Kurkov, who writes fiction in Russian, shortlisted for 'Jimi Hendrix Live in Lviv'; 'Boulder' by Catalan author Eva Baltasar; 'Whale' by Korean author Cheon Myeong-kwan; and 'Standing Heavy' by French-Ivorian author GauZ.

The list also includes 'Time Shelter' by Bulgarian author Georgi Gospodinov; 'Is Mother Dead' by Norwegian author Vigdis Hjorth; 'The Birthday Party' by French author Laurent Mauvignier; 'While We Were Dreaming' by German author Clemens Meyer; and 'Still Born' by Spanish author Guadalupe Nettel.



# US, UK, Australia agree on nuclear submarine project

## Bid to counter China’s aggressive behaviour

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States, Australia and the United Kingdom have announced a nuclear-powered submarine deal, a step aimed at countering the Chinese aggressive behaviour in the resource-rich Indo-Pacific region and ensuring that the region remains “free and open.” Under the Aukus agreement, Australia will first receive at least three nuclear-powered submarines from the US.

The announcement was made after US President Joe Biden, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese attended a summit meeting in San Diego on Monday and asserted that the move is to keep the Indo-Pacific region “free and open.” “With the support and approval of the Congress, beginning in the early 2030s, the United States will sell three Virginia-class submarines to Australia with the potential to sell up to two more if needed, jumpstarting their undersea capability a decade earlier than many predicted,” Biden said in the presence of Australian Prime Minister Albanese and British Prime Minister Sunak. As part of the announcement, the US has also pledged a total of USD 4.6 billion over the next few years to build its submarine construction capacity and to improve the maintenance of its Virginia-class submarines. “This state-of-the-art conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarine will work — that will combine the UK submarine technology and design with the American technology,” he said.

The Indo-Pacific is a biogeographic region, comprising the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the South China Sea. India, the US and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China’s rising military manoeuvring in the region. China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it.

Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. Australia’s future SSN, which Biden described as “SSN-AUKUS”, will also be a state-of-the-art platform designed to leverage the best of submarine technology from all three nations.



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, right, meets with US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese, left, at Point Loma naval base in San Diego, US on Monday. AP/PTI

## Commitment to global security: Sunak

**London (PTI):** The first generation of AUKUS nuclear submarines to be built in the British shipyards is a “tangible demonstration” of the country’s commitment to global security, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Tuesday. The AUKUS pact, which is a trilateral alliance between the UK, US and Australia, is seen as a counter to an aggressive China in the strategic Indo-Pacific region, which included its claim over most parts of the disputed South China Sea.

Sunak, who is in San Diego with US President Joe Biden and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, said the conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine dubbed the ‘SSN-AUKUS’ will be built in British shipyards. “The AUKUS partnership, and the submarines we are

building in British shipyards, are a tangible demonstration of our commitment to global security,” Sunak said, in a statement released by Downing Street. “This partnership was founded on the bedrock of our shared values and resolute focus on upholding stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. And I am hugely pleased that the plans we have announced today will see pioneering British design expertise protect our people and our allies for generations to come,” he said. It follows the refreshed Integrated Review of its foreign policy tabled in Parliament, which highlights that the so-called Indo-Pacific “tilt” of the 2021 review is now a permanent pillar of the UK’s policy and that the AUKUS pact a key element of that pillar.

Australia is going to need to build and maintain its fleet,” he said.

Describing it as a new chapter in the relationship between the three countries, Albanese said this is a friendship built on their shared values, commitment to democracy, and a common vision for a peaceful and prosperous future.

“The AUKUS agreement, we confirm here in San Diego, represents the biggest single investment in Australia’s defence capability in all of our history, strengthening Australia’s national security and stability in our region; building a future made in Australia with record investments in skills, jobs, and infrastructure; and delivering a superior defence capability into the future,” he said.

# Death toll climbs as cyclone slams Malawi, Mozambique

PTI ■ BLANTYRE

An unrelenting Cyclone Freddy that is currently battering southern Africa has killed at least 56 people in Malawi and Mozambique since it struck the continent for a second time on Saturday night, authorities in both countries have confirmed. Local police said 51 people in Malawi, including 36 in Chilobwe in the financial hub of Blantyre in the centre of the country have died, with several others missing or injured. Authorities in Mozambique reported that five people were killed in the country since Saturday. The deaths in Malawi include five members of a single family who died in Blantyre’s Ndirande township after Freddy’s destructive winds and heavy rains demolished their house, according to a police report. A three-year-old child who was “trapped in the debris” is also among the victims, with her parents among those reported missing, authorities also said. “We suspect that this figure will rise as we are trying to compile one national report from our south-west, southeast and eastern police offices which cover the affected areas,” Malawi police spokesperson Peter Kalaya told the AP. The cyclone lashed over Mozambique and Malawi over the weekend and into Monday. It’s the second time the record-breaking cyclone — which has been causing destruction in southern Africa since late February — made landfall in mainland Africa. It also pummeled the island states of Madagascar and Réunion as it traversed across the ocean.



The cyclone has intensified a record seven times and has the highest-ever recorded accumulated cyclone energy, or ACE, which is a measurement of how much energy a cyclone has released over time. Freddy recorded more energy over its lifetime than an entire typical US hurricane season. Freddy first developed near Australia in early February and travelled across the entire southern Indian Ocean. It’s set to be the longest-ever recorded tropical cyclone. The UN’s weather agency has convened an expert panel to determine whether it has broken the record set by Hurricane John in 1994 of 31 days.

Freddy made landfall in the seaport of Quelimane in Mozambique on Saturday where there are reports of damage to houses and farmlands, although the extent of the destruction is not yet clear. Telecommunications and other essential infrastructure are still cut off in much of the affected

Zambezia province, impeding rescue and other humanitarian efforts. French weather agency Météo-France’s regional tropical cyclone monitoring centre in Réunion warned on Monday that “the heaviest rains will continue over the next 48 hours” as Freddy barrels on. Mozambique’s central provinces and Malawi have been identified as especially vulnerable to “floods and landslides in mountainous areas” by weather monitors.

Much of the damage experienced in Malawi is in homes built in areas prohibited by law such as in mountainous regions or near rivers where they are battling landslides, unprecedented flooding and rivers bursting their banks.

The cyclone has forced the Malawian government to suspend schools in 10 districts in its southern region “as a precautionary measure”. Freddy is expected to weaken and to exit back to sea on Wednesday, according to Météo-France.

# My country safer than US, says Mexican President

**Mexico City (AP):** Mexico’s president claimed Monday that his country is safer than the United States, a week after two US citizens were killed and two kidnapped and later rescued in the border city of Matamoros. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said US travel warnings and reports of violence in Mexico were the result of a conspiracy by conservative politicians and U.S. media outlets to smear his administration.

Despite López Obrador’s assurances that Mexico was safe for travel, the FBI confirmed last week that three other women from the small Texas town of Peñitas have been missing in Mexico since late February. “Mexico is safer than the United States,” López Obrador said at his morning news briefing. “There is no problem in traveling safely in Mexico.” Mexico’s nationwide homicide rate is about 28 per 100,000 inhabitants. By comparison, the U.S. homicide rate is barely one-quarter as high, at around 7 per 100,000.

The president brushed off continued concern over violence.

Currently, the U.S. State Department has “do not travel” advisories for six of Mexico’s 32 states plagued by drug cartel violence, and “reconsider travel” warnings for another seven states.

“This is a campaign against Mexico by these conservative politicians in the United States who do not want the transformation of our country to continue,” López Obrador said.

# UK boosts defense spending in response to Russia, China

**London (AP):** UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged Monday to increase military funding by 5 billion pounds (USD 6 billion) over the next two years in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the “epoch-defining challenge” posed by China. The increase, part of a major update to U.K. foreign and defense policy, is less than military officials wanted. Sunak said the U.K. would increase military spending to 2.5 per cent of gross domestic product “in the longer term,” but didn’t set a date. Britain currently spends just over 2 per cent of GDP on defense, and military chiefs want it to rise to 3 per cent. The extra money will be used, in part, to replenish Britain’s ammunition stocks, depleted from supplying Ukraine in its defense against Russia. Some will also go towards a U.K.-U.S.-Australia deal to build nuclear-powered submarines. “The world has become more volatile, the threats to our security have increased,” Sunak told the BBC during a visit to the U.S. “It’s important that we protect ourselves against those.”

Sunak met U.S. President

Joe Biden and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in San Diego on Monday to confirm next steps for the military pact, known as AUKUS, struck by the three countries in 2021 amid mounting concern about China’s actions in the Pacific. Under the deal, the U.K. and Australia will build new nuclear-powered, conventionally armed subs from a British design, with U.S. technology and support. Most of the U.K. construction will take place in shipyards at Barrow-in-Furness in northwest England, with the first subs completed by the late 2030s. Australia will also buy up to five Virginia-class subs from the U.S.

The three leaders said the submarine plan “elevates all three nations’ industrial capacity to produce and sustain interoperable nuclear-powered submarines for decades to come, expands our individual and collective undersea presence in the Indo-Pacific, and contributes to global security and stability.” Britain last produced a defense, security and foreign policy framework, known as the Integrated Review, in 2021.

# UK cybersecurity centre looking into risks posed by TikTok

**London (AP):** Britain’s security minister said Tuesday he has asked the country’s National Cyber Security Centre to review threats posed by TikTok amid calls for the UK to impose a ban on the Chinese-owned social media app.

Security Minister Tom Tugendhat said he was waiting for a review from the government’s cybersecurity experts before deciding on the “highly important question.” Prime Minister Rishi Sunak hinted a day earlier that the UK could follow the US and the European Union in banning the app from government-issued mobile phones and devices. “We take security of devices seriously ... and we look also at what our allies are doing,” Sunak said during his visit to the US on Monday. “We want to make sure that we protect the integrity and security of sensitive information,” Sunak told ITV News. “And we will always do that and take whatever steps are necessary to make sure that happens.”

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**TENDER NOTICE**  
Invitation of tender through E-tendering (e-Procurement Systems)

<b>NIT No.</b>	<b>6-SEFile-165326-Tender</b>
<b>Name of Work and its Location</b>	Tender for "Works contract for Provision for supply and fixing of road sign board and layout board at RCNK/SNP as per scope of work"
<b>Approx. Cost of Work</b>	<b>Tender Cost:</b> Rs. 30,15,732.43/- including GST (Rs. Thirty Lak fifteen Thousand seven Hundred Thirty-Two and forty three paise Only)
<b>Earnest Money</b>	Rs. 60300/-
<b>Completion Period of Work</b>	90 days of date of execution of work
<b>Cost of Tender document on cash / by post</b>	NIL
<b>Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender</b>	Upto 11:00 hrs. on 04/04/2023 Opening of Tender at 11:30 hrs.
<b>Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen</b>	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>
<b>No., 6-SEFile-165326-Tender Dated 13/03/2023</b>	<b>792/23</b>

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Whereas The Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana (DTCP) had granted a License No. 45 of 2018 dated 29.06.2018 to M/s Revital Realty Private Limited for developing of an Affordable Housing Colony ("Said Colony") on land measuring 9.0625 acres situated in Sector-78, Gurugram. Now vide Memo no. LC-3012/JE(DS)/2023/4933 dated 21.02.2023 and LC-3012/JE(DS)/2023/5301 dated 22.02.2023, DTCP has granted in-principle approval for Transfer of license over 7.53125 acres and Change of Developer over 9.0625 acres in favour of M/s Ametek Buildtech India Private Limited ("ABIPL") for development of the said colony.

And whereas several individuals have made booking for allotment of residential flats/property in the said colony ("Existing allottees") and whereas, before grant of final permission w.r.t. Transfer of License and Change of Developer, DTCP has required seeking of objection(s), if any, from the existing allottees.

Accordingly, this Public Notice objections are hereby invited from any of the existing allottees in the said colony on the proposed Transfer of License and Change of Developer. A copy of the above said in-principle approval along with site plan has been hosted on the website of the company i.e. [www.revitalrealty.com](http://www.revitalrealty.com) and also displayed in the office of the Senior Town Planner, Gurugram at 3rd floor, HSPV Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram for perusal of the existing allottees.

Any existing allottee(s) having any objection on the proposed Transfer of License and Change of Developer may file his/her/their objections in the office of the Senior Town Planner, Gurugram or in the office of the undersigned within 30 days of the publication of this Public Notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed Transfer of License and Change of Developer.

Place:- Gurugram Date:- 15/03/2023

# China to reopen to tourists, resume all visas today

PTI ■ HONG KONG

China will reopen its borders to tourists and resume issuing all visas on Wednesday after a three-year halt during the pandemic as it sought to boost its tourism and economy. China is one of the last major countries to reopen its borders to tourists. The announcement on Tuesday came after it declared a “decisive victory” over COVID-19 in February.

All types of visas will resume from Wednesday. Visa-free entry also will resume at destinations such as Hainan island as well as for cruise ships entering Shanghai that had no visa requirement before COVID-19. Foreigners holding visas issued before March 28, 2020, that are still valid will be allowed to enter China.

Visa-free entry will resume for foreigners entering Guangdong in southern China from Hong Kong and Macao. The

notice didn’t specify whether vaccination certificates or negative COVID-19 tests would be required, but Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters on Tuesday that China had “optimized measures for remote testing of people coming to China from relevant countries”, allowing pre-boarding antigen testing instead of nucleic acid testing.

“All these have been well implemented, and the epidemic risk is generally controllable,” Wang said at a daily briefing. The move would “further facilitate the exchange of Chinese and foreign personnel,” according to the notice posted on the websites of numerous Chinese missions and embassies.

China had stuck to a harsh “zero-COVID” strategy involving sudden lockdowns and daily COVID-19 testing to try to stop the virus before abandoning most aspects of the policy in December amid growing opposition.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

To be known to all: Kiran Narang W/o Sh. Lalit Narang R/o Flat No.66, Pocket-E, Near Sanjay Lake, Mayur Vihar Phase-2, Delhi-110091. Purchaser/Owner of DDA SFS Flat No.66, First Floor, Pocket-E, Cat-II, Triok Puri, Mayur Vihar Phase-II, Delhi-110091 have applied for conversion of the aforesaid flat from lease hold to free hold in DDA. The original documents i.e. Allocation Letter/Demand/Allotment Letter, Possession Letter, NOC For Water And Electricity Connection, Site Possession Slip & amp; Other Documents of the above said flat has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LR No.228089/2023 dated 10/03/2023 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person (s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9868169325 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing)-SFS or Director (H)-SFS, Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**

**e-TENDER CALL NOTICE**  
No. CE/HW-II-W-04/23/54 Dt. 10.03.2023

**Name of the Work: "Development of New Plot behind CISF Office near Gate no.2 inside Harbour area"**

**Estimated cost: Rs.1,65,76,093.30.**

**Last Date & time of submission: 31.03.2023 up to 17:15 Hrs. Refer our website for details: [eprocure.gov.in/](http://eprocure.gov.in/) [eprocure.gov.in/](http://eprocure.gov.in/)**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, HW-II, PPA PPA/PR/230/2022-23 dtl. 13.03.2023**

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION CIRCLE, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM, PITHORGARH**

Phone/Fax : 05965 - 230044 E-Mail : [executivechampanipawal@gmail.com](mailto:executivechampanipawal@gmail.com)

**Bid Notification No : 681 / Nivida / 128 Date: 14.03.2023**


**E - TENDER NOTICE (Single Bid System)**

**Name of the works: Salli W/S Scheme (JMM).**

**Date of Publication on e-procurement portal Date: 14.03.2023 at 17.00 hrs.**

**Note : Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal - [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) & contact 05965-230044.**

**Superintending Engineer**

**कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, केन्द्रीय मण्डल, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान**  
जल भवन, 'बी' ब्लॉक, नेहरु कॉलोनी, देहरादून।

**निविदा सूचना** दिनांक : 14.03.2023

उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान की ओर से केन्द्रीय मण्डल, देहरादून द्वारा निम्न कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा, दू-बिड सिस्टम (तकनीकी बिड एवं कॉमिशियल बिड) आधार पर निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा सं.	कार्य विवरण	घरोर कर राशि रु.	ई-निविदा प्रपत्र जलनलद करने की तिथि एवं समय	ई-निविदा अपलोड करने की प्रारंभ एवं अंतिम तिथि व समय	ई-निविदा सूचना क्र.सं. 7 अनुसार मूल प्रपत्र विभाग में जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	तकनीकी बिड खोले जाने की तिथि एवं समय	निविदा की तिथि एवं समय	बि-बिड मीटिंग की तिथि एवं समय
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
23/ 22-23	वायिक द अनुबन्ध पर, M.S. Intake Chamber size 40.5cm. x 40.5cm. x 50cm. as per departmental drawing and design की आपूर्ति।	1,25,000.00	18.03.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	29.03.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	06.04.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	120 days	24.03.2023 at 11:00 a.m.
अर्हता:— Only manufacturers/fabricators of M.S. Intake Chamber as per departmental drawing and design are allowed to take part in this tender.								
24/ 22-23	वायिक द अनुबन्ध पर, M.S. Uttaranchal Koop having 4, 5 & 6 laterals size 200, 250, 300 and 350 mm as per departmental drawing and design की आपूर्ति।	1,55,000.00	18.03.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	29.03.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	06.04.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	120 days	24.03.2023 at 11:00 a.m.
अर्हता:— Only manufacturers/fabricators of M.S. Uttaranchal Koop as per departmental drawing and design are allowed to take part in this tender.								
25/ 22-23	वायिक द अनुबन्ध पर, ISI marked Pre-cast concrete Manhole Covers conforming to IS: 12592:2002 with M.S. Frame (M.S. Frame for square and rectangular shall be made from hot rolled steel flat iron 5 mm. thick with arrangement for hold fast 10 cm. long at each corner) of suitable size, quality and load bearing, for placing of H.H. Covers की आपूर्ति।	92,500.00	18.03.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	29.03.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	06.04.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	120 days	24.03.2023 at 11:00 a.m.
अर्हता:— Only manufacturers of ISI marked Manhole Covers having BIS license for IS: 12592/2002 are allowed to take part in this tender.								
28/ 22-23	मात्रा द अनुबन्ध पर, SITC of Energy Efficient Centrifugal Pumpsets at Raw Water Pumping Station Pump No. 1 under New Tehri Pumping W/s Scheme, Distt. Tehri Garhwal कार्य।	1,03,000.00	18.03.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	29.03.2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	05.04.2023 upto 5:00 p.m.	06.04.2023 at 11:00 a.m.	120 days	24.03.2023 at 11:00 a.m.
अर्हता:— Only manufacturers or dealer authorised by manufacturer for this tender and who have experience in supply and installation of Energy Efficient Centrifugal Pump set of required duties and efficiency are allowed to take part in this tender.								

ई-निविदा से सम्बन्धित समस्त जानकारीय व शर्तें उत्तराखण्ड की वेबसाइट [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) एवं विभागीय वेबसाइट <http://ujls.uk.gov.in> पर ऑन लाइन देखी/प्राप्त की जा सकती है।



# ‘Govt taking steps to make India \$5 trillion economy’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday informed the Rajya Sabha that it is taking steps to make India a USD 5 trillion economy earlier than the International Monetary Fund's forecast year of 2026-27.

The IMF's World Economic Outlook earlier said the size of the Indian economy will increase from USD 3.2 trillion in 2021-22 to USD 3.5 trillion in 2022-23 and cross USD 5 trillion in 2026-27.

“The government has been taking steps to make the country a USD 5 trillion economy at an early date,” Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to the Upper House.

Observing that the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in 2020 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 has impacted the world output, increased inflation in several countries and raised uncertainty in the world economy, he said, “lower uncertainty in the global economic outlook will help India become a USD 5 trillion-dollar economy earlier”.

Some of the important mea-



sures taken by the government in the past to boost economic growth include the making of the National infrastructure pipeline of projects, push to capital expenditure, implementation of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, finalisation of the National Monetization Pipeline of public sector assets and formulation of National Logistics policy, he said.

The minister further said that capital expenditure will be speeded up by PM Gatishakti for integrated planning of infra-

structure and synchronised project implementation across all concerned central ministries, departments and state governments.

The Union Budget 2023-24, Chaudhary said, “further sustains the growth momentum with an increase in capital investment outlay for the third year in a row by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore (3.3 per cent of GDP)”.

The other initiatives to boost the economy include enhanced outlay for PM Awas Yojana, the

launch of the Aspirational Blocks Programme covering 500 blocks for saturation of essential government services; an increase in agriculture credit target to Rs 20 lakh crore with a focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries; and setting up of Agriculture Accelerator Fund to encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas, among others.

The minister also said that the direct capital investment by the Centre is being complemented by the provision made for the creation of capital assets through grants-in-aid to states. The ‘effective capital expenditure’ of the Centre is budgeted at Rs 13.7 lakh crore (4.5 per cent of GDP) for 2023-24, he said, adding “the newly established Infrastructure Finance Secretariat will oversee the increase in private investment in infrastructure”.

In order to improve logistics performance, he said, one hundred critical transport infrastructure projects for last and first-mile connectivity for ports, coal, steel, fertiliser, and food grains sectors have been identified and will be prioritised for development.

# Sensex, Nifty fall for 4th day on trot

## On concerns over fallout of US bank failures

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex declined nearly 338 points to close below the 58,000 level on Tuesday, marking its fourth straight day of losses as auto, IT and financial stocks wilted amid concerns over interest rate hikes and the fallout of failure of two US-based banks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 337.66 points or 0.58 per cent to settle at a new five month low of 57,900.19. During the session, it touched a high of 58,490.98 and a low of 57,721.16. The broader NSE Nifty declined 111 points or 0.65 per cent to end at a five-month low of 17,043.30, with 38 of its scrips ending in the red.

Sensex tumbled 2,447 points or 4.1 per cent while Nifty tanked 711 points or 4.6 per cent in the four days to Tuesday.

Analysts said relentless foreign capital outflows, investors junking riskier assets ahead of the US Fed policy decision and fears of interest rate hikes to stifle global economic recovery have hit the market sentiment. Mahindra & Mahindra was



the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, declining nearly 3 per cent, followed by TCS, Bajaj Finance, Wipro, Kotak Bank, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech and Tata Motors. In contrast, Titan, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank and L&T were among the gainers, rising up to 0.93 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, IT declined 1.4 per cent, tech fell by 1.08 per cent, power by 1.06 per cent, realty by 1 per cent, auto by 0.99 per cent, financial by 0.54 per cent and bankex by 0.42 per cent. Only capital goods index closed marginally up 0.12 per cent.

“The selling continued while the degree of ambiguity over the US Banks reduced due

# Rupee falls 26 paise to 82.49 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee declined by 26 paise to 82.49 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday amid stronger dollar, negative sentiment in the domestic equity market and unabated foreign fund outflows.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened lower at 82.27 against the dollar and traded between the range of 82.24 and 82.50 during intra-day. It finally settled at 82.49 (provisional) against the American currency.

This is the second consecutive day of decline in the Indian currency. On Monday, the rupee settled at 82.23 against the US dollar.

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities, attributed the fall in rupee to the spillover fears after the collapse of the Silicon Valley Bank in the US.

“The Rupee fall continued as the Silicon Valley Bank in the US has spread concerns over the spillover fears after its collapse and in line with Asian peers. Rupee this time, fell below 82.48 levels which were last seen on 3rd March 23.

# ‘Most APAC fin institutions not to be hit by US bank failure’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Most Asia Pacific financial institutions are not exposed to the failed US banks and are not as susceptible to large losses from debt security holdings as Silicon Valley Bank was, Moody's said on Tuesday.

On March 12, US regulators closed Signature Bank, just two days after shutting Silicon Valley Bank, following mass withdrawals of customer deposits from these regional banks.

Moody's Investors Service said these events are likely to result in a tightening of liquidity in debt markets globally as investors grow wary. However, the impact will be limited for most rated financial institutions in Asia-Pacific (APAC) because of structural factors.

“Also, most APAC institutions are not exposed to the failed US banks, and only a handful of institutions has immaterial exposures. Finally, most

institutions are not as susceptible to large losses from debt security holdings as Silicon Valley Bank was,” Moody's said.

The US-based rating agency said rated banks in APAC structurally have stable funding and ample liquidity.

They are mostly funded with customer deposits, while their market borrowings are modest at about 16 per cent of their total assets on average.

Their business depositors are well diversified across different sectors, with no rated bank in the region being heavily exposed to technology companies. Also, APAC banks' deposits are generally not heavily concentrated on single clients.

Most banks in the region are subject to liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) requirements that are aimed at ensuring banks hold ample high-quality liquid assets to get through stressed funding conditions, such as deposit runs, Moody's said.



In most systems in APAC, banks' investments in held-to-maturity (HTM) instruments are generally not substantially relative to tangible common equity, unlike the case of Silicon Valley Bank, which suffered substantial unrealized losses from its large HTM invest-

ments, the agency added.

Signature Bank, New York, which lent mostly to the crypto industry was shut down by the regulators on Sunday after there was a run on their deposits.

Besides, the failure of Silicon Valley Bank last week left many startups, tech

companies, entrepreneurs and VC funds nervous and jittery. SVB, the 16th largest bank in the United States, was closed on Friday by the California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation which later appointed the FDIC as its receiver.

SVB was deeply entrenched in the tech startup ecosystem and the default bank for many high-flying startups.

Its abrupt fall marked one of the largest bank failures since the 2008 global financial crisis. The bank failed after clients -- many of them venture capital firms and VC-backed companies that the bank had cultivated over time -- began pulling out their deposits, creating a run on the bank.

The UK government announced on Monday that it has facilitated London-based banking major HSBC to buy the embattled UK arm of Silicon Valley Bank for 1 pound, securing the deposits of more than 3,000 customers worth around 6.7 billion pounds.

# Coal India ready to meet dry fuel demand from power sector

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid early onset of summer and a pick-up in industrial demand for electricity, state-owned CIL on Tuesday said it is geared up to meet the demand of dry fuel from the power sector.

The public sector coal producer also expressed hope to supply 156 million tonnes of coal to the power sector during April-June quarter of FY24. This would be 25.6 per cent of the enhanced annual dispatch target of 610 million tonnes (MT) slated for the sector in 2023-24.

“Coal India Limited (CIL) is optimistic about supplying 156 million tonnes of coal to power sector during April-June '23 quarter amid concerns over spike in coal demand,” the coal behemoth said.

CIL, which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output, is a major supplier of dry fuel to the electricity generating plants.

Factors in favour of CIL are a strong 68 MT coal stock build-up expected at its pitheads by the end of current fiscal, which as of Monday was 57.3 MT.

Also, the maharatna firm will scale up its production into a higher orbit maintaining the pace on the back of an unprecedented 700 MT output, which it is on course to achieve by the end of FY23. “Even after despatching the planned coal to power utilities in the first quarter of FY24, CIL is likely have a healthy 50 MT coal stock at its pitheads by June'23 end,” said a senior official of the company in a statement.

The state-owned coal mining behemoth is confident of meeting the enhanced 610 million tonnes (MT) coal supply target to power sector in 2023-24. The target is 20 MT more than the initially projected 590 MT requirement by power sec-



tor. Of the total 821 MT domestic coal demand projected for the power sector in 2023-24, CIL's target alone accounts for nearly three-quarters at 610 MTs.

By the end of the ongoing financial year it is estimated that there would be at least 115 MT of domestic coal available to the power plants, with 68 MT at CIL's pitheads and 32 MT at plants' end.

Coal lying at private washeries, goods sheds, ports and captive mines account for around 12 MT. Rakes on run, that is coal in transit, normally make up 3 MT of coal. Compared to last year's 92.7 MT, from the same sources, coal availability in the system would be 22.3 MT more.

“Even in the current financial year the initial target of 565 MT, to thermal plants, was increased to 569.5 MT by the power sector in May 2022. Taking the rejigged target into its stride, CIL as of 13 March '23, had already clocked 554 MT supply to power sector,” the company said.

The company is well on its track to close FY23 with more than 585 MT despatch to power sector which represents an 8.3 per cent jump over 540 MT of FY22.

“We are fully cognizant of the importance of meeting the demand surge from power sector and would do everything within our means to meet it,” said the executive.

# Wholesale inflation eases to over 2-yr low of 3.85% in Feb

Food items remain costly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The wholesale price-based inflation declined to over two-year low of 3.85 per cent in January on easing prices of manufactured items, fuel and power, even though food articles remained expensive. This is the ninth straight month of decline in the rate of wholesale price-index (WPI) based inflation.

The WPI inflation was 4.73 per cent in January and 13.43 per cent in February, last year.

“Decline in the rate of inflation in February 2023 is primarily contributed by fall in prices of crude petroleum & natural gas, non-food articles, food products, minerals, computer, electronic & optical products, chemicals & chemical products, electrical equipment and motor vehicles, trailers & semi-trailers,” the commerce and industry ministry said on Tuesday.

The 3.85 per cent WPI inflation is the lowest since January 2021, when the rate of price rise on wholesale basis was 2.51 per cent.

The decline in the rate of price rise was mainly due to a favourable base effect, economists said, adding that going forward, softening commodity prices would help ease WPI inflation further.



PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR

However, the future course of food inflation would depend on weather related conditions and timely monsoon.

Although inflation in manufactured items softened, in the case of food articles it rose to 3.81 per cent in February, from 2.38 per cent in January.

Inflation in pulses was 2.59 per cent, while in vegetables was (-)21.53 per cent. Inflation in oil seeds was (-)7.38 per cent in February 2023.

Fuel and power basket inflation eased to 14.82 per cent, from 15.15 per cent in the preceding month. In manufactured products it was 1.94 per cent, against 2.99 per cent in January.

The deceleration in WPI comes in line with the dip in retail inflation, data of which was released on Monday. Consumer price index based retail inflation declined to 6.44 per cent in February from 6.52 per cent in January.

# Fragrance, flavour industry to touch over \$5bn in 3-4 years: Industry body

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The fragrance and flavour industry of the country is likely to grow around 12 per cent each year and touch over USD 5.2 billion in three to four years, an apex body of the industry said.

This growth will be driven by factors like rising disposable incomes and changing consumer preferences, Fragrances and Flavours Association of India (FAFAI) president, Risabh Kothari, said.

“The fragrance and flavour industry is growing very fast in the country. The present size of the industry is USD 3.7 billion in the country,” Kothari said.

The major user industries of this segment are food and beverages, personal care, home-care, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, and these include major MNCs, domestic companies and small businesses, the FAFAI president said.



Given the growing demand for natural and organic products, consumers are increasingly opting for them which present an opportunity for the fragrances and flavours industry, he stated.

Coupled with this, consumers are willing to spend

more on premium products with rising disposable incomes, Kothari said.

According to him, the personal care industry is growing at a rapid pace which also presents a good opportunity for this segment.

However, Kothari said the biggest threat which this industry is facing is that of cheap imports dumped by overseas players owing to inverted duty structure.

A major ingredient for the industry is natural essential oils which attract higher import duty compared to fragrances, the end product.

“We have sent several representations to the government to correct this anomaly by increasing duty on finished fragrance compounds which will protect the domestic industry”, he said.

The present duty structure is detrimental to the domestic industry, Kothari claimed.

# Toys ‘R’ Us shuts store within 24 hrs of opening in Hyderabad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

American toy and clothing retailer Toys ‘R’ Us is said to have shut within 24 hours a store it opened in Hyderabad to mark its second entry into India over some legal complexities with the mall owner, sources said.

Toys ‘R’ Us opened a store in Sarath city Capital mall in Hyderabad on March 11 but closed it within 24 hours, two sources with knowledge of the matter said.

Emails sent to the company, as well as its Indian operator and the mall owners, remained unanswered.

Sources said a no-compete clause with another global toy retailer is said to be behind the

mall pulling the plug on Toys ‘R’ Us. Just like cola brands Coke and Pepsi are seldom retailed from the same restaurant, the no-compete clause meant the two competing toy retailers could not operate in the same mall. The other retailer already had a shop in the mall.

Toys ‘R’ Us has been launched in India in two formats - Toys ‘R’ Us, which is the world's leading toy store, and Babies ‘R’ Us, a one-stop destination for baby essentials.

It is run by a Bangalore-based firm, Ace turtle, which entered into a joint venture with the Flipkart Group's wholesale entity in India to acquire the licence for Toys ‘R’ Us and Babies ‘R’ Us in June 2021.

# India exports wheat worth ₹11,728 cr during April-Jan of this fiscal: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country has exported wheat worth Rs 11,728.36 crore during the April-January period of this fiscal year, the government said on Tuesday.

In May last year, the government had banned exports of wheat to boost domestic availability and control prices

In a written reply to Lok Sabha, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said, “At present, there is no proposal for lifting restriction on export of wheat before the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare”.

“During the current fiscal year (up to January 2023), Rs 11,728.36 crore worth of wheat has been exported,” he added.

Although the export was



banned, the government had said wheat export will be allowed in case of shipments where the Irrevocable Letter Of Credit (ILOC) has been issued on or before May 13.

Tomar said, as per second advance estimates for the agriculture year 2022-23, the wheat production in the country is estimated at 112.18 million tonnes which is higher by 4.44 million

tonnes than the production achieved during 2021-22 crop year (July-June).

In reply to a separate question, Tomar said, “in the Northern Indian plain, the maximum temperature in February 2023 was hovering around 32-33 degree celsius in most of the area, and this temperature is unlikely to impact the wheat grain growth adversely as crop canopy temperature can be easily modulated by 2-3 degree celsius less than air temperature by irrigation.”

In central and peninsular India, he said the temperature always remains comparatively higher against northern plain throughout the crop growth period and crop phenology is naturally adjusted accordingly. “Therefore, in these area

also, the temperature as high as 35 degree celsius is also not going to impact wheat yield adversely,” he added.

Based on the surveys conducted by ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat & Barley Research (IIWBR), Karnal in collaboration of State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs), it is found that wheat crop situation is normal, he added.

“The scientists of ICAR have issued the advisory of giving light irrigation to modulate the crop canopy temperature favourably as and when required. ICAR-IIWBR issues weekly advisory to the farmers and the information is circulated to state agriculture departments, KVKs and SAUs,” the minister said.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### ADANI GROUP STOCKS END LOWER

**New Delhi:** Stocks of all the ten listed Adani group firms ended lower on Tuesday, with flagship firm Adani Enterprises tanking over 7 per cent amid a weak trend in the equity markets. The shares of Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) plunged 7.25 per cent to close at Rs 1,737.75 apiece on the BSE. The company also hit its lower price band of Rs 1,686.25 on the BSE. Its market capitalisation stood at Rs 1.98 lakh crore.

### 551 KG MILLET CAKE PREPARED IN 18 HRS

**New Delhi:** SRM Institute of Hotel Management, Kattankulathur at the outset of completing 3 decades of excellence in hospitality education has achieved The Triumph World Records for the good cause of creating awareness to the public on the health benefits of millets by preparing 551 kgs of cake displayed in 17 feet length and 7 feet width with a total area of 119 sq.feet and out of 8 different millets. The cake was prepared within 18 hours of time using all healthy ingredients like millets, jaggery, palm sugar and karupatti.

### NTPC DULHS 5.4 MN TONNES COAL IMPORT

**New Delhi:** State-run power giant NTPC is planning to import around 5.4 million tonnes of coal to meet the supply shortage during the first half 2023-24 fiscal. Parliament was informed on Tuesday. “NTPC is planning to import around 5.4 million tonnes of coal for its group stations to meet domestic coal supply shortage during the first half of Financial Year 2023-24,” Power Minister R K Singh said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.



# MILAN SLIP IN TOP FOUR RACE

AP ■ MILAN

AC Milan slipped up in Serie A's race for the Champions League on Monday after allowing struggling Salernitana to escape the San Siro with a 1-1 draw.

Champions Milan could have drawn level on 50 points with second-placed Inter Milan but stay fourth following Boulaye Dia's 61st minute leveller after Olivier Giroud had headed the hosts in front on the stroke of half-time.

It was a deeply disappointing result after coming into Monday's match on a high following qualification for the Champions League quarter-finals on Wednesday night.

"We had to do better, this was a chance and we knew it was... we need to grow up a bit," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli to Sky.

"We need to grow mentally, because we're a team that should be competitive both in Europe and Italy.

"We're playing five days after a good performance which should have given us energy and intensity and looking at how we conceded our goal we were lacking something.

Giroud's eighth league goal of the season came only moments after goalkeeper Mike Maignan had stopped Dia netting the opening goal for Salernitana with a superb tackle on the edge of box.

Stefano Pioli's side were denied the chance to go back ahead from the penalty spot midway through the second half when referee Federico La Penna overturned his own decision to awarded a spot-kick for a Domagoj Bradaric foul on Ismael Bennacer.

Guillermo Ochoa then pulled off two superb saves to deny Div-



ock Origi and Zlatan Ibrahimovic, with Alessandro Florenzi being watching aghast as his late effort fell into the hands of Ochoa who was prone on the goalline.

"When you play a great team like Milan you know you're going to have to dig in," said Ochoa.

"It's a great point for the future, for our chances of survival."

Milan drawing is great news for Inter who fell to a shock defeat at Salernitana's relegation rivals Spezia on Friday night.

Inter might have fallen 18 points behind champions-elect Napoli but none of their rivals for the remaining three places in the top four won this weekend.

Just three points separate Inter and fifth-placed Roma, with Atalanta another five points back in sixth after being run over by the Napoli title train on Saturday evening.

Salernitana meanwhile stay 16th but maintain the seven-point gap between them and Verona, who sit just inside the relegation zone.



## Morata strikes late as Atletico beat Girona

AP ■ GIRONA

Alvaro Morata snatched a 94th minute winner to earn Atletico Madrid a 1-0 victory at Girona on Monday and tighten their hold on third place in La Liga.

After La Real, fourth, drew at Mallorca on Sunday, Atletico moved three points clear of the Basque side with their last-gasp victory at Montilivi.

Morata turned home from close range after a corner was flicked on to him by Angel Correa, with Atletico surviving a long VAR check to see if the striker had strayed offside.

"For me it was very clear (that it was valid), but if it wasn't I'd have gone home by bicycle," Morata told DAZN.

"(My team-mates) were annoyed because I touched it, but VAR gave it, so I am happy.

"It's hard to see it there and not touch it, maybe they would have been more annoyed if I

didn't touch it and it didn't go in."

Girona, 12th, started brightly and thought they had won a penalty when Stefan Savic handled in the box, but striker Taty Castellanos was offside.

After Atletico's 6-1 thrashing of Sevilla last weekend, Simeone kept faith in the Memphis Depay and Antoine Griezmann strike partnership.

Early in the second half Griezmann, one of the league's most in-form players, set up Marcos Llorente but he too was denied by Gazzaniga.

With the game petering out, substitute Morata intervened late on to snatch Atletico three points from an even clash, their fourth win from their last five La Liga games.

"It's a pity, we made a huge effort, (a result) escaped us by a fine margin and it's a shame because it was an important point," Girona defender Santi Bueno told DAZN.

## STREICH EXTENDS FREIBURG DEAL

AP ■ BERLIN

Christian Streich has extended his deal as Freiburg coach, the Bundesliga club announced on Tuesday. As has become tradition during Streich's term with the outfit, Freiburg did not announce an end date to the contract.

Previous agreements have however been extended by one year, with his new deal expected to finish in 2024. "It is nice that we still like coming into the office and maintaining an open and honest exchange," the 57-

year-old said.

"The group here is special and it is a pleasure for me to continue working at this club together with my coaching colleagues."

After playing for Freiburg, Streich started as a youth coach in 1995 before becoming head coach in December 2011, making him the longest-serving coach in the Bundesliga.

He is currently overseeing the most successful period in the club's history.

Streich took them to the German Cup final for the first



time in 2021-22, which they lost to RB Leipzig on penalties.

This season, Freiburg have spent much of the year in the top four and could qualify for the Champions League for the first time. Freiburg are also in the last 16 of the Europa League against Italian giants Juventus but are 1-0 down ahead of Thursday's second-leg at home.

Streich, who rides his bicycle to training and games, has turned down interest from bigger clubs to stay with Freiburg, and has become a cult figure in Germany.

## Madrid relying on injury-hit Benzema for more European glory



AP ■ MADRID

Karim Benzema has formed an essential part of Real Madrid's Champions League success, but there are doubts over whether his team can rely on him to extend their European domination this season.

The French striker's season has been regularly disrupted by injuries, and although Vinicius Junior is a deadly threat on the left,

without Benzema, defences can focus on shutting down the Brazilian winger.

His future at Madrid is also unknown — his contract expires in June and no public decision has been made over a renewal by player or club.

"Legends of this club have to stay at Madrid," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, hoping the forward remains at his disposal next year.

Benzema missed Madrid's La Liga win

over Espanyol on Saturday with an ankle issue but is expected to return to face Liverpool at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday in a last 16 second leg clash.

The 35-year-old has been sidelined frequently, including with a thigh problem that saw him miss the World Cup with France.

"Something is wrong with Benzema, never in his entire career has he spent so much time in the injury room," complained Madrid newspaper AS last week, with Benzema out for the eighth time.

The forward has missed 34 percent of Madrid's games across all competitions this season, 14 matches in total, but has scored 18 in the 27 games he has played.

"These have been months of disappointment and enormous mystery regarding Karim," continued AS.

Benzema has aged like a fine wine, playing his best football in his later years, freed up from playing on the fringes when Cristiano Ronaldo left Madrid in 2018, and becoming a top-class goalscorer.

Last season Benzema captained Madrid to Champions League glory, with the 1-0 win over Liverpool in the final securing a record 14th triumph.

Benzema was crucial in Madrid's wild run to Paris, scoring a remarkable 17-minute hat-trick in the last 16 to knock out Paris Saint-Germain.

The forward netted another hat-trick at Stamford Bridge in the quarter-finals to put Chelsea on the ropes and clinched the tie for his team with an extra-time winner in the second leg.

Manchester City suffered the same fate in the semi-finals, with Benzema netting twice at the Etihad in the first leg then slotting home a penalty to send Madrid through to the final, in extra-time again at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Benzema finished as the competition's top scorer, with 15 goals, and scored 44 in 46 games across all competitions last season, as Madrid lifted the double.

That magic has been sprinkled less liberally this season, although Liverpool had a taste at Anfield in the first leg as Madrid ran out 5-2 winners, with Benzema netting twice, his first goals in this season's edition.

## Ahead of Tri-Nation event, Stimac announces provisional squad for camp

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Indian football team coach Igor Stimac has announced a provisional 23-man squad for a camp that begins here on Wednesday, with Sunil Chhetri and Manvir Singh forming a potent duo upfront.

The Indian team will undergo a five-day camp in Kolkata, before travelling to Imphal, where they will play the Tri-Nation International Football Tournament, at the Khuman Lampak Stadium from March 22 to 28, with Myanmar and Krygyz Republic being the two



opponents.

Out of the 23 called up in the squad, 14 will report to the camp on Wednesday, with the other nine (players from Bengaluru FC and ATK Mohun

Bagan FC) joining on Match 19, one day after the ISL final.

Eleven players have also been named as the reserves, and will be called up for the camp only if the necessity arises. The final list of players for the Tri-Nation tournament will be announced after the completion of the ISL final.

### PROVISIONAL SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Phurba Lachenpa Tempa, Amrinder Singh. **Defenders:** Sandesh Jhingran, Roshan Singh, Anwar Ali, Akash Mishra, Chinglensana Konsham,

Rahul Bheke, Mehtab Singh, Glan Martins. **Midfielders:** Surresh Wangiam, Rohit Kumar, Anirudh Thapa, Brandon Fernandes, Yasir Mohammad, Ritwik Das, Jeakson Singh, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Bipin Singh. **Forwards:** Manvir Singh, Sunil Chhetri, Sivasakthi Narayanan.

### LIST OF 11 RESERVES

**Goalkeepers:** Vishal Kaithi, Prabhukhan Gill. **Defenders:** Subhasish Bose, Pritam Kotal, Ashish Rai, Narendar Gahlot. **Midfielders:** Liston Coloco, Nikhil Poojary, Sahal Abdul Samad, Naorem Mahesh Singh.

## Referee corruption case is Spanish football's worst ever moment: Tebas

AP ■ BARCELONA

Spanish football is enduring its worst ever moment because of the refereeing corruption case involving Barcelona, La Liga president Javier Tebas said on Monday.

Last week Spanish prosecutors charged the Catalan club with corruption after payments of more than 7.3 million euros (\$7.8 million) to a company owned by a former refereeing chief were uncovered earlier this year.

Barcelona say they paid Jose Maria Enriquez Negreira, the former referee and ex-vice president of the refereeing committee of the Spanish football fed-

eration (CTA) between 1994 and 2018, for reports and advice related to refereeing.

"Yes, (it's the worst moment) that I remember," Tebas told Movistar channel Vamos.

"The problem that we have is the worst. There are payments recognised by Barcelona to the vice-president of the CTA, that's something abnormal.

"It's understandable that tension is generated. The reputation of our football is at stake. I am ashamed. We have no explanation from Barcelona."

Barcelona president Joan Laporta spoke at an event on Monday and said he would defend his team against "attacks".

Laporta appeared emotional during his speech and said it was not weakness, but instead showed his desire to take on his club's detractors.

"Don't think that I'm getting emotional out of weakness, I'm getting emotional because I really want to confront all the scoundrels who are tarnishing our badge," said Laporta.

"There are ferocious attacks to sully our club badge, which have nothing to do with reality. "And you can be sure that the board of directors that I have the honour of chairing will defend it with all our might."

Spanish newspaper El Pais reported Monday that former

Barcelona coaches Luis Enrique and Ernesto Valverde, would be called upon as witnesses in the court proceedings. Reigning Spanish champions Real Madrid said Sunday they would appear as an "injured party" in the case once it moves forward.

As well as the club and Enriquez Negreira, two of the club's former presidents, Josep Maria Bartomeu and Sandro Rosell, are facing the same charge of corruption.

On a sporting level, Barcelona face no immediate danger because the governing bodies of Spanish, European and world football have five-year statute of limitations, Tebas has said.

## Alcaraz, Swiatek march on at Indian Wells; Murray falls

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Carlos Alcaraz fended off tenacious Tallon Griekspoor 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 on Monday to reach the fourth round at Indian Wells as he and women's top seed Iga Swiatek passed tough tests in the California desert.

Alcaraz, 19, had a testing time breaking through against his determined Dutch foe, who had won their only prior hard court meeting.

He didn't face a break point in the first set, nor could he convert either of his two.

A strong start in the tiebreaker proved the difference, Alcaraz locking up the set with a forehand winner on his second set point.

He rolled from there, breaking Griekspoor in the second game on the way to a 3-0 lead in the second set.

Alcaraz will face Britain's Jack Draper for a place in the quarter-finals after Draper overcame former world number one Andy Murray 7-6 (8/6), 6-2.

Women's world number one Swiatek, seeking to become the first woman since Martina Navratilova in 1990 and 91



to win back-to-back titles in the combined WTA and ATP Masters 1000 event, elevated her game when she had to for a 6-3, 7-6 (7/1) victory over Canadian Bianca Andreescu.

Swiatek next faces another former US Open champion in Britain's Emma Raducanu, who earned an impressive 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 victory over big-hitting Brazilian Beatriz Haddad Maia.

Reigning Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan punched her ticket to the fourth round with a 6-3, 7-5 victory over former champion Paula Badosa of Spain.

Fourth-seeded Tunisian Ons Jabeur, playing her first tournament since missing Doha and Dubai in the wake of knee surgery, was beaten 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 by Czech Marketa Vondrousova — the same woman who upset Jabeur in the second round of the Australian Open.

In another rematch of an Australian Open second-round clash, fifth-seeded Caroline Garcia beat Canadian Leylah Fernandez 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-1.

In other men's action, defending champion Taylor Fritz cruised past Argentina's Sebastian Baez 6-1, 6-2.

## WAWRINKA OUTLASTS RUNE

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka scored a win for the old guard on Monday, beating 19-year-old seventh seed Holger Rune 6-2, 6-7 (5/7), 7-5 to reach the fourth round at Indian Wells.

A former world number three now ranked 100th, Wawrinka has had two left knee and two left foot surgeries since he reached the Indian Wells and Roland Garros finals in 2017.

At 37, he had 18 years on his opponent, but he avenged a first-round defeat to the Dane at the Paris Masters in November, where Rune saved three match points to launch his run to a first Masters title.

It looked like the young Dane, ranked eighth in the world, might pull off a similar comeback when he saved a match point and broke



Wawrinka in the ninth game of the second set.

Rune clawed back from 5-2 down in the second-set tiebreaker to force a third set, but Wawrinka dictated the pace using his trademark backhand to good effect.

The Swiss, who won the Australian Open in 2014, the French Open in 2015 and the US Open in 2016, finished with 12 aces and didn't face a break

point in the final set.

He broke Rune in the penultimate game and served out the victory in two hours and 40 minutes -- and more than an hour after his first match point.

Wawrinka will fight for a quarter-final berth against another young talent in 21-year-old Italian Jannik Sinner, who beat France's Adrian Mannarino 7-6 (9/7), 6-4.



# NOT SCORING BIG WAS EATING ME UP: KOHLI

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India's star batter Virat Kohli has admitted that not being able to make any substantial contribution to team India's cause for a long time was "eating him up" and he let the expectations overwhelm him a bit because he was desperate to score a big Test hundred.

Kohli hit a splendid 186 against Australia in the drawn fourth Test, ending a three-year wait to get his 28th Test century.

In a conversation with head coach Rahul Dravid, the 34-year old Kohli revealed that the weight of expectations became a bit tough to handle for him.

"Honestly, I've let the complications grow on me a bit because of my shortcomings," Kohli told Dravid in the chat, the video of which was posted by the BCCI on its website.

"The desperation to get to the three-figure mark is something that can grow on you as a batsman. I let that happen to me to a certain extent. But a flip side to it is, I'm not a guy who is happy with 40-45. I take a lot of pride in performing for the team.

"It's not like when Virat Kohli should stand out. When I'm batting on 40, I know I can get a 150. That was eating me



up a lot.

"Why am I not able to get that big score for the team? Because I took pride in the fact that when the team needed me, I stood up, scoring in difficult conditions. The fact that I wasn't able to do that, was bothering me," he added.

Asked by Dravid how tough it was, Kohli said, "If I've to be brutally honest, it does become a little difficult as the moment you step out of the hotel room, right from the guy outside, to the guy in the lift, the bus driver everyone is saying 'we want a hundred'.

"So, it does play on your mind all the time but that's also the beauty of playing for so long to have these complications come up and overcome these challenges," Kohli said.

Kohli dished out an uncharacteristic 364-ball innings, spanning more than

eight hours and 30 minutes. It was his 75th international century across formats.

David said he was also desperate to see former skipper score that big hundred but it was worth in the end since Kohli delivered a master class.

"I've seen him as a player, seen a lot of hundreds of him on TV and after I took over the coach about 15-16 months ago, was a bit desperate to see him score a Test hundred and really enjoy it from the comfort of the dressing room

"To be able to enjoy and relax a Test hundred. It was a beauty. You made me wait a long time but it was an absolute privilege to watch an innings and the way you constructed it," said Dravid.

Before this match, Kohli's last Test century had come in India's maiden Day/Night Test against Bangladesh in November 2019.

Kohli insisted that he never "about the milestones".

"A lot of people ask me, 'how do you keep scoring those hundreds'. And I always say a hundred is something that happens along the way within my goal, which is to bat as long as possible for my team."

Kohli credited his fitness to be able to bat in different ways which help him excel in all formats.

## Hardik can be India captain post 2023 WC: Gavaskar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar reckons Hardik Pandya can stake claim for leadership role in one-dayers too after the World Cup this year, provided his side emerges victorious against Australia in the first ODI here on Friday.

With regular skipper Rohit Sharma set to miss the first ODI at the Wankhede Stadium due to family commitments, Pandya has been named the stand-in captain for the contest.

The 29-year-old all-rounder, who captained Gujarat Titans to title win in their maiden appearance in the Indian Premier League 2022 season, is already the incumbent leader for India in the shortest format.

Gavaskar told Star Sports, "I have been very impressed with his captaincy at the T20 level for the Gujarat Titans and for India when he is captaining the T20 side. I do believe that if he wins the first game in Mumbai, then you can almost stamp him as the India captain once the World Cup is over in 2023."

Gavaskar said Pandya's presence in the middle-order is essential for India.

"He can be an impact player as well as a game changer in the middle-order. Even for the Gujarat team, he was promoting himself up the order knowing that this is the time when the team needed some momentum and push, and he



would do that," Gavaskar said. "So, someone who is prepared to take on responsibility, lead from the front, and who will not ask the players to do something that he wants to do himself, is highly crucial," he said.

Gavaskar added that Pandya's captaincy style also makes him a favourite among the players.

"What you see with Hardik Pandya as a captain is a sense of comfort with the rest of the team. Maybe, it's

the way he handles the players, puts his arm around the players... He just seems to give the players a sense of comfort.

"That's so important... To give a player a sense of comfort so that he can go and play his natural game. I think he encourages them, which is a wonderful sign."

Meanwhile, former India player and commentator Ajit Agarkar has backed Rohit to fire with the bat once he links up with the Indian squad.

## Warner remains in Oz plans for WTC final: McDonald



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Australia opener David Warner will compete in the upcoming ODI series against India, having recovered from his elbow injury, coach Andrew McDonald said here.

Warner struggled in the two Tests he played against India, scoring 26 runs from his three innings before being substituted out of the second match in Delhi due to concussion.

He then returned home to recover from a hairline fracture in his elbow.

"He (Warner) is coming back (to India) for the one day series, he's recovered from his injury," Australia head coach Andrew McDonald said here.

McDonald said Warner is even in the frame for the World Test Championship final against Rohit Sharma's men in

London in June.

"At the moment Dave's fully in our plans for the World Test Championship," McDonald said of Warner, who has scored 8158 runs from 103 Tests at an average of 45.57.

The 36-year-old has also scored 6007 runs from 141 ODIs at an average of 45.16.

McDonald also confirmed that in-form opener Usman Khawaja, who made 180 in Australia's first innings in the drawn fourth Test here, has been cleared of structural damage to his lower leg which he injured while fielding on the penultimate day on Sunday.

"The scans are pretty positive... so he gets some time to rest up now and look forward to the World Test Championship," McDonald said of Khawaja.

"I'm sure there'll be a bit of rehabilitation around that, but

at this stage nothing structural or anything that will keep him out for long."

The WTC final at the Oval will be played just a few days after the end of the Indian Premier League (IPL) but McDonald said Australia will be prepared well.

"It will be squeezed, pretty much straight on the back of the IPL," he said.

"We'll head to England with plenty of time to prepare over there. We've got things that are almost in place for that - we'll be well prepared."

Of the front-line bowlers Australia are likely to deploy in England for the WTC final and the Ashes that follow, only injured quick Josh Hazlewood (achilles soreness) and all-rounder Cameron Green are signed to take part in the IPL that begins on March 31.

Warner is the other probable member of Australia's UK touring party who will also spend the coming months playing white-ball cricket in India.

"We are continually talking to our senior players with what they have coming up, juggling the schedule that's in front of us.

"We are staring down 274 days on the road - 144 for the red-ball team, 130 for the white-ball team. So there's going to be some give and take within that."

McDonald admitted that the defeat in the second Test in Delhi where Australia suffered a batting collapse, losing eight wickets for 28 runs in barely an hour, was the moment when hopes of a historic series win evaporated.

"It's a proud group and they'll see it as a missed opportunity. Not many teams come here and get the opportunity like what was presented in Delhi, and if it had been one-all (after Delhi) who knows how the series goes from there," McDonald said.

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Senior batter Steve Smith will lead Australia against India in the upcoming three-match ODI series as regular captain Pat Cummins, who lost his mother recently, will not return to the country for the white-ball contest.

Cummins had left for home after the second Test in Delhi to take care of his mother Maria, who died of breast cancer last week.

The first game of the three-match series will be played in Mumbai on Friday.

"Pat won't be coming back, he's still taking care of what's happened back home," Australia coach Andrew McDonald said.

"Our thoughts are with Pat and his family as they go through that grieving process,"



## Bangladesh whitewash England in T20 series

AP ■ MIRPUR

Bangladesh whitewashed world champion England in their Twenty20 series by winning the third game by 16 runs on Tuesday.

Opener Liton Das hit a career-best 73 and Najmul Hossain Shanto 47 not out for Bangladesh to put up 158-2 on a slow Mirpur pitch.

Dawid Malan and skipper Jos Buttler had England on track to avoid being swept until their dismissals in consecutive deliveries. England slumped to 142-6.

Bangladesh earned its first T20 sweep of major opposition, while England was swept for only the third time after Australia in 2014 and South Africa in 2016.

"We talked about showing character ahead of the series and that's what we showed," Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan said.

"We were put into a tough position but won the game.

That's the thing that will give us the confidence as we are build a team for the 2024 T20 World Cup."

Left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam, on debut, struck with his third ball when he removed opener Phil Salt for a duck.

Then Malan hit a 47-ball 53 with six fours and two sixes and put on a 95-run stand with Buttler, who appeared to be in supreme touch with 40 off 31, including four fours and a six.

But Malan edged behind to give pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman his 100th T20 wicket, and Mehidy Hasan ran out Buttler with a direct hit from point.

England collapsed from there, trying to maintain the asking run rate.

"Our fielding was top notch. Those two wickets in two balls changed the game completely," Shakib said.

England coach Mathew Mott agreed.

"The turning point was the

run out, it was an amazing piece of fielding," Mott said. "You'd back yourself with Jos set at the back end there, got his eye in, and was ready to go. It really turned the game.

"We lost two wickets in the over. I thought we had enough of a platform that, if one of those two batted through, we would have given it a big shake at the back end."

Fast bowler Taskin Ahmed took 2-26 to receive man of the match and, when England needed an unlikely 27 off the last over, Hasan Mahmud conceded just two boundaries.

England also bowled superbly at the death, giving up only 27 runs in five overs to Bangladesh, and only one four.

But Bangladesh capitalised on dropped catches to build a competitive total.

Opener Liton Das, who made just 26 runs in the last five matches against England, returned to form with a 57-ball 73 studded with 10 fours and one six.

Donald was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au.

Cricket Australia has not named any replacement for Cummins in the 15-man squad. Smith had captained Australia in the last two Tests of the four-match series that India won 2-1 to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Nathan Ellis was recently recalled to the ODI squad after Jhye Richardson made a late withdrawal having been forced to undergo a hamstring surgery.

On the pace front, Josh Hazlewood, who also captained the ODI team during the England series when Cummins

missed a match, is absent due to an injury.

Ashton Agar has returned after being sent home midway through the Test series and is likely to form a spin partnership with Adam Zampa.

The series will also mark the returns of Glenn Maxwell (broken leg) and Mitchell Marsh (ankle surgery) from serious injuries. "We've got a couple conversations around the balance of the team we want to play, we've gone in with a structure with eight batters to bat a little bit deeper, we've tried that," said McDonald.



## Williamson, Southee to be released early for IPL

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Four New Zealand players, including Kane Williamson and Tim Southee, were given go-ahead by the country's cricket board to join their respective Indian Premier League (IPL) teams without taking part in the home white-ball series against Sri Lanka.

The quartet of Williamson (Gujarat Titans), Southee (Kolkata Knight Riders), Devon Conway and Mitchell Santner (both Chennai Super Kings) will be released after the second and final Test against Sri Lanka beginning here on Friday so that they are able to join their respective IPL franchises early.

Three other players -- Finn Allen (Royal Challengers Bangalore), Lockie Ferguson (KKR) and Glenn Phillips (Sunrisers Hyderabad) -- will fly out to India after the first ODI slated in Auckland on March 25.

Following the conclusion of the ongoing two-match home Test series, New Zealand will face Sri Lanka in three ODIs and three T20Is.

The IPL starts on March 31 with a match between defending champions Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings in Ahmedabad.

In the absence of Williamson, New Zealand

Cricket (NZC) has named Tom Latham as the skipper for the ODI series. The departure of the players to India will see Mark Chapman, Ben Lister and Henry Nicholls join up with the squad ahead of the second ODI at Hagley Oval in Christchurch on March 28.

Another feature of the squad is the return of Tom Blundell and Will Young to international white ball cricket.

NZC has named Canterbury's Chad Bowes and Auckland Ace Ben Lister as the two uncapped players in the ODI squad to face Sri Lanka.

Lister is fresh from his T20I debut for New Zealand in India last month while Bowes has earned his first selection in the Black Caps squad.

"It's always exciting as a coach to have new players in the environment and to have players putting their hands up to be selected again in a particular format," Black Caps coach Gary Stead said in the NZC website.

"We are set to play 16 white ball matches between now and the start of May so there will be a number of chances for players to test themselves in familiar and unfamiliar conditions," he said about NZ's plans ahead of the ODI World Cup in India in October-November.

## Manika loses both women's doubles and mixed doubles

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Indian campaign ended at the Singapore Smash table tennis tournament after Manika Batra lost both her women's doubles and mixed doubles matches with her respective partners on Tuesday.

Manika and Sathiyam Gnanasekaran lost to Japan's world championships silver medallists duo of Hina Hayata and Tomokazu Harimoto in the mixed doubles quarterfinals to end their fine run in the tour-



nament. Manika-Sathiyam went down 2-3 (9-11, 9-11, 11-8, 11-

5, 7-11) to their fourth-seeded opponents in a hard-fought last-eight stage match that lasted 52

minutes. The Indian duo were seeded sixth in the tournament.

Earlier, Manika and Sathiyam had defeated Singapore pair of Jian Zeng and Chew Zhe Yu Clarence 3-1 (11-7, 12-10, 9-11, 11-3) in their round of 16 mixed doubles match. They had got a first round bye.

In the women's doubles, Manika and Archana Kamath lost to Meng Chen and Yidi Wang of China 2-3 (2-11, 6-11, 15-13, 12-10, 6-11) in a hard-fought round of 16 match that lasted 42 minutes.

## Prannoy makes winning start at All England

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India's HS Prannoy survived some anxious moments before advancing to the second round of the All England Championships after registering a straight-game win over Chinese Taipei's Tzu Wei Wang in the men's singles competition here on Tuesday.

The World No. 9 Indian eked out a 21-19, 22-20 win over Wang in the 49-minute opening round clash to take his overall tally to 5-3 over the Taiwanese.



The 30-year-old from Kerala will meet either third seeded Indonesian Anthony Sinisuka Ginting or Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen next.