

In Koraput

3 die as SUV hits auto-rickshaw, 2 bikes



CM announces ex-gratia for deceased's kin

PNS ■ KORAPUT
At least three persons, including two women, were killed and 13 others were injured in a road mishap involving an SUV, an auto-rickshaw and two motorcycles in Koraput district on Friday. The mishap took place near Bijapur Square under the Borigumma police limits in

the afternoon. According to locals, the SUV first collided with a bike coming from the opposite direction and then hit the auto-rickshaw from the rear before colliding with the second bike within a few seconds. The SUV and the auto-rickshaw skidded off the road and fell into the nearby field due to the collision. Three persons died on the spot while 13 other sustained injuries in the mishap. The injured were rushed to

In Deogarh

Jumbo crushes 2 women to death

PNS ■ DEOGARH
An elephant trampled two women to death at Tipirisingha village under the Deogarh Forest Range on Friday night. The deceased were identified as Surubali Kisan (43) and Khairi Kisan (19). As per reports, the two were sitting near a bonfire when they realised about the presence of the elephant close to them. Though they raised an alarm in this regard, the pachyderm crushed the two to death before the arrival of locals at the scene. Police recovered the body for postmortem. Locals demanded compensation from the Forest Department for the kin of the deceased.

announced an ex-gratia of Rs 3 lakh each to the next of the kin of the deceased persons, said the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). The CM directed the officials to ensure proper treatment for the people who have sustained injuries in the mishap. announced an ex-gratia of Rs 3 lakh each to the next of the kin of the deceased persons, said the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). The CM directed the officials to ensure proper treatment for the people who have sustained injuries in the mishap.

In Ganjam

Bus-pickup van collision: 3 dead



PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR
In a tragic incident, three people, including a woman, died when a bus and a pickup van collided head on in Ganjam district on Saturday. The identities of deceased persons were yet to be ascertained. Several others were also injured in the fatal accident. According to reports, the private bus was travelling from Brahmapur to Aska and the pickup van was en route to Brahmapur from Aska in the district. The incident took place near the Khadabhaga area. The pickup van was completely damaged in the mishap. Sources said that the deceased persons were trapped inside the pickup van. The Aska police and Fire Service personnel recovered the bodies from the vehicle.

3 girls killed In Nayagarh



In picnic bus-truck collision

PNS ■ NAYAGARH
A head-on collision between a picnic bus and a truck near Buguda under the Daspalla police limits in Nayagarh district killed three girl students and left more than 10 students injured on Friday night. As per reports, the accident took place when the bus carrying around 50 students of a Daspalla-based coaching centre was heading towards Harishankar in Balangir district for picnic. While the three students died under the impact of the collision, the injured ones were rescued and hospitalised for treatment. The deceased were identified as Chinmayee Priyadarshini, Amrita Sahu and Lopamudra Pradhan. Police started an investigation into the incident.

Events at ULB level to mark Odia Language Conf

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The first World Odia Language Conference will be organized at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar between February 3 and 5. A wide range of programmes are scheduled to be organised to promote the language and create interest in the language. In view of this, it has been decided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to celebrate Odia language convention in all the urban areas of the State. In this regard, Director, Municipal Administration, Sangamjit Naik has written letter to the Commissioners of all the Municipal Corporations and the Executive Officers of the Municipalities and NACs. He also discussed the necessary steps to be taken, through video conferencing. Underscoring the need to hold various events it at the ULB level across the State, Nayak directed that portraits of famous poets, writers and linguists who have contributed to the development of Odia language and culture to be placed at prominent places in urban self-governing bodies. He further asked the ULB authorities to take up programmes to increase the number of Odia researchers, scholars and intellectuals in the local area. Debate and essay competitions can be organised among school and college students as part of the drive. For proper organisation of the conference, an "Odia Asmita Rath" will roll out in the various wards. Besides, emphasis will be placed on writing signboards/billboards/hoardings in Odia, he directed. During the virtual discussion, all the ULBs participated in the and expressed their commitment to preserve the language, literature and culture.

CM inaugurates SAMALEI project

Samaleswari Temple dazzles with major facelift

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR
Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives (SAMALEI) project here on Saturday. On the occasion, Patnaik had darshan of Maa Samaleswari and took blessings of the deity. He prayed for the peace and prosperity of the people of the State. The project includes peripheral development of the shrine, construction of a heritage corridor, amenities for pilgrims, improved



access to the temple and development of the Mahanadi riverfront. The project, which was being carried out during the last three years, has transformed the 16th-century temple, significantly. The work for the project started in February of 2021 with an initial expenditure of Rs 200 crore. The State Government has spent a total of Rs 290 crore for the transformational work. A Bhakta Niwas, a new trust board office, a museum, a park, a cafeteria, a common amenities centre, a Dipa Ghar and Mahanadi Alati are among the significant aspects of the SAMALEI project.

Kharge to attend 'Odisha Bachao Samavesh'



On January 29

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikarjun Kharge would attend an 'Odisha Bachao Samavesh' in Bhubaneswar on January 29. This would be Kharge's first visit to Odisha after becoming the AICC president. Informing this on Saturday, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Sarat Pattanayak alleged that even after 24 years of the BJD rule, 52 per cent of the population in the State is poor. While there are 2 lakh vacancies in government jobs, 10 lakh registered educated youths are unemployed and staring at a dark future. Even, people are still deprived of basic facilities. On the other hand, a conspiracy has been hatched to destroy the Odia identity. Even, plans are being made to hand over the State's governance to non-Odias, Pattanayak alleged. Former OPCC president Jayadev Jena also spoke. AICC secretary and Odisha Congress deputy n-charge Sahanawaj Chaudhury and PCC social media chairman Amiya Pandav were present.

Guv, CM grace R-Day fest at Gandhi Marg



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Odisha celebrated the 75th Republic Day with a great spirit of patriotism and fervour on Friday. Governor Raghuraj Das unfurled the Tricolour at a State-level Republic Day function at Gandhi Marg in Bhubaneswar. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik was also present at the event. Governor Das received the salutes of marching contingents in presence of CM Patnaik at the national day event. The parade was led by IPS officer AB Silpa in which 50 contingents participated. The contingents of ITBP, CRPF, BSF, Fire, ODRAF, Odisha Home Guard, RPF, Sainik School, NCC, Police Band participated. This apart, four cultural groups, a skating team from Odisha Skating Academy and the Maharshi Dare Devils also participated in the Republic

Day parade here. The teams of various educational institutes also took part. A platoon of Jharkhand State Armed Police led by DSP Binod Kumar Mahato participated in the parade as a guest contingent. The tableaux of 12 departments of the State Government including Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment, Health and Family Welfare, School and Mass Education, Panchayati Raj and Drinking

Water, Works, Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts, Tourism, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, SC and ST, OMC and Fire were showcased during the State level parade. The parade ground was under three-tier security arrangements. The national flag was also unfurled in all the district headquarters, offices and educational and business establishments across the State to celebrate Republic Day-2024.

R-Day Parade in Delhi

Odisha tableau flaunts Pattachitra craft



PNS ■ NEW DELHI
A tableau from Odisha selected by the Centre rolled down the Kartavya Path at the Republic Day Parade in the national capital on Friday. The tableau based on the theme 'Women Empowerment in Viksit Bharat' displayed Pattachitra of heritage craft of Raghurajpur village. The tableau from the State took part in the parade on 75th Republic Day after a gap of three years. The tableaux of 16 States/Union Territories (UTs) on different themes

showcasing India's rich cultural diversity and creativity were seen at the event. Apart from Odisha, the tableaux of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Ladakh (UT), Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh were displayed. The Ministry of Defence had shortlisted tableaux proposals of a total of 15 States and one Union Territory for the Republic Day Parade 2024.

Rs 2-cr fraud: Two Noida scammers get 10-yr RI

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

OPID Special Court's Judge here Biswajit Das on Saturday sentenced two Noida-based fraudster to ten years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for their involvement in fraud of over Rs two crore.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 3 lakh each on the convicts Bijay Bharadwaj and Himanshu Bhandari, who were earlier arrested by the Odisha Economic Offences Wing of Odisha Police. In case of default in payment of fine, they would have to undergo further imprisonment of two years each.

The EOW had arrested the duo based on the complaint of a businessman Pramod Kumar Rout of Joda in Keonjhar. He had alleged that the two had duped of him of Rs 2.35 crore on the pretext of paying him Rs 3 crore from the Central Government, under 'Pradhan Mantri Rahat Kosh Yojana' against his insurance policy with Max New York Life, using the forged and manipulated documents.

Complainant Rout had one policy in Max New York Life Insurance Company. In 2019, he received a call from a fraudster impersonating himself as AK Walia, the Fund Releasing Head,

Ministry of Finance. He informed Rout that his insurance policy has been selected for a reward under "Pradhan Mantri Rahat Kosh Yojana" of Government of India and an amount of Rs.3 crore would be released to his account.

Subsequently, he received one letter on WhatsApp, which was issued purportedly by one HOD (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA) that the complainant is required to pay some dues for receiving fund of Rs 1,56,36,500 within the next four hours.

Along with the above letter, the informant also received

some other communications/ photographs on WhatsApp.

Rout received a series of calls from different persons using different mobile numbers, who identified themselves as employees in the office of AK Walia and induced/ persuaded the informant to transfer money through RTGS for the release of Rs 3 crore.

Being lured, he transferred around Rs 2.35 crore in installments believing that after these procedures, he would get the reward money but no amount was received. He lodged a complaint with the EOW after realising that he had been duped by the duo.

Nat'l Girl Child Day

Focus on girls' edu in B'patna meet



PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA

On the occasion of the National Girl Child Day, a district level convergence meeting- cum -orientation programme was held by the Piramal Foundation at the BM High School campus at Bhawanipatna on Wednesday.

A detailed discussion on the need of girls' education for a better future was held. The discussions revolved around the presentation of findings by Saswata Sourav Panda and Sisir Sukla of Piramal Foundation

on a recent survey conducted by the Foundation in Kalahandi district on the status of girls' education and related issues. Various problems and challenges like dropout reduction, increasing enrolment, retention and improving scholarship coverage were discussed.

ADEO Temlal Dubey, DWO Arabinda Ray, CI Kamalakanta Praharaj and SPM Aditya Sahoo were present. WEOs, BEOs, MISPCs and other Block level officers also participated.

Industry-academia interface IIT-BBS holds training for Tata Steel engineers

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar, organised a training programme on 'School of Excellence in Design and Engineering' as part of the capability-building support for Tata Steel engineers for their in-house infrastructure projects.

The four-day training programme was held from January 22 to 25 at the School of Infrastructure of the institute. As many as 30 civil engineers from Tata Steel participated in the training programme, which was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding on the use of modern finite element-based software with practical examples and hands-on sessions.

The programme was inaugurated by Director, IIT, Bhubaneswar Prof Shreepad

Karmalkar, in the presence of Dean- Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy (SRIC) Prof Dinakar Pasla and Head of the School of Infrastructure Prof Sumanta Halder. Speaking on the occasion, Director Prof Karmalkar highlighted the importance IIT Bhubaneswar is according to industry-academia collaboration and the efforts being made to motivate faculty for the same.

On the second day of the programme, G&M, Design and Engineering of Tata Steel Limited Manish Kumar Singh visited IIT, Bhubaneswar and interacted with the Director about the possible collaboration with TATA Steel for industry-academia relationship.

The four-day training programme focused on the modern aspects in the analysis and design of infrastructure projects considering structural and geotechnical engineering domains.

Pulmonologist Mishra holds anti-tobacco meet



PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

On January 19, the Rotary Club of Brahmapur Central and Rotary Club of Baleswar conducted an anti-tobacco awareness workshop under the leadership of PDG Prof Dr Narayan Mishra, a pulmonologist of international repute, at Sidhi Vinayak Public School, Baleswar which was attended by more than 200 students of class 9th, 11th and the Rotarians.

Dr Mishra and his wife Asha Mishra started their anti-tobacco movement in 1987 and within a span of 37

years, have conducted 652 such participatory workshops. One of their anti-tobacco rallies with more than 10,000 students on World Cancer Day in 2009 was the largest of its kind in the world and featured in Limca book of records.

The initiative was taken up by PDG Santanu Pani and was supported by Rtn Sudhanshu Panda, the head of the Sidhi Vinayak Public School. Senior Rotarians like Subrat Kar, Udayabhanu, Pradip Panda, Sourav Behera, CH Mohan Subudhi and Asha Mishra were present.

In Deogarh 3 held for ivory smuggling; 2 tusks seized

PNS ■ DEOGARH

Three persons were arrested by Forest Department officials in Deogarh district for their alleged involvement in ivory smuggling.

The three were nabbed from a hotel in Deogarh during a raid by the Forest officials. Two tusks were seized from the duo's possession.

Acting on a tipoff about ivory smuggling, a team of forest officials conducted a

raid at the hotel and took the three smugglers into custody. One of them was a local jeweller, while another person was a New Delhi resident.

The three are being interrogated to unearth more information about the racket and a thorough search operation is in progress in the area following the seizure of tusks, said a forest official. Further investigation WAS in progress to ascertain the exact nature of the trade.

‘Stop releasing sewer water into Rushikulya’

BJD leader Panda writes to CM to protect spiritual purity of river, besides preventing pollution

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Former Deputy Speaker of Assembly Rama Chandra Panda has written a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, requesting him to take necessary steps for stoppage of sewerage outlets to the Rushikulya river.

The river is not only con-

sidered most sacred, but also is the lifeline of the people of Ganjam district. On the bank of the river, human civilization has grown from time immemorial. From the Rushikulya hills in Kandhamal district to Ganjam mouth, several small rivers like Baghuda, Badanadi, Ghodahada, Kharakhari and Dhanei are its tributaries, the letter said.

The letter further pointed out that both the human and cattle population of hundreds of villages located on the bank of the river are using its water for their day-to-day needs, apart from conducting several religious, spiritual activities and rituals on its bank, par-

ticularly at the river's northern turnings. Considering the same as most sacred, they take holy dip in the river (known as Maha Baruni Snana), it said.

Panda raised concerns that several people of various Gram Panchayats and NACs, those who stay on the bank of the river have connected their sewerage system directly to the river Rushikulya which is the cause of pollution of the water.

Citing an instance, Panda pointed out that during his recent tour to Pratappur, some senior citizens reported that such contamination has caused a layer of sewer solid sediments floating on the surface of the

water flow causing a great concern among the locals.

As the State Government has played a pioneering role in taking initiatives to restore cultural and spiritual heritage of various religious sites which is appreciated in various quarters, Panda requested the Chief Minister to instruct the concerned district administration and other stakeholders to advise the NACs and GPs situated on the bank of the river to refrain from directly letting their sewerages to the river course to protect the purity of the river and its water and to prevent environmental pollution in the larger interest of the local public.

Ex-B'swar MP Jena, wife do philanthropy



PNS ■ BALESWAR

About 100 wheelchairs and other aids were distributed among some physically challenged persons by Subasini Jena and her spouse former Baleswar MP RK Jena as a part of the couple's ongoing philanthropic activities here.

Subasini is the State working president of BJD women

wing, while Rabindra Kumar is a ticket aspirant in BJD for Basta constituency in the upcoming Assembly poll.

These aids were distributed by the Jena couple among the beneficiaries following surveys in Basta and Baliapal. "For generations our family has been doing social and philanthropic activities for the poor, downtrodden and underprivi-

leged and we continue to maintain the same streak. In society we have to help each other, especially those who are needy. There have been demands mainly for wheelchairs for differently abled besides other appliances and in the first phase we could address the issues mainly mobility of around 100 people. In future also, we would continue to

provide such needful assistance," said the Jena couple.

It may also be noted the Jena couple does a lot of philanthropic and social works across Baleswar, be it flood, cyclone, and any other disaster situation, besides helping people for the education and marriage of their children. They also extended help during the time of Covid-19.

‘Odisha can proudly claim to be a birding hub’

Three-day Chilika Birds Fest begins

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 4th National Chilika Birds Festival was on Saturday inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

He applauded the efforts of the organisers of the event such as the Department of Tourism, Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change and Chilika Development Authority.

The fest started off with a captivating photo exhibition showcasing the extraordinary talents of renowned photographers such as Shakti Nanda, Umakanta Biswal, Dhritiman Mukherjee, and other eminent photographers. It unfolded a mesmerising array of photographs, capturing the diverse and enchanting avian wonders that grace the



Chilika region. The images not only reflected the skill of the photographers but also served as a powerful testament to the rich biodiversity of Chilika lake.

The three-day programme

witnessed the participation of 52 selected birders from across India.

Offering a gist of the focused conservation campaign by the Government, Tourism Minister Aswini Kumar Patra

said, "While the elusive wild-life deep within our forests evades our sights, Odisha can proudly claim to be a birding hub, thanks to the pioneering efforts in wetland and bird conservation and special ini-

INBRIEF

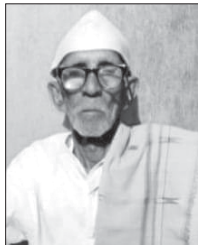
TOMAR BJP POLL IN-CHARGE FOR ODISHA

Bhubaneswar: The BJP on Saturday appointed its national vice-president Baijayant 'Jay' Panda as the party's in-charge for Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh. For Odisha Vijaya Pal Singh Tomar, MP, was nominated as election in-charge. Besides, Lata Usendi, MLA, was also nominated as co-in-charge for Odisha.



FREEDOM FIGHTER NILAMANI SAMAL DIES AT 102

Jajpur: Noted freedom fighter Nilamani Samal (102) of village Balipadia under Barachana block in Jajpur district passed away on Saturday at the SCB Medical College Hospital at Cuttack. He is survived by his two sons. His wife predeceased him four years back. He was suffering from old age-related ailment for the last two years. Samal had been felicitated on August 9, 2019 by the President and the Prime Minister in the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced that Samal's funeral would be held with full State honour.



UTKAL SAMMILANI HOLDS REPUBLIC DAY

Bhubaneswar: The Utkal Sammilani celebrated the 75th Republic Day at its central office here. Sammilani State president Ananta Prasad Jena unfurled the National Flag. Vice-president Surendra Mishra and general secretary Dillip Dashsharma spoke on the occasion. Sammilani Bhubaneswar branch president Subrat Mahapatra presided over the meet. Mancheswar branch advisor Nimai Das, Bhubaneswar branch secretary Shibabrat Mohanty, Arun Nayak, Diptimayi Nayak, Susama Lenka, Surjit Parida, Bhagwan Pradhan, Rajanikant Acharya, Narayan Sutar and Dilip Sahu were among others present.



R-DAY CELEBRATED AT DAV CHANDRASEKHARPUR

Bhubaneswar: The 75th Republic Day was celebrated amidst various activities at the DAV Public School, Chandrasekharpur here on Friday. Regional Director of DAV Institutions, Odisha Dr KC Satapathy joined as chief guest and unfurled the Tricolour in the presence of Principal Dr Sujata Sahu, Basanta Manjari Satapathy, Academic Supervisors and others. Dr Satapathy appealed to uphold the greatness of the republic and enrich it further with greater dedication and sacrifice.



PARADIP PORT BANIK SANGHA HOLDS REPUBLIC DAY

Paradip: Th Paradip Port Banik Sangha (PPBS) celebrated the 75th Republic Day at Badpada, where its president Santosh



Kumar Pattnaik hoisted the National Flag. Pattnaik honoured freedom fighters and paid tribute to Dr BR Ambedkar, the architect of Indian Constitution. Acknowledging the contributions of brave soldiers and farmers, he pledged the union's commitment to pursuing the interests of traders. The occasion was attended by business figures, including PPBS secretary Debabrata Sahu, Kshirod Swain, Pramod Mohapatra, Anadi Parida, SriCharan Biswal, Ayaskant Samal, Kedar Biswal, Chaitanya Sahu and Bibhu Bhushan Mohanty.

tiatives like the National Chilika Birds Festival. This year's census has revealed a total count of 11.37 lakh birds across over 187 species."

Among others, OTDC Chairman Lenin Mohanty, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism, Surendra Kumar and Director Tourism, Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav spoke while Director, Nandankanan and Chief Executive Chilika Development Authority Manoj Nair gave vote of thanks.

The State of India's Birds poster and video was launched at the inaugural ceremony. The State of India's Birds video encapsulated the scientific report that assesses the birds of India. The periodic assessment examines the geographic distribution, abundance trends, and conservation status of the majority of bird species commonly found in India. 13,000 bird watchers have contributed to the report.

The talks by Director Nandankanan Dr Manoj Nair, Scientist, Wildlife Institute of India Dr Suresh Kumar, Birder and author Panchami Manoo Ukil and eminent photographer Dhritiman Mukherjee contributed significantly to the festival's goal of promoting awareness and appreciation for the rich avian fauna around Chilika. Their collective expertise spanned scientific research, birding experiences, and visual storytelling, creating a well-rounded and engaging programme for all participants.

The Parallel Session on Citizen Science and Bird Conservation brought together a diverse group of delegates passionate about leveraging citizen engagement for the preservation of avian biodiversity.

Over the next two days, participants and delegates will undertake birding tours to Mangalajodi - Nalabana.

Hand over Gyanvapi structure to Hindus: VHP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Saturday claimed the ASI survey report has “reconfirmed” that the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi was constructed after demolishing a “magnificent temple” at the site and demanded that the structure be declared “a Hindu temple and handed over to the community. It also demanded that Hindus be permitted to offer “sewa puja” to the ‘Shivlinga’ found in the “so-called Wazukhana area” at the disputed site. “The evidence collected and the conclusions provided by the ASI do prove that the religious character of this place of worship existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and as at present is of a Hindu Temple,” VHP working president Alok



Kumar said in a statement. “Thus, even as per Section 4 of the Places of Worship Act, 1991, the structure should be declared as a Hindu temple,” he also demanded. The VHP also called upon the Intezamia Committee that manages the mosque to agree to “respectfully shift” the Gyanvapi mosque to another appropriate place and to hand over the original site of Kashi Vishvanatha to the Hindu society. “The VHP believes that this righteous action shall be an

important step towards creating amicable relations between the two prominent communities of Bharat,” Kumar said. The VHP’s demands came after the ASI survey report on the Gyanvapi mosque complex was made public two days ago, with the lawyer representing the Hindu litigants claiming that the mosque was built after demolishing a pre-existing temple. “Hand over the Gyanvapi structure to Hindus,” Kumar said.

He claimed the evidence collected by ASI “reconfirms that the mosque had been constructed after demolishing a magnificent temple”. A part of the temple structure, particularly the western wall, is the remaining part of the Hindu temple, he further claimed. The ASI report also proves that parts of the pre-existing temple including pillars and pilasters were reused with modifications to extend the span of the mosque and in the construction of the ‘sahan’, he added. “The Shivalinga in what was called the ‘wazukhana’ leaves no doubt that the structure does not have the character of a mosque. The discovery of the names including the Janardana, Rudra and Umeswara in the inscriptions found in the structure are the tell-tale evidence of this being a temple,” Kumar claimed.

Happy that work is underway on One Nation, One Legislative platform: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said he was happy that Parliament and State Legislatures were working towards realisation of the goal of ‘one nation, one legislative platform’. Addressing the 84th All India Presiding Officers’ Conference (AIPOC) virtually, the PM also rued that some political parties defend their members even if they violate the rules of the House, and warned that it did not augur well for Parliament and state legislatures. “In 2021, during discussions with you, I spoke about ‘one nation, one legislative platform.’ I am happy that our Parliament and state legislatures are now working towards this goal through E-Vidhan and Digital Sansad platforms,” the prime minister said. Led by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla a total of 26 Presiding Officers

participated in the inaugural session. Notably, the ‘one nation, one legislative platform’ project aims at making available the proceedings of all legislatures on a single digital platform. The image of a legislature depends on the conduct of its members, the prime minister stressed. “There was a time when, if any member in the House broke the rules and action was taken against that member, senior members of the House would talk to him so that in future he did not repeat the mistake and break the rules of the House. Inaugurating the Conference

at Mumbai, Birla expressed concern over incidents of indiscipline, disruption of proceedings and unparliamentary conduct in the legislatures affecting their credibility. Birla noted that there is enough space to give voice to dissent in the democratic system, therefore, disruption should not be used as a tool of protest and dissent. Stressing on innovation, Birla suggested that new and innovative methods of working should be promoted in legislatures so that the democratic institutions can better perform their responsibility of monitoring

the executive and people’s faith in these institutions will enhance. Referring to the role of parliamentary committees in democracy, Birla noted that parliamentary committees play a vital role in shaping laws and policies in the present perspective. Parliamentary Committees are actually ‘mini Parliaments’ and they review these laws, policies and programs on behalf of the Parliament and make them more useful to the public, he added. Maharashtra Chief Minister, Eknath Shinde; Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Harivansh; Speaker of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, Rahul Narwekar, Deputy Chairperson, Maharashtra Legislative Council, Dr. Neelam Gorhe and Deputy Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, Narahari Sitaram Jirwal graced the Inaugural Session and addressed the distinguished gathering.

Collect data for Digi Yatra with fliers consent: Scindia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Saturday said Digi Yatra is purely voluntary for air passengers and personnel at airports have been directed to collect data for the application only with the consent of passengers. There have been complaints that biometric data for Digi Yatra were being gathered from passengers without their consent and the issue was flagged to the minister by Rajya Sabha member Saket Gokhale. Digi Yatra, which provides for contactless, seamless movement of passengers at various check points at airports based on Facial Recognition Technology, is available at a minimum 13 airports for domestic passengers. In response to the member, Scindia has said that the issue was examined and “airport operators have been advised to sensitise Digi buddies on consent taking process and keeping use of Digi Yatra completely voluntary”. To support passengers with the use of Digi Yatra, services of individuals called Digi buddies have been made



available at the airports. The minister, in a letter dated January 24, told Gokhale that Digi Yatra is a voluntary process for seamless and hassle free air travel which is purely voluntary. “Consent of passenger is prerequisite for taking face biometric on kiosk based registration. Further, the data is automatically purged from the airport system after 24 hours of departure of the flight,” Scindia said in the letter, a copy of which has been shared by Gokhale on social media platform X. The data shared by a passenger for Digi Yatra is stored in an encrypted format. For availing the service, a passenger has to register his or her details on

DigiYatra app using Aadhaar-based validation and a self image capture. In the next step, the boarding pass has to be scanned and the credentials are shared with the airport. At the airport e-gate, the passenger has to first scan the bar-coded boarding pass and the facial recognition system installed at the e-gate will validate the passenger’s identity and travel document. Once this process is done, the passenger can enter the airport through the e-gate. The passenger will have to follow the normal procedure to clear the security and board the aircraft. Digi Yatra Foundation, a not-for-profit company, is the nodal body for Digi Yatra.

Modi to inaugurate Diamond Jubilee celebrations of SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Supreme Court on Sunday. Unveiling the 75th year of the Supreme Court, Prime Minister Modi will launch citizen-centric information and technology initiatives that include Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi-SCR), Digital Courts 2.0 and a new website of the apex court, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). He will also address the gathering on the occasion. The Supreme Court held its inaugural sitting on January 28, 1950. Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Supreme Court of India on January 28 at 12 noon at the Supreme Court auditorium, the statement said. The Digital Supreme Court Reports (SCR) will make Supreme Court judgments available to citizens free of cost and in the electronic format, it said. The key



features of Digi-SCR are that all 519 volumes of Supreme Court reports since 1950, covering 36,308 cases, will be available in the digital format, bookmarked, user-friendly and with open access, the statement said. The Digital Courts 2.0 application is a recent initiative under the e-Courts project to make court records available to judges of district courts in the electronic form. This is coupled with the use of artificial intelligence for transcribing speech to text on a real-time basis. Prime Minister Modi will also launch the new website of the Supreme Court which will be in a bilingual format in English and Hindi, and has been redesigned with a user-friendly interface, according to the statement. This would be followed by the sitting of a Ceremonial Bench of the SC in the CJI Court at 3:30 pm.

Congress launches donate for Nyay crowdfunding campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday launched a ‘Donate for Nyay’ crowdfunding campaign for the ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra under which people will get a Rahul Gandhi-signed letter or merchandise in return for their donation. Launching the campaign at the AICC headquarters here along with Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh, Congress treasurer Ajay Maken said the idea behind this initiative and the earlier wider crowdfunding campaign of the party, ‘Donate for Desh’, was not to get money but to motivate workers. Under the party’s ‘Donate for Nyay’ campaign, any person who donates Rs 670 or more will get a T-shirt signed by Rahul Gandhi as a gift, Maken said. “Those who donate Rs 67,000 or more will get a ‘Nyay Kit’ which will contain a T-shirt, bag, band, badge and sticker,” he said. “For anything that one donates, he or she will get a letter signed by Rahul ji and a certificate of donation,” said Maken, flanked by Ramesh, joint treasurer Vijay Inder



Singla and Congress minority cell head Imran Pratapgarhi. He said that under the party’s ‘Donate for Desh’ crowdfunding campaign launched on December 18 last year, Rs 20 crore has been collected. Within two hours of launching the ‘Donate for Nyay’ campaign, Rs 2 crore had been collected, the Congress treasurer said. Asked about funds collected through the crowdfunding campaign being lower than expectations, Maken said, “We can’t contest elections by raising money through our workers. If someone thinks we will get all our funding for the elections through this crowdfunding, he is wrong and this is something we did not intend.” It is much more than the

crowdfunding by any other political party as both the AAP and the BJP had started it but they could not reach even Rs 1 crore. “You cannot undermine the efforts of 3 lakh Congress people who have given money. The idea is not to get money, the idea is to motivate the workers. Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra will be going through one part of the country. The rest of the party workers in other parts will be able to participate by giving Rs 67,” he said. So, it is a political platform and not a money generation programme, Maken stressed. The Rahul Gandhi-led yatra is on a two-day break from January 26 to 27 and will restart from West Bengal’s Jalpaiguri on Sunday.

Ensure smooth Yatra passage through Bengal, Kharge writes to Mamata

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apprehending trouble by Amiscreants during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in West Bengal, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has written to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee seeking appropriate directions to ensure its smooth passage through the State and safety of the yatri, including Rahul Gandhi. In his letter, Kharge expressed fear that some miscreants may try to show the state administration in bad light or disrupt the yatra, as had happened in some neighbouring states. He said the Congress has embarked on the “Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra” from Manipur to Maharashtra to spread the message of justice to heal and unite the nation. Kharge said Rahul Gandhi, who is leading this yatra had earlier walked from Kanyakumari to Kashmir in the Bharat Jodo Yatra, has always maintained that the yatra serves a larger purpose of uniting people who stand divided today by the BJP in the name of religion, caste and creed and to ensure that the weakest are assured of justice social, economic and political. “That is why the yatra has remained apolitical and attracted crores of people across India cutting across all sections of the society who identify with a strong, progressive and secular ‘INDIA for All’” he said. The Congress president said



the Bharat Jodo Yatra went across the country without any untoward incident and culminated in a rally in Kashmir. “However, some miscreants targeted the current Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in your neighbouring states. This has been done on political instigation but our cadre faced it bravely. “Now the yatra is passing through Bengal over the next few days. I have been made aware that again some miscreants may foment trouble for the yatra. I am not sure if intention may be to show the state administration in bad light or to disrupt the yatra,” Kharge wrote. “I am writing to request you that you may kindly issue

appropriate directions to ensure smooth passage of the yatra through Bengal and ensure safety of the yatri, including Shri Rahul Gandhi. “I am aware that the Gandhi family and you share very cordial relations, and you would ensure that all security concerns would be addressed adequately. However, I thought it would be best if I personally write to you requesting for the same,” the Congress president said. Kharge has earlier spoken to Banerjee soon after she announced that the Trinamool Congress would contest the elections alone and efforts are on to have a tie-up with her party and the Congress. The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra entered West Bengal in Cooch

Behar Thursday morning and after a two-day break would restart from Jalpaiguri with a padayatra. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the yatra will then proceed to Siliguri and Gandhi will address a public rally there. On January 29, the yatra will reach Araria in Bihar and will remain in Bihar’s Araria, Purnia and Kishanganj on January 30, where Gandhi will address rallies and padayatras. On January 30, the yatra will return to West Bengal at night and will be in Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum districts on January 30 and 31, after which it will go to Jharkhand, Ramesh said. He said as some exams are going on in Siliguri, the padayatra will start at 2 pm instead of in the morning. “Kharge ji has spoken to West Bengal Chief Minister and have given him invitation to her to join the yatra. We feel that going by her statement, her target is the BJP and she is fighting against BJP. The Congress also wants to defeat the BJP are on the same page. “The Congress wants that West Bengal chief minister should participate in the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra and we will welcome her. She should take out some time for the yatra,” Ramesh said. “The Congress president, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi all respect Mamata ji. And they know that of we have to defeat communal forces and it is important that she should be a partner of the opposition alliance,” he said.

Minister Pradhan reviews preparations for 7th edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday reviewed the preparations for the seventh edition of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ‘Pariksha Pe Charcha’. “Pariksha Pe Charcha has become an annual tradition, that exam warriors, parents and teachers all look forward to, to overcome anxiety and come out with their best. There is excitement amongst everyone for the interaction with the Prime Minister, at PPC 2024, for the most-sought after interaction of the year,” Pradhan said on Friday. “Pariksha Pe Charcha” (PPC) is an initiative led by Prime Minister Modi to address the stress associated with examinations and promote a celebratory approach towards life, aligning with the larger movement of ‘Exam Warriors’. Organised by the Ministry of Education, ‘Pariksha Pe Charcha’ has been engaging students, parents, and teachers for the past six years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the fourth edition was held

online, while the fifth and sixth editions returned to the town-hall format. A total of 31.24 lakh students, 5.60 lakh teachers, and 1.95 lakh parents participated in the previous year’s edition. “The current 7th edition recorded a remarkable 2.26 crore registrations on the MyGov portal, highlighting widespread enthusiasm among students nationwide,” Pradhan said. Scheduled on January 29, the event will be held in a town-hall format at the Bharat Mandapam. Two students and a teacher from each State and Union Territory, along with winners of the Kala Utsav, have been invited. A hundred students from Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) will attend for the first time. An online MCQ competition on the MyGov portal from December 11, 2023, to January 12, 2024, determined participants based on their submitted questions. Selected participants will receive a Pariksha Pe Charcha kit, including the “Exam Warriors” book by the prime minister and a certificate.

Niti Aayog identifying key sectors for transforming India into global manufacturing hub

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

As the Government aims to make India a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047, its premier think tank Niti Aayog has decided to reach out to experts to help identify key sectors that have the potential to transform the country into a Global Manufacturing Hub. “With its favourable demographics, skilled workforce, and increasing economic growth, India can attract significant investments and become a preferred destination for manufacturing. In view of this, research studies are proposed to be undertaken by industry vertical on identifying the key sectors for India to become a global manufacturing hub,” said an official from the Niti Aayog. As per the Request for Proposal issued recently, the studies will focus on analyzing various factors, including future trends in manufacturing, industrial capabilities, infrastructure, policy framework, and market potential, to determine the sectors that offer the most significant opportunities for India’s manufacturing growth. The researchers have been asked to study around 12 sectors which they feel that can be exploited to boost the investments. Among others, the study should give details on identification of key sectors in India with high growth

potential for manufacturing considering the value of product, manufacturing efficiency and global demand. Also, assessment of the existing industrial capabilities, infrastructure, and other factors of production in the identified sectors has also been sought. “Assessing the infrastructure requirements, including transportation, logistics, power supply, and digital connectivity, for each identified sector; examining the policy framework, including regulatory environment, tax structure, trade agreements, and ease of doing business, relevant to manufacturing in India,” needs to be factored in while submitting the studies. The experts will also have to suggest global market trends, competitive landscapes, and export potential for the selected sectors. The move comes amid various reports stating India has the potential to become a Global Manufacturing Hub, and by 2030 it is expected to add more than US\$ 500 billion annually to the global economy. As per FICCI president Anish Shah, India’s manufacturing sector will transform into a global powerhouse in the next five years, aligned with the country’s goal of reaching a USD30 trillion GDP by 2047. India can become a manufacturing hub for the world and that is going to drive manufacturing growth faster, he had said.

Houthi missile hits tanker, crew put blaze off

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The crew aboard a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker hit by a missile launched by Yemen's Houthi rebels extinguished an hourslong fire onboard the stricken vessel Saturday sparked by the strike, authorities said.

The attack on the Marlin Luanda further complicated the Red Sea crisis caused by the Iranian-backed rebels' attacks over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The tanker carried Russian-produced naphtha, a flammable oil, drawing Moscow further into a conflict that so far it had blamed on the US.

Early Saturday, US forces conducted a strike against a Houthi anti-ship missile that was aimed at the Red Sea and prepared to launch, the US military's Central Command said. That attack came after the

USS Carney, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, had to shoot down a Houthi missile targeting it.

The Marlin Luanda burned for hours until being extinguished Saturday, said Trafigura, a Singapore-based trading firm. Its crew of 25 Indian nationals and two Sri Lankans were still trying to battle the blaze sparked by the missile strike, it said. No one was injured by the blast, it added.

"We are pleased to confirm that all crew on board the Marlin Luanda are safe and the fire in the cargo tank has been fully extinguished," Trafigura said. "The vessel is now sailing towards a safe harbor."

The Indian navy said its guided missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam was assisting the Marlin Luanda's crew in fighting the fire. It posted images showing the blaze still raging Saturday, likely fueled by



the naphtha on board.

The ship, managed by a British firm, is carrying the Russian naphtha bound for Singapore, the company said. It described the flammable oil as being purchased below the price caps set by G7 sanctions placed on Russia over its ongoing war on Ukraine. It wasn't clear what environmental impact the attack had caused.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed the attack on the Marlin Luanda in a prerecorded statement late Friday, describing it as a "British oil ship." He insisted such

attacks would continue.

Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea over Israel's offensive in Gaza against Hamas. But they have frequently targeted vessels with tenuous or no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for global trade between Asia, the Mideast and Europe.

Since the airstrike campaign began, the rebels now say they'll target American and British ships as well. On Wednesday, two American-flagged ships carrying cargo for the US Defense and State departments came under attack by the Houthis, forcing an escorting US Navy warship to shoot some of the projectiles down.

China, which relies on the seaborne trade through the area, has called for calm. The US had sought to get China to apply pressure on Iran, as

No evidence of POWs killed in Russian plane crash: Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV (UKRAINE)

Officials in Ukraine said Russia has provided no credible evidence to back its claims that their own forces shot down a military transport plane carrying Ukrainian prisoners of war who were to be swapped for Russian POWs.

The Ukrainian agency that deals with prisoner exchanges said late Friday that Russian officials had "with great delay" provided it with a list of the 65 Ukrainians who Moscow said had died in the Wednesday plane crash in Russia's Belgorod region. Ukraine's Coordination Staff for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said relatives of the named POWs were unable to identify their loved ones in crash site photos provided by Russian authorities. The agency's update cited Ukraine's military intelligence chief, Kyrylo Budanov, as saying that Kyiv had no verifiable information about who was on the plane.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Wednesday that missiles fired from across the border brought down the transport plane that it said was taking the POWs back to Ukraine. Local authorities in Belgorod, which borders Ukraine, said the crash killed all 74 people onboard, including six crew members and three Russian servicemen.

"We currently don't have evidence that there could have been that many people onboard the aircraft. Russian propaganda's claim that the IL-76 aircraft was transporting 65 Ukrainian POWs (heading) for a prisoner swap continues to raise a lot of questions," Budanov, who heads Ukraine's POW agency, said.

Social media users in the

Belgorod region posted a video Wednesday that showed a plane falling from the sky in a snowy, rural area, and a huge ball of fire erupting where it apparently hit the ground.

Kyiv has neither confirmed nor denied that its forces downed a Russian military transport plane that day, and Russia's claim that the crash killed Ukrainian POWs could not be independently verified. Earlier Friday, Mykola Oleshchuk, Ukraine's air force commander, described Moscow's assertion as "rampant Russian propaganda."

Ukrainian officials earlier this week confirmed that a prisoner swap was due to happen Wednesday but said it was called off. They said Moscow did not ask for any specific stretch of airspace to be kept safe for a certain length of time, as it has for past prisoner exchanges.

An International Committee of the Red Cross spokesperson in Ukraine urged Russia on Friday night to return the bodies of any POWs who might have died in the plane crash. In a live interview with the US-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Red Cross Media Relations Officer Oleksandr Vlasenko also remarked that "very little time" had passed between the initial reports of the incident and Moscow declaring it was ready to return the bodies of the Ukrainian POWs.

While Ukraine and Russia regularly exchange the bodies of dead soldiers, each trade has required considerable preparation, Vlasenko said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has called for an international investigation into the crash. Russia has sole access to the crash site.

Trump ordered to pay \$83.3m in defamation case

AP ■ NEW YORK

A jury awarded USD 83.3 million to E. Jean Carroll on Friday in a stinging and expensive rebuke to former President Donald Trump for his continued social media attacks against the longtime advice columnist over her claims that he sexually assaulted her in a Manhattan department store.

The award, when coupled with a USD 5 million sexual assault and defamation verdict last year from another jury in a case brought by Carroll, raised to \$88.3 million what Trump must pay her. Protesting vigorously, he said he would appeal.



It was the second time in nine months that a civil jury returned a verdict related to Carroll's claim that a flirtatious, chance encounter with Trump in 1996 at Bergdorf Goodman's Fifth Avenue store ended violently. She said Trump slammed her against a dressing room wall, pulled down her tights and forced himself on her.

In May, a different jury awarded Carroll USD 5 million. It found Trump not liable for rape, but responsible for sexually abusing Carroll and then defaming her by claiming she made it up. He is appealing that award, too.

Trump is also awaiting a verdict in a New York civil fraud trial, where state lawyers are seeking the return of USD 370 million in what they say were ill-gotten gains from loans and deals made using financial statements that exaggerated his wealth.

As for Trump's ability to pay, he reported having about \$294 million in cash or cash equivalents on his most recent annual financial statement, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. Testifying at his civil fraud trial last November, he Trump boasted: "I have very little debt, and I have a lot of cash." Trump skipped the first Carroll trial. He later expressed regret for not attending and insisted on testifying in the second trial, though the judge limited what he could say, ruling he had missed his chance to argue that he was innocent. He spent only a few minutes on the witness stand Thursday, during which he denied attacking Carroll, then left court grumbling "this is not America."

Carroll, 80, clutched her lawyers' hands and smiled as the seven-man, two-woman jury delivered its verdict. Minutes later, she shared a weepy three-way hug with her attorneys.

She declined comment as she left the Manhattan federal courthouse, but issued a statement later through a publicist, saying: "This is a great victory for every woman who stands up when she's been knocked down, and a huge defeat for every bully who has tried to keep a woman down."

Trump had attended the trial earlier in the day, but stormed out of the courtroom during closing arguments read by Carroll's attorney. He returned for his own attorney's closing argument and for a portion of the deliberations, but left the courthouse a half hour before the verdict was read.

"Absolutely ridiculous!" he said in a statement shortly afterward. "Our Legal System is out of control, and being used as a Political Weapon."

Israel presses on with war against Hamas

AP ■ RAFA (GAZA STRIP)

Two women and a man were killed early on Saturday in what witnesses said was an Israeli airstrike on a home in the southernmost part of Gaza, as Israel pursued its military offensive against the Palestinian enclave.

The strike came less than a day after the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza. As part of its binding ruling, the top United Nations court asked Israel for a compliance report in a month, meaning the military's conduct will be under increasing scrutiny.

The court stopped short of ordering a cease-fire, but the orders its judges issued were in part a stinging rebuke of the army's conduct so far in Israel's nearly 4-month-long war against Gaza's Hamas rulers. Friday's decision came in a case brought by South Africa, which alleged Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinian territory's

people, a charge Israel vehemently denies.

The war has killed more than 26,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, destroyed vast swaths of Gaza and displaced nearly 85 per



cent of a population of 2.3 million people. It was triggered by an unprecedented Hamas attack on southern Israel on October 7 in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took about 250 hostages.

The overall Palestinian

death toll in the war rose to 26,257 as of Saturday, with 174 deaths over the past day, the Health Ministry in Gaza said. The ministry does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count, but has said

ians. Israel says its air and ground offensive in Gaza has killed more than 9,000 militants.

Bilal al-Siksik, who lost his wife, a son and a daughter in Saturday's strike in Rafah, a town on Gaza's border with Egypt, said the decision by the world court meant little since it did not stop the war.

"No one can speak in front of them (Israel). America with all its greatness and strength can do nothing," he said as he stood beside the pile of rubble and twisted metal that was once his home. "What can people do, who have no power or anything?" He said his family was asleep when their residence was struck. Rafah and its surrounding areas are crammed with more than 1 million people after the Israeli military ordered civilians to seek refuge there from the fighting elsewhere in the territory. Despite those orders, the designated evacuation areas have repeatedly come under airstrikes, with Israel saying it would go after militants as needed.

ICJ ruling vindicated us: SA Prez Ramaphosa

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

President Cyril Ramaphosa has said the International Court of Justice's ruling has vindicated South Africa's unprecedented decision to charge Israel of genocide during its military offensive against Hamas in Gaza and marked an important first step in its quest to secure justice for the Palestinians.

The top UN court on Friday stopped short of ordering a ceasefire in Gaza but demanded that Israel try to contain death and damage in its military offensive. South Africa, which brought the case, had asked for the court to order Israel to halt its military operations against Hamas militants. The top UN Court court decided not to throw out genocide charges against Israel for its military offensive in Gaza, as part of a preliminary decision in the case.

In a national TV broadcast on Friday evening, Ramaphosa said the ruling of the International Court of Justice is "a victory for international law, for human rights, and above all, for justice."

"The court has concluded that pursuant to Article 9 of the (1948 Genocide Convention, it has jurisdiction to adjudicate our application. The effect of the order that the ICJ has granted today is that there is a plausible case of genocide. This follows the unprecedented action taken by South Africa to take another country to the International Court of Justice," he said.

The president said the ICJ ruling marked an important first step in South Africa's quest to secure justice for the people of Gaza.

"Some have told us to mind our own business. Others have said it was not our place. And yet it is very much our place, as people who know too well the pain of dispossession, discrimination, and state-sponsored violence.

"We are also a people who were the victims of the crime of apartheid. We know what apartheid looks like. We experienced and lived through it. Sadly, many people died and were exiled like

our beloved leader Oliver Tambo and others, others were jailed, like the father of our democracy (Nelson Mandela) and others were maimed," Ramaphosa said.

He said, "We, as South Africans, will not be passive bystanders and watch the crimes that were visited upon us being perpetrated elsewhere. We stand on the side of freedom for all. We stand on the side of justice."

The war between Israel and Hamas began on October 7 after Hamas' attack in which around 1,200 Israelis were killed.

Since then, Israel has been continuously attacking Gaza with the country's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stressing that they will continue its war till victory is achieved despite "international pressure". Since Israel started bombarding the Gaza strip, some 26,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to the Gaza health authority.

Paraphrasing a statement by Nelson



Mandela made 30 years ago when he was elected South Africa's first democratically elected president, Ramaphosa said, "We say again today, never, never and never again shall it be that acts of genocide are perpetrated with impunity as we, the international community look on."

The president said he firmly believed that following this judgment there should now be a more concerted effort towards a ceasefire.

"Negotiations should commence on a permanent two-state solution, to enable Israel and Palestine to live side by side as independent states," he said as he thanked those in the international community who had supported South Africa's application to the ICJ.

"We will not waver in our commitment to the Palestinian people and their quest for self-determination. Our own painful history obliges us to do no less. We thank the International Court of Justice for upholding its role of achieving justice, promoting peace, preventing genocide and holding those guilty of genocide accountable," Ramaphosa said.

Gunmen kill 9 on Iran-Pak border area

AP ■ TEHRAN

Unknown gunmen on Saturday shot to death nine people in the southeastern part of Iran that borders Pakistan, media reports said.

A report by the semi-official Mehr news agency said the shooting took place in a home near the town of Saravan, in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan province. It added that the victims were not Iranian.

No official news outlet reported the shooting and no group has yet taken responsibility for the attack.

HalVash, an advocacy group for the Baluch people, shared images online that appeared to be bodies of victims and said three more people were wounded. It said they were Pakistani nationals and identified four of them, saying all the victims were workers at an auto repair shop.

Last week, Pakistan launched retaliatory strikes on the same area, allegedly targeting militant hideouts, an attack that killed at least nine people.

The strikes followed Iran's attack Tuesday on Pakistani soil that killed two children in the southwestern Baluchistan province.

The tit-for-tat attacks appeared to target two Baluch militant groups with similar separatist goals on both sides of the Iran-Pakistan border. The two countries have accused each other of providing safe haven to the groups in their respective territories.

On Friday, media reports said both nations' ambassadors resumed activities in each other's capital that were idled following the attacks.

Pak seeks \$2 billion loan from China

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Cash-strapped Pakistan has sought financial assistance of USD 2 billion from its close ally China for a year, according to a media report on Saturday.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, in a letter, has requested his Chinese Premier Li Qiang to roll over the debt as soon as the deposit time for the loan from China is completed on March 23.

In his letter, Kakar expressed gratitude to China for its financial assistance to Pakistan during its economic crisis as the cash-strapped country has secured a safe deposit of a total of USD 4 billion in loans from China, reducing the country's mounting pressure on external debt payments and stabilising its foreign exchange reserves, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

Earlier this month, the UAE rolled over Pakistan's maturing loan of USD 2 billion. Apart from the UAE, Saudi Arabia has deposited USD 5 billion with the State Bank of Pakistan.

Following the loan rollover by the UAE, the interim government requested the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to dispatch a new mission this month for talks for the last loan tranche of USD 1.2 billion. The IMF's next mission is critical for not only securing the last loan tranche but also for beginning negotiations for a new long-term programme.

While speaking to a private TV news channel recently, former finance minister Ishaq Dar said in case his party – the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)

– won the elections and formed the government, the decision about the new IMF programme would be made at the earliest. Dar, the four-time finance minister of the country, added that in case his party decided not to enter the IMF programme, it would immediately start implementing the belt-tightening measures.

The IMF has made new adjustments in its fresh staff-level report about the available financing to Pakistan.

The Washington-based lender has increased the projection of budget support loans to USD 3 billion but cut the project financing to USD 3.7 billion for this fiscal year. The overall external financing requirements have been reduced to a little under USD 25 billion with minor downward adjustments in the current account deficit projections, the report said.

The report suggested the global lender had made a minor adjustment of USD 575 million in its current account deficit projection in comparison with July's estimates.

The IMF has now projected the deficit at USD 5.7 billion or 1.6 per cent of the GDP – an estimate that appeared on the higher end. Pakistan is in economic ruin and awaiting a monumental financial default without long overdue structural reforms sought by global creditors such as the IMF and the World Bank, along with bilateral partners like China and the UAE. The primary reason behind Pakistan's economic woes is its staggering debt levels, which, as of 2023, amount to nearly USD 125 billion owed to external creditors, with approximately one-third to China.

Sharif's party to focus on revival of Pak's economy

PTI ■ LAHORE

Focus on bringing Pakistan's economy back on track, the message of peace to India, a vow to combat climate change, and zero-tolerance towards terrorism are the highlights of the manifesto unveiled by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's party on Saturday.

With less than two weeks before the February 8 general elections, Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) manifesto promises to send a "message of peace" to other countries, including India, on the condition that New Delhi revert its August 2019 action on Kashmir, Dawn.com reported, quoting the manifesto.

The manifesto also vows to combat the impacts of climate change and a "zero-tolerance policy" towards terrorism, it said.

Released at a special event here in the provincial capital of Punjab, the PML-N later shared the detailed manifesto titled 'Pakistan ko Nawaz do' on its official X account. "If voted to power, the party vowed to provide the public with cheap and increased electricity as well as speedy development. Its promises include a 20 to 30 per cent reduction in power bills, a 15,000 megawatt-increase in electricity production, and a 10,000 MW production of solar energy," the Dawn newspaper reported.



Revelers march during a traditional carnival to celebrate the departing winter and forthcoming spring in the village of Hamry, Czech Republic on Saturday. The carnival is part of a centuries old tradition called the Shrove-tide Procession which takes place in Eastern Bohemia near the end of winter and before Christian Lent. Experts trace the event, also known as Masopust, with its vibrant colors and archaic masks to pre-Christian paganism, then common in the area. AP/PTI

Tuvalu's PM loses his seat in crucial poll

AP ■ SYDNEY

Prime Minister Kausea Natano reportedly lost his seat in parliament in elections on the tiny Pacific island nation of Tuvalu.

The election for the 16-seat parliament, which could have implications for China, Taiwan and Australia, saw eight new-

comers win seats, according to Radio New Zealand. The report couldn't be independently confirmed. Tuvalu, with just over 11,500 people, is one of the smallest nations in the world. But the election has gained international attention because Tuvalu, a British colony until 1978, is one of only 12 countries that have

official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the self-governing democratic island that China claims as its territory.

Natano is a supporter of Taiwan. Another contender for the top job, the reelected Finance Minister Seve Paeniu, has said he wants to review Tuvalu's relationships with both Taiwan and

China.

The elections come as China, the United States and others wrangle for influence in the strategically crucial region. But China has been putting pressure on supporters of Taiwan. Nauru, for instance, another small Pacific nation, recently switched its support from Taiwan to China.

Budget expectations: Income tax benefits, support to women entrepreneurs

PTI ■ KOLKATA

An increase in income tax exemption limits, support to women entrepreneurs, a long-term taxation policy and steps to boost consumption and savings are among the expectations of experts from the interim budget which will be presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 ahead of Lok Sabha elections.

They also demand for parity in taxation among companies, partnerships and limited liability partnerships.

“This is going to be an interim budget but at least there may be some indications of full-budget benefits. There may be some concession to be offered to individual taxpayers under section 87A under which the overall tax exemption limit may be increased to Rs 8 lakh from now Rs 7 lakh, inclusive of rebates,” All India Federation of Tax Practitioners national president Narayan Jain said.



Bharat Chamber of Commerce president N G Khaitan said there is a need for a long-term taxation policy and parity in taxation among companies, partnerships and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) for a level playing field for small and medium firms.

MSMEs, which have a huge

contribution to the country's GDP and employment generation, are subjected to higher taxation, he said.

Khaitan also expects some actions to mitigate the burden on salaried persons with a reduction in the personal taxation front and boost consumption and savings.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce's fiscal affairs and taxation committee chairperson Vivek Jalan expected that a simplified “single hybrid scheme” for personal income taxation incorporating certain deductions could be rolled out.

The government needs to pri-

oritise its ‘Vasudeva Kutumbakam’ (the whole world is one family) roadmap and India's leadership role in green manufacturing, the expert said.

Jalan hoped that customs duty on capital goods and raw materials like lithium-ion cells for electric vehicles to propel green energy initiatives could be reduced.

A government-facilitated settlement mechanism for customs disputes and a dedicated tribunal for handling GST-related cases may see the light of day.

Radhika Dalmia, chairperson of FICCI Ladies Organisation (Kolkata chapter), advocated tax relaxations for women entrepreneurs and more paid holidays for working mothers.

“Increasing the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana allowance and enhancing education benefits for girls are crucial steps. Strengthening financial inclusion and healthcare infrastructure along with prioritising education, particu-

larly for girls, is vital for a more inclusive Bharat,” she said.

Mjunction services MD and CEO Vinaya Varma, in his expectations, said, “I think the role of export on e-marketplaces will become important with the government's focus on Made in India. Therefore, a regulatory framework that acknowledges e-marketplaces as responsible players in facilitating cross-border payments, potentially granting them specific roles in the release or holding of funds based on pre-defined criteria and agreements, will be welcome.”

The executive of the company, the B2B e-commerce joint venture by Tata Steel and SAIL, said that the interim budget must prioritise sustainable energy, digital adoption in manufacturing, and increased credit for MSMEs.

“The government must review TDS which is obligatory on us (eCommerce platforms) to deduct and deposit for payments made by the buyers,” he added.

Every partner needs to collaborate for India to become third largest economy by FY28: Sitharaman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the initiatives of Customs department like Faceless Assessment and Single Window Clearance need to evolve with the overall objective of growth of trade as every partner needs to collaborate to help India's GDP surpass USD 5 trillion by 2027-28.

In a written message on the occasion of ‘International Customs Day 2024’, Sitharaman said with a common purpose of ease of doing business for nation building during India's ‘Amrit Kaal’, all the stakeholders need to come together and contribute for benefits to citizen of India.

She said this year's theme of International Customs Day which is “Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose” resonates with the Motto of ‘Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas’ given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“Every partner needs to collab-



orate to put India on course to becoming the third-largest economy by 2027-28, with a GDP surpassing USD 5 trillion,” Sitharaman said.

Many initiatives taken by Customs such as Faceless Assessment, Direct Port Delivery, Single Window Clearance, AEO Scheme need to evolve with overall objective of growth of trade and business, she added.

Special focus on MSMEs, new startups and inclusivity will align with the vision of the prime minister, Sitharaman added.

Centre to help Maharashtra cooperative sector: Verma

PTI ■ NASHIK

Union minister BL Verma on Saturday said the Centre will provide all help for the development of the cooperative sector in Maharashtra.

The Union minister of state for cooperation was speaking at the Maharashtra State Urban Cooperative Banks Conference (MSUCBC) 2023-24 being held here.

“Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and guidance of Union Minister for Cooperation Amit Shah, many steps have been taken for development in the country through the medium of cooperation. The Union government will provide all help for development of the cooperative sector in Maharashtra,” Verma said.

He said the Narendra Modi government had created a separate ministry for cooperation, which was ensuring all stake-

holders were getting support and solutions were being found for problems facing the sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Union minister of state for health Bharti Pawar said the government must provide help to the Nashik District Central Cooperative Bank so that the institution can tide over problems.

Pawar is Lok Sabha MP from Dindori in the district.

Maharashtra has a glorious tradition of cooperation and cooperative institutions, which have contributed greatly in the development of the nation, state cooperation minister Dilip Walse Patil said.

“The state government has prepared a scheme to protect depositors of cooperative credit societies and has allotted Rs 100 crore for it. The Union government must also give Rs 100 crore so that these institutions can be strengthened,” he said.

Government working on SEZ reforms: Commerce Secretary

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The government is working on reforms in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) domain so that movement of goods between domestic tariff area (DTA) and SEZ space is carried out smoothly without affecting the competitiveness of goods in the export markets, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said on Saturday.

During the pandemic two years ago, many office spaces in the SEZ areas had been vacated due to ‘work from home’ practice initiated by the occupants.

Barthwal said this had led to the demarcation of SEZs into SEZ and DTA spaces.

“Scale economies have become very important nowadays. Reforms in the SEZ are in the offing so that movement of goods from SEZ to DTA and vice-versa are not affected rendering goods produced become less competitive”, Barthwal said at a symposium organised by the Bharat Chamber of Commerce.

The official said that the foreign trade policy (FTP) of the government had been framed keeping in mind the global value chain.

“Our FTP has been designed for exporters to take advantage of



the global value chain. The industry, which had always sought protection in the past, will now have to integrate with the global value chain and look at where the competitive advantage lay”, he added.

Stating that the target of achieving USD two trillion exports by 2030 is possible, Barthwal said that USD one trillion will be forthcoming from merchandise exports and another USD one trillion from services.

“Services appear to be intangible, but there is a huge scope to grow. We should look at the impediments which are preventing the growth of the services sector”, he added.

Barthwal said with external

trade becoming an important part of the growth engine, both the industrial and foreign trade policies are now intertwined.

He said that there is an increasing demand by countries to link free trade agreements (FTAs) with India. In bilateral and multilateral agreements, the most important aspect is to understand the policy of ‘give and take’.

If one has to take something, he also has to give something, he said.

Barthwal said both the UK and the US are raising the standards by bringing in sanitary and phytosanitary issues in imported goods.

“We will have to adhere to these standards which are becoming increasingly difficult”, he said.

Yes Bank posts ₹231 crore profit for October, December quarter

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Yes Bank reported a net profit of Rs 231 crore for the October-December quarter of 2023-24 on Saturday.

The city-headquartered private sector lender had reported a post tax net profit of Rs 52 crore for the year-ago period, heavily impacted by money it had to set aside following the transfer of sour loans to an asset reconstruction company.

In the preceding September quarter, the bank's net profit was Rs 225 crore.

Its core net interest income grew 2.3 per cent to Rs 1,971 crore in the reporting quarter on the back of 11.8 per cent growth in advances and a 0.10 per cent narrowing in the net interest margin at 2.4 per cent.

The non-interest income grew 12.1 per cent to Rs 1,195 crore.

Total net income grew by 5.8 per cent to Rs 3,211 crore in the third quarter of FY24 against Rs 3,036 crore in the year-ago period.

The deposit growth came at

13.2 per cent for the quarter.

However, echoing peers who have been flagging risks on the deposits front, the bank's managing director and chief executive Prashant Kumar said the bank will have to be conscious of ensuring that the base keeps growing to ensure that credit growth of around 15 per cent can be sustained.

On the asset quality front, the fresh slippages were Rs 1,200 crore, of which over Rs 1,000 crore came from retail alone.

The bank has already recovered Rs 3,800 crore of assets in the first nine months of the fiscal and is confident of surpassing its Rs 5,000 crore target on the same for FY24.

The gross non-performing asset ratio was stable at 2 per cent.

Given the regulatory concerns on the unsecured lending and the prevailing market conditions, the bank has reviewed its underwriting practices to be more cautious on the front, a senior official told reporters on the earning call.

Kumar added that the stance will not impact the overall loan growth.

Fund inflow in real estate from foreign investors dips 30 per cent last year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The inflow of funds in Indian real estate from foreign investors fell 30 per cent to USD 2.73 billion last year, but the influx jumped more than two times from domestic players to USD 1.51 billion, according to real estate consultant Vestian.

According to Vestian data, the total institutional investments in real estate declined 12 per cent to USD 4.3 billion in 2023, from USD 4.9 billion in the previous year.

The consultant highlighted that investments from foreign funds fell 30 per cent annually because of their cautious approach, but rose 120 per cent from domestic investors.

Domestic investors pumped in USD 1,511 million (USD 1.5 billion) last year, as against USD 687 million in the 2022 calendar year. However, the inflow from foreign funds stood lower at USD 2,733 million last year, as against USD 3,926 million in 2022.

Accordingly, the share of domestic investors increased to 35 per cent in 2023 from 14 per cent in 2022.

Shrinivas Rao, CEO of Vestian, said, “Despite uncertainty in demand across the real estate sector, investments remained robust throughout the year. The optimism of domestic investors kept the real estate market buoyant, as they continued to show confidence in India's growth story.”

| APPENDIX IV-A | |
|---|--|
| Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property | |
| E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. | |
| Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 29.02.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 13,20,942/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Twenty Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Two only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLNOD00316819, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 23.01.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 24.01.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from AMIT KUMAR PANDEY and AJAY KUMAR GUARANTOR). | |
| The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 8,20,000/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Twenty Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 82,000/- (Rupees Eighty Two Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price. | |
| DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY | |
| FLAT NO. GF-3 (L. I. G), HAVING COVERED AREA OF 400 SQUARE FEET ON GROUND FLOOR, (BACK SIDE), CONSTRUCTED UPON PLOT NO. C-8/2, DLF ANKUR VIHAR, PARGANA AND TEHSIL LONI, GHAZIABAD - 201020, UTTAR PRADESH. | |
| For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com . For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in | |
| Date : 25.01.2024 | Sd/- Authorized officer Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited |
| Place : GHAZIABAD | |

APPENDIX IV-A

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] and Indiabulls Asset Reconstruction Company Limited [CIN : U67110MH2006PLC305312] acting as a Trustee of Indiabulls ARC- XXXI Trust (both IHFL and IARCL) are jointly and severally referred to as ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 29.02.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of the following amounts due to IHFL and IARCL:

DUES OF INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED :

| S. No. | Loan Account Number | Outstanding Amounts (in Rs.) as on 24.01.2024 |
|--------|---------------------|---|
| 1. | HHLDMT00404521 | Rs. 20,46,232/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Forty Six Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Two only) |

DUES OF INDIABULLS ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED:

| S. No. | Loan Account Number | Outstanding Amounts (in Rs.) as on 24.01.2024 |
|--------|---|--|
| 1. | D008XXXI (Old Loan Account No. HHEDMT00404509) | Rs. 16,78,788/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakh Seventy Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Eight only) |

The Loan Account No. HHEDMT00404509, along with all right(s), title(s), interest(s), underlying security(ies), pledge(s) and / or guarantee(s) including the Immovable Property, has been assigned by IHFL to and in favour of Indiabulls Asset Reconstruction Company Limited ("IARCL") vide Assignment Agreement dated 21.08.2023, and the same has been renewed by IARCL and bears new Loan Account No. D008XXXI. Consequently, IARCL has also become a Secured Creditor for the said assigned Loan Account. IARCL has given its consent to IHFL to issue this Notice of Sale.

| APPENDIX IV-A | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property | |
| E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. | |
| Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 29.02.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 15,38,296/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Thirty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Ninety Six only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLDMT00458627, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 23.01.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 24.01.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from VIMAL VERMA and DILEEP VERMA. | |
| The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 9,30,000/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Thirty Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 93,000/- (Rupees Ninety Three Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price. | |
| DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY | |
| RESIDENTIAL FLAT BEARING NUMBER G- F-2, L. I. G, GROUND FLOOR (WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS), FRONT RIGHT HAND SIDE, HAVING TOTAL AND COVERED AREA OF 400 SQUARE FEET I.E 37.16 SQUARE METER, BUILT ON RESIDENTIAL PLOT NUMBER A-7/10 MEASURING TOTAL AREA OF 209 SQUARE METER IN "D. L. F ANKUR VIHAR", SITUATED AT VILLAGE LONI, PARGANA AND TEHSIL LONI, DISTRICT GHAZIABAD, GHAZIABAD - 201102, UTTAR PRADESH. | |
| PLOT NUMBER A-7/10 MEASURING TOTAL AREA OF 209 SQUARE METER ON WHICH THE FLAT IS BUILT IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS :- | |
| EAST : PARK | WEST : ROAD 9 METER WIDE, |
| NORTH : ROAD 12 METER WIDE, | SOUTH : PLOT NUMBER A-7/9 |
| FLAT NO. G- F-2 IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS :- | |
| EAST : COMMON PASSAGE, | WEST : ROAD 9 METER WIDE, |
| NORTH : FLAT NUMBER G- F-1 (L.I.G), | SOUTH : PLOT NUMBER A-7/9 |

APPENDIX IV-A

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to **Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd.** [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] (“Secured Creditor”), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on “as is where is”, “as is what is” and “whatever there is” basis on **29.02.2024** from **02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M.**, for recovery of **Rs. 16,16,275/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakh Sixteen Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Five only)** pending towards **Loan Account No. HHLDCP00384965**, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till **23.01.2024** with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. **24.01.2024** along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from **BHAGWAT YADAV and DEEPAK KUMAR**.

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be **Rs. 10,30,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakh Thirty Thousand only)** and the Earnest Money Deposit (“EMD”) will be **Rs. 1,03,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Three Thousand only)** i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

RESIDENTIAL FLAT BEARING NUMBER SF-4 HAVING TOTAL COVERED AREA OF 325 SQUARE FEET I.E. 30.19 SQUARE METER, L. I. G, SECOND FLOOR WITH ROOF, REAR LEFT HAND BACK SIDE, IN “SLF VED VIHAR” SITUATED ON PLOT NUMBER A-80, HAVING AREA OF 167.22 SQUARE METER, KHASRA NUMBER 399, HADBAST VILLAGE SADULLABAD, PARGANA AND TEHSIL LONI, DISTRICT GHAZIABAD, GHAZIABAD - 201102, UTTAR PRADESH.

PLOT A-80 IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS:-

EAST : PLOT NUMBER A-81,

WEST : PLOT NUMBER A-79,

NORTH : OTHER'S LAND,

SOUTH : ROAD 9 METER WIDE, BADHUA PARK

THE FLAT IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS :-

EAST : FLAT NUMBER SF-3 (L.I.G),


WEST : PLOT NUMBER A-79,

NORTH : OTHER'S LAND,

SOUTH : COMMON PASSAGE AND FLAT NUMBER SF-1 (H. I. G)

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Date : 25.01.2024 | <div style="text-align: center;">Sd/- Authorized officer Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited</div> |
| Place : GHAZIABAD | |



Office of the Superintending Engineer

1st Circle, Public Works Department, Almora

Phone/Fax: 05962-230295 Email: sepdwalm@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 471(I)/ Nivida-01/2023-24


Dated : 25/01/2024

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering)

Short Term E-TENDER NOTICE

The Superintending Engineer, 1st Circle, PWD Almora invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from dated 29/01/2024 & onwards on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

| Sl. No. | Name of Work | Cost of Tender Form | Earnest Money (Rupee in lakh) | Validity of Tender | Time of Completion | Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering |
|---------|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| 1 | PD PWD Ranikhet Improvement & Damarikaran of Bajkhet Kankot Toulbudhani Turachora Motor Road in Km. 19 to 23.200 in Salt constituency of Almora district under the state sector. | ₹ 5000.00 + 18% GST | ₹ 6.93 Lakh | 120 Days | 15 Month (Including With Raining Season and Winter Season) | Class “A” & Higher in Road work in Central Govt./Any state Govt./Any Govt. Undertaking |



छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल

पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर (छ.ग.)

//सर्व संबंधित को सूचना//

भारत सरकार पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन 2006 (स्था-संशोधित) के तहत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेसर्स अग्रवाल वैमल मिस्र प्राइवेट लिमिटेड, दुर्गसुंदरीय ग्रोथ सेंटर सिलतारा, फेस-11, तहसील व जिला-रायपुर (छ.ग.) में Expansion of production facilities of Induction Furnace with CCM from existing 59,500 TPA to 2,89,400 TPA, MS Billets along with total Re-rolled Steel Production capacity of 2,72,000 TPA, out of which 2,42,000 TPA through Hot Charging and 30,000 TPA through existing BRF based rolling mill के पर्यावरणीय स्वीचिंग हेतु लोक सुचारु दिनांक 29.02.2024 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे से स्थल-पंचायत भवन परिसर, ग्राम-मुंछी, सिलतारा (औद्योगिक क्षेत्र के समीप), जिला-रायपुर (छ.ग.) निमित्त की गई है। यह भी सूचित हो कि:-

1. लोक सुचारु के दौरान सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों को निजिकल/सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का पालन करना अनिवार्य होगा।

2. लोक सुचारु में सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों द्वारा मास्क का उपयोग किया जावेगा तथा समय-समय पर सेनेटाइज़र का उपयोग किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

3. लोक सुचारु स्थल पर सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों की बैठक व्यवस्था कम से कम 02 मीटर की दूरी रखना अनिवार्य होगा।

4. कोरोना वायरस के प्रसारण एवं रोकथाम हेतु केन्द्र सरकार तथा राज्य शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-निर्देशों का अवशरः पालन किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन, 14 सितम्बर, 2006 (स्था-संशोधित) के अनुसार संबंधित व्यक्तियों के अवलोकन/पहन हेतु ड्राफ्ट ई.आई.ए. रिपोर्ट, कार्यपालक सार हिन्दी एवं अंग्रेजी भाषा तथा सी.डी. (संपर्क योगी) जयधरकर, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, जोर बाम रोड, नई दिल्ली, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, एकीकृत क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, रायपुर, जिला-रायपुर, मुख्य कार्यपालन अधिकारी, जिला पंचायत-रायपुर, जिला-रायपुर, मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, जिला व्यापार एवं उद्योग केन्द्र, जिला-रायपुर, मुख्य कार्यपालन अधिकारी, जनपद पंचायत रायपुर, जिला-रायपुर, कार्यालय, सरपंच, ग्राम पंचायत सिलतारा एवं मुंछी, तहसील-धरसीला, जिला-रायपुर, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, न्यू ऑफिस बिल्डिंग, गिरी रोड नं. 02, टाटीबंद रायपुर, जिला-रायपुर एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर में रखी गई है।

सदस्य सचिव

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल,
नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

Sreeja advances to quarterfinals

PTI ■ MAPUSA (GOA)

Indian paddler Sreeja Akula registered a commanding victory to move into the women's singles quarterfinals of the ongoing World Table Tennis (WTT) Star Contender Goa 2024, while Manika Batra and Archana Kamath suffered defeats in their respective last-eight matches here on Saturday.

The Hyderabad-based paddler Akula began the contest on a positive note against higher ranked Hong Kong opponent Doo Hoi Kem (WR 36) and won the thrilling first game before losing the second.

However, the world No. 66 Indian looked in complete control of the next two games and clinched the match 3-1 (12-10, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8) to reach the quarterfinals.

"In 2021, I had lost to the same opponent, so it feels really great to win a match against her in this tournament. I was able to execute my plans perfectly and kept myself motivated even after losing the second game to win the contest,"



Akula said after the win. "She was really aggressive and I focused on putting the ball on the table and choosing the right ball to attack which worked in my favour. I will be

well prepared for the upcoming match as well." The tournament is co-hosted by Stupa Sports Analytics and Ultimate Table Tennis under the guidance of the

Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI). On the other hand, India's top-ranked singles paddler Batra (WR 38) went down 1-3 (11-9, 11-13, 7-11, 9-11) to

the world No. 13 Xiaoxin Yang of Monaco despite winning the first game of the contest. In the other women's singles pre-quarterfinal, youngster

from Bengaluru Kamath lost to South Korea's Jeon Jihee by 1-3 (11-13, 11-9, 6-11, 4-11).

World No. 8 Shin Yubin of South Korea continued her positive form to defeat Sweden's Christina Kallberg 3-1 (11-5, 11-6, 10-12, 11-6), whereas Chinese Taipei's Cheng I-ching (WR 18) beat Yang Ha Eun of South Korea by 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-9).

In the last-16 stage of the men's singles category, world No. 8 Felix Lebrun of France extended his sparkling form to register a comfortable 3-0 (11-3, 12-10, 11-9) win against Sweden's Ruls Moregard.

However, his brother Alexis Lebrun faced a 1-3 (8-11, 11-8, 10-12, 8-11) defeat against world No. 14 Quadri Aruna of Nigeria.

Six-time Olympic medallist Dimitrij Ovtcharov of Germany looked in fine form to beat England's Liam Pitchford 3-1 (11-5, 8-11, 17-15, 11-8) as he made his way into the quarter-finals of WTT Star Contender Goa 2024.

The semi-finals and finals will be played on Sunday.



Rhythm, Ujjwal win mixed team pistol gold

PTI ■ CAIRO

India picked up their first gold medal of the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday when Rhytham Sangwan and Ujjwal combined to defeat the Armenian pair of Elmira Karapetyan and Benik Khlgatyan 17-7 in the 10m air pistol mixed team event.

Earlier Arjun Babuta and Sonam Uttam Maskar won silver in the 10m air rifle mixed team event. Indian shooters have so far won one gold and two silver medals here.

Anuradha Devi had opened the team's account with a silver in the women's 10m air pistol on Friday evening.

Rhythm, who won her second consecutive World Cup mixed team gold in Cairo, and Ujjwal finished second behind the Armenian pair in qualifying with a total score of 580. The Armenians were a point ahead.

The Indians, however, proved far too superior in the final, going up 7-1 very quickly as Benik had a horror outing.

The closest Armenians got was when the scores read 11-7, but Rhythm picked up in the later stages

and despite low scores all around, the Indians prevailed by a big margin in the end.

In the air rifle mixed team, Arjun and Sonam had topped qualification, piping the British pair of Dean Bale and Seonaid McIntosh by a point but then went down 3-9 at the beginning of the race to 16 points final.

It was soon 6-12, as whatever the Indians threw at the British pair, they would return in kind. But Arjun and Sonam held their composure as Dean showed nerves and soon it was 14-14.

On match point, McIntosh showed her class and hit a 10.9 and despite solid 10s from the Indians, the British pair snatched the gold.

No Indian shooter, however, was able to make the trap finals at the shotgun ranges.

Zoravar Sandhu shot 118 to finish 12th in the men's trap event as Bhowneesh Mendiratta (114) and Prithviraj Tondaiman (112) finished further down.

In women's trap, Rajeshwari Kumari was 13th with a score of 110 while Manisha Keer (109) and Bhavya Tripathi (106) finished 15th and 18th respectively.

700 wrestlers to compete in senior nationals: WFI president

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Around 700 grapplers, representing all affiliated state units except Punjab and Odisha, will participate in the Senior National Championship in Pune from Monday, the suspended Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) said on Saturday.

The national body was suspended by the Sports Ministry on December 24, just three days after it held its election for violating its own constitution after it announced to host the 2023 age group nationals in Gonda, UP in last week of December.

The Sports Ministry had said that the Nationals organised by WFI will not be recognised. However, WFI remains defiant.

"The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) is organising its 2023 Senior National Wrestling Championship in Free Style, Greco Roman & Women Wrestling. The Championship is being



organised by the Maharashtra Rajya Kushtigiri Sangh at Pune from 29th to 31st January 2024," said WFI president Sanjay Singh in a statement.

"Around 700 Wrestlers across the country are participating in this mega event. All affiliated state units of Wrestling Federation of India have entered its teams for participation in the event except Punjab & Odisha." The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) then on the behest of the ministry formed a three-member panel to manage the day-to-day affairs of WFI.

Aryna beats Zheng 6-3, 6-2 to clinch back to back Australian Open titles

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Aryna Sabalenka clinched back-to-back Australian Open titles with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Zheng Qinwen on Saturday in a one-sided women's final. The No. 2-seeded Sabalenka broke Zheng's serve in the second game and took the first set in 33 minutes. She broke again to start the second set and maintained her dominance throughout against the No. 12-seeded Zheng.

"It's been an amazing couple of weeks. It's an unbelievable feeling right now," Sabalenka said in the trophy presentation. "As usual, my speech is going to be weird - it's not my super power."

Only two things slowed down Sabalenka's progress Saturday for her second Grand Slam singles title.

In the third game of the second set, with Zheng serving, the match was interrupted after an activist



started yelling out. The match continued after the man was escorted out by security.

Then, when she was serving for the match, Sabalenka had three championship points at 40-0 but missed two with wide or long forehands and another with Zheng's clever drop shot.

After giving Zheng a breakpoint chance, she bounced the ball away behind her in disgust but she recovered her composure to win the next three points.

In the end, she needed five championship points before finishing off with a forehand crosscourt winner. It was the kind of shot that had kept Zheng on the back foot almost from the start.

The 25-year-old Sabalenka improved to two wins in three Grand Slam finals, all in a span of 13 months. She beat Elena Rybakina a year ago for the title in Australia.

Sabalenka is the first woman since Victoria Azarenka in 2012 and '13 to win back-to-

back Australian Open titles, and the fifth since 2000 to win the championship here without dropping a set - a group that includes Serena Williams.

The 21-year-old Zheng was making her debut in a major final and playing an opponent ranked in the top 50 for the first time in this tournament. It was the second time in as many majors their paths had met in the second week.

Sabalenka beat Zheng in the U.S. Open quarterfinals last year on her way to the final, where she lost to 19-year-old American Coco Gauff.

Sabalenka avenged that loss to Gauff with a semifinal victory here that extended her winning streak at Melbourne Park to 13 matches. It's now 14.

In just her ninth major, Zheng's push to the final was two rounds better than her previous best run to the quarterfinals in New York last September.

Gukesh draws with Alireza to drop to second spot

PTI ■ WIJK AAN ZEE (THE NETHERLANDS)

Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh dropped to second spot after drawing with Alireza Firouzja of France as Nodirbek Abdusattarov of Uzbekistan snatched the lead going into the penultimate round of Tata Steel Masters here.

After the draw with Iranian turned French player Firouzja, Gukesh has seven points for his sole second spot.

Abdusattarov defeated women's world champion Wenjun Ju of China to accumulate 7.5 points and place himself on course for his maiden triumph at the Masters.

Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi improved his chances for a podium finish with a brilliant



victory over Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran. The Indian GM moved to 6.5 points and now shares the third spot with compatriot R Praggnanandhaa, Wei Yi of China and Anish Giri of Holland.

Gujrathi played probably the game of the tournament thus far. It was a Queen's gambit declined as black by Gujrathi but desperately seeking complications, Maghsoodloo went for a very sharp middle game and used up a lot of

time in the process. Gujrathi showcased his calculation skills and came up with a spectacular Queen manoeuvre that sealed the game in his favour.

"I felt relieved because if I don't find that move, I think I am just worse. I was thinking for like 40-50 minutes, trying to figure out if there is something and I couldn't find anything. I thought I just have a lost position, if I don't find something right now," Gujrathi said after the game.

"So I spent the time there and this move struck me like Qe7. After that Black is better. I don't know if it's winning but he collapsed because he had very low time and then my attack was just too strong."

Gukesh was up against a Grunfeld defense against Alireza and this one too was a

keenly contested game. The middle game that arose was sharp and Gukesh tried to change the equilibrium by giving up his queen for two rooks. Alireza was always in control and found a perpetual check to force a draw.

Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by Donchenko in a Queen's Gambit accepted structure. The Indian tried to make a breakthrough but Donchenko held on to his own and drew after 60 moves.

In the challengers' section, India's Leon Luke Mendonca remained in the hunt for top spot but he needs a sort of miracle. Mendonca scored a crushing victory over Mustafa Yilmaz of Turkey but French GM Marc Andria Mariuzzi maintained his full point lead on 8.5 points by defeating Liam Vrolijk of Holland.

Renata wins junior girls title, Rei wins boys final

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Top-seeded Renata Jamrichova claimed the Australian Open junior girls' singles title with a 6-4 6-1 win over 15-year-old Emerson Jones on Saturday.

Jamrichova made six aces and saved five of six break points to clinch her first Grand Slam singles' title in just over an hour on Rod Laver Arena.

"I'm just so happy right now," Jamrichova said.

"I played my best this week. At first I started really nervous because of the crowd and of the Rod Laver (Arena), but then I just told myself, just be happy on the court and enjoy every point, just be happy that you can (be) here and play this amazing match."



The 16-year-old Slovakian won the juniors doubles title at Melbourne Park last year and made the semifinals of the juniors' tournaments at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in a stellar season.

In the boys' final, fourth-seeded Rei Sakamoto of Japan rallied from a set down

to beat Jan Kumstat 3-6 7-6(2) 7-5.

The 17-year-old Sakamoto had to withstand 25 aces from his big-serving Czech opponent, ranked No.42, but still found a way to wrest back momentum after losing the first set to win the title in two hours, 11 minutes.

Vandana returns as Indian women eye fresh start in FIH Pro League

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Smarting from the failure to make the Paris Olympics, a Savita Punia-led 24-member Indian women's hockey team will look to make a fresh start in the upcoming FIH Pro League matches. Savita will be assisted by Vandana Katariya, who returned to the side as vice-captain after recovering from a cheekbone fracture, which forced the senior striker to miss the Olympic Qualifiers in Ranchi earlier this month.

The Indian team endured a disappointing outing in Ranchi and failed to qualify for the Olympics after having made the cut in the last two editions.

In fact, in the last edition at Tokyo, the Indians finished a creditable fourth.

The Bhubaneswar leg of the Pro League will begin on February 3 and end on February 9, while the Rourkela leg will commence on February 12 and last till February 18.

India will take on the United States, the Netherlands, China, and Australia twice each across both legs. The Indian women will begin their campaign against reigning Asian Games champions China on February 3. The team might have failed to make the Olympics but the Hockey India selectors decided to stick to the core group that played in Ranchi while adding six more players — both junior and seniors — to strengthen the squad.

Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur, who was missed in Ranchi, and young Jyoti Chhatri are the two additions in the Indian backline, which also has Nikki Pradhan, Udita, Ishika Chaudhary and Monika.

Do not write off Novak after Australian Open loss

Analysis

AP ■ MELBOURNE

It might be tempting to see some tidy symbolism and greater significance in Novak Djokovic's loss to Jannik Sinner in the Australian Open semifinals.

The end of the thirtysomething Djokovic's 33-match winning streak at Melbourne Park. The end of his bid for an 11th championship there and 25th Grand Slam trophy overall. The breakthrough for the twentysomething Sinner, an up-and-coming talent who will

now get to play in his first major final, against Daniil Medvedev on Sunday.

Then again, that was the sort of passing-of-the-torch oversimplification some folks found in Djokovic's loss to another kid, Carlos Alcaraz, in last year's Wimbledon final. And what happened a couple of months later? Djokovic claimed the US Open title as part of a 19-match unbeaten run. So don't be too quick to write off the 36-year-old from Serbia this time, either, as he essentially told the world himself after bowing out 6-1 6-2 6-7(6) 6-3 against Sinner on Friday.

"Doesn't necessarily mean that it's beginning of the end, as some people like to call it," the



No. 1-ranked Djokovic said. "Yeah, let's see what happens in the rest of the season."

At first glance, that seems like a bit of a warning to the rest of the tour.

A few moments later, Djokovic sounded more contemplative and somewhat less sure of

what's to come, saying: "I just hope that I'll get a chance to come back, to play at least another time and go through the emotions once more."

Either way, his takeaway from this particular afternoon was that he played quite poorly - "Everything, you know, was

just subpar" - against an opponent who showed off some of his best tennis and was, in a word, "flawless."

That's a fair assessment. There might not be a much larger meaning, even if Djokovic entered the day a combined 20-0 in semifinals and finals at Melbourne Park. And even if No. 3 Medvedev vs. No. 4 Sinner (they're scheduled to get started Sunday at 7:30 pm local time, which is 3:30 am ET) represents the first Australian Open men's final without at least one of Djokovic, Rafael Nadal or Roger Federer participating since Marat Safin defeated Lleyton Hewitt in 2005.

For Medvedev, a 27-year-old

from Russia who won the 2021 US Open, this will be his sixth Grand Slam final - and first against someone other than Djokovic or Nadal. Medvedev moved on by coming back to eliminate Alexander Zverev 5-7 3-6 7-6(4) 7-6(5) 6-3 in a semifinal that came after Sinner-Djokovic.

"Obviously it means so much to me to beat Novak here in Melbourne," said Sinner, a 22-year-old from Italy who lost to Djokovic in the Wimbledon semifinals last July and has now won three of their past four matchups, "but ... I know that the tournament is not over."

It was remarkable to see Djokovic, the greatest returner of his generation and perhaps

ever, unable to make a dent on Sinner's serve. Consider: This was the first completed match in a Grand Slam career spanning more than 400 contests that Djokovic did not manage to earn a single break point. Another unusual sight was all of the miscues coming off Djokovic's racket. He finished with nearly twice as many unforced errors as Sinner, 54 to 28.

Djokovic hadn't lost a match at the Australian Open since 2018 - a span of 2,195 days - because he collected four championships in a row there and didn't compete at Melbourne in 2022, when he was deported from the country for not being vaccinated against COVID-19.

Pope defies India with gritty hundred

England make 316/6 on Day 3

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Ollie Pope transformed the RGI Stadium into a gladiatorial fighting arena with a doughty hundred as England reached 316 for six to temporarily resist India's push for a win on the third day of the first Test here on Saturday.

Pope (148 batting) and Rehan Ahmed (16 batting) were guarding England's second innings fort at close and the visitors are now 126 runs ahead of India, an unimaginable position at the dawn of the day.

India were bowled out for 436 in their first innings after building a lead of 190 runs.

It was quite remarkable how Pope, who generally resembles a cat on a hot tin roof in these conditions, mustered fortitude and technical perfection to defy the Indian bowlers, who were primed to finish the match on day three itself, reducing England to 163 for five.

But Pope and Ben Foakes (34) milked 104 runs for the sixth wicket alliance to keep India at bay, stretching the match into the fourth day.

It wasn't that Pope had complete command in the middle as spinners on occasions beat him for turn and pacers deceived him outside the off-stump.

There was even a reprieve for him on 110 when Axar Patel grassed a fairly straight



chance at backward square leg off Ravindra Jadeja when the batter attempted a reverse sweep.

But the 26-year-old Essex man found a way to push those distractions away from his thoughts to build on

individual and the team's score.

Pope, whose main source of runs were sweeps and reverse sweeps, duly completed his first Test hundred, fifth in his career, against India off 154 balls, leading England's

recovery act.

It was a massive effort from a batter who had just 384 runs from nine Tests against India at an average of 24 with a highest of 81 before this innings.

However, credit should also

be given to Foakes for playing a mature hand to support Pope in his venture.

The wicketkeeper-batter is one of better players in this England line-up against spin, as he can read the tweekers off their hands and off the

pitch.

The Surrey batter who averages 40 in Asia in Tests, put all those abilities into use here to battle Indian spinners for 108 minutes across two sessions as England fought tooth and nail to stay alive in

the Test. The Indian bowlers too looked clueless in the face of this unexpected confrontation from their rivals.

However, the burgeoning stand came to a close when left-arm spinner Axar Patel managed to slip a low grubber past Foakes' defence to rattle his woodwork.

But before that fight, England resembled a rudderless ship in a storm against a set of brilliant Indian bowlers.

Pacer Jasprit Bumrah found some relevance for himself amidst the dominance of spinners to jettison Joe Root and Ben Duckett to inflict early jolts.

Bumrah managed to sneak an in-ducker past Ben Duckett (47, 52 balls) from the length as the batter was culpable of playing around the ball, while another incoming delivery that kept low gave little chance to Joe Root (2) while hitting his knee rolls.

Soon, the old firm of R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja joined the party. Jadeja was the first to get into the act in the post-lunch session, getting rid of Jonny Bairstow (10).

Bairstow negated a ball that turned away from him quite solidly, but the next one from Jadeja went straight and his decision to shoulder arms had a fatal effect on his stint in the middle.

But there was more magic in store as Ashwin got the

number of England captain Ben Stokes for the 12th time in Test cricket.

After getting tied down by three maidens in a row by the off-spinner, the left-hander tried to release the pressure going for a forward press but the ball spun past his bat to rattle the stumps.

Stokes' bewildered face spoke volumes about Ashwin's mastery over his craft, especially angles.

Before their bowlers made some early inroads into the England line-up, India had a mildly disappointing 54 minutes in the morning session after resuming from overnight 421 for seven.

Jadeja could not bring up a much-anticipated fourth Test hundred, falling leg before to Root.

The left-hander went to front foot to defend a length delivery on off-stump, and the ball took a good amount of turn to hit his pads.

Umpire Chris Gaffaney raised his finger as Jadeja opted to review the call.

The ball seemed to have taken a deflection off his bat but the replays remained inconclusive and the third umpire went with the on-field umpire's decision to give the batter out leg before.

In the very next ball, Root castled Bumrah and Ahmed cleaned up Axar as Indian innings came to a quick end, losing their last three wickets without adding any runs.

All weather Bumrah ability to get reverse swing leaves Root, Mhambrey gushing

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Amid the focus on spinners, pacer Jasprit Bumrah on Saturday made a statement of his skills bagging two crucial wickets that helped India keep pace with England on the third day of the first Test here.

In a dazzling display of skill and ability to extract reverse swing, Bumrah dismissed Ben Duckett and Joe Root in the middle session of the day.

India's bowling coach Paras Mhambrey was stating the obvious when he rated Bumrah as an all-weather bowler.

"Bumrah was bowling very well and was moving the ball both ways. That's the quality he has. He is a special bowler and we have seen what he can do in overseas conditions.

He has not played much (Test) cricket in India. Every time he turns up, he gives his best. It's pure skills," he said.

Mhambrey, however, said Bumrah's influence percolates to the dressing room too as one of the lead thinkers.

"The dressing room conversations he has, the



energy he brings on to the field...he is a part of the discussion when the captain

and support staff are around, he's right there with all suggestions," said Mhambrey.

Root was all admiration for Bumrah's impressive skill sets and said his dismissal was a

big moment in the context of this Test match.

"It's what you'd expect from a Test match, and a big moment in the game. I was disappointed not to get through it (Bumrah's spell). You know that for four or five overs he will charge in and throw everything at us.

So, you recognise that as a big moment in the game. One of my frustrations was to not still be there at the back end of it, but he's a quality bowler with a huge amount of skill and pace," said Root.

The former England captain was also excited at the prospect of keeping his on-field rivalry with Bumrah throughout this five-match series.

"So, 1-0 to him, although 1-1 actually as I got him out earlier. I'm sure that this battle will continue throughout the series," he added.

Later, Mhambrey also allayed any concerns over Bumrah's fitness. The pacer was seen taking some pills towards the flag end of the day, and Mhambrey attributed it to cramps.

Australia needs 156 runs to beat West Indies

Reaches 60-2 on Day 3 of day night test

AP ■ BRISBANE (AUSTRALIA)

West Indies made early inroads through its pace and made Australia work hard for the first time in its dominant test summer during the day-night test match at the Gabba on Saturday.

Australia lost its recently named test player of the year Usman Khawaja (10) and Marnus Labuschagne (5) to end Day 3 at 60-2, still needing 156 runs to make a clean sweep of its test summer that saw them rout Pakistan 3-0 and beat the West Indies by 10 wickets inside three days in the first test at Adelaide.


West Indies wasted numerous

opportunities to swell its lead beyond 215 runs as it got bowled out for 193 in the last session after No. 11 batter Shamar Joseph had to retire hurt when he injured his right toe off a searing Mitchell Starc yorker. He was adjudged leg before wicket while negotiating Starc's toe-crushing yorker only to see the bowler had over-stepped.

Josh Hazlewood picked up 3-

23 with his impeccable bowling and Nathan Lyon grabbed 3-42 with Starc and Cameron Green picking up one wicket apiece.

Shamar Joseph walked off in lot of pain and might not be able to bowl in the remainder of the test match, but Alzarri Joseph provided West Indies an early breakthrough when Khawaja edged the pacer down the legside.




NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL
PURUSHOTTAMPUR, (GM.) Pin-761018
Email:purushottampurnac@gmail.com Ph No. 06811-295222
C-2419 Letter No: 158 / NAC Dated: 24.01.2024
"e" Procurement Notice
Tender Ref No. PUR-NAC-07/2023-24
Bid documents consisting of work estimated cost, Cost of Tender paper, EMD, Time of completion, Class of the contractor, and the set of terms and conditions of the contract and other necessary documents can be seen on Govt. website, i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in
1. Name of the Work : Works as mentioned in DTCN
2. No. of Works : 17 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : Rs. 11.22 Lakhs to Rs. 19.99 Lakhs
4. Period of Completion : 45 Days
5. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 11:00 AM on dtd. 25-01-2024 to dtd. 05-02-2024 up to 5:00 PM
6. Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids in the portal : 05-02-2024 up to 5:00 PM
7. Bids received online shall be opened on : 05-02-2024 at 5.00 PM
8. Tender document in original should drop in tender box at NAC Purushottampur Office during office hour
9. Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Officer, NAC Purushottampur
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>
OIPR-13187/11/0028/2324
Executive Officer
NAC, Purushottampur



C-2431
ଓ଼ି଼ରପ଼ରସ଼ବ କା଼ର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ : କ଼ଉସୁ଼ର
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL: JEYPOR
Main Road, Jeypore Dist. Koraput, Odisha Phone No. 06854-231098e-Mail : ylbjeypore@gmail.com
Letter No. 273 /JM Date:24January 2024

CORRIGENDUM TO THE TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. 162 DATED 10/01/2024 OF SANITATION PRIVATISATION OF JEYPORE MUNICIPALITY.
Regarding the tender call notice no. 162 Dated 10/01/2024 and subsequent corrigendum notice no. 225 Dated 18/01/2024, in respect of privatisation of sanitation work in Jeypore Municipality, this office has issued the following corrigendum.
1) The last date of submission of tender is extended up to **06/02/2024 up to 5.00 PM (on working days)**
2) Date of opening of Technical Bid is scheduled on **07/02/2024 at 11.00 AM**
3) Date of opening of Financial Bid is scheduled on **08/02/2024 at 11.00 AM**
OIPR-13079/11/0072/2324
Executive Officer,
Jeypore Municipality



GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, KEONJHAR

"e" Procurement Notice for Road Works
Identification No Online NCB - 18/2023-24.
1. Name of the Work : 07 Nos. Road Work
2. Total Number of Work : 07 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : Rs. 5.08 Lakhs to Rs.25.61 Lakhs
4. Class of Contractor : D . C & B Class
5. Period of Completion : As per annexure of e-Procurement Notice No.18/2023-24.
6. Other Details :
Further details can be seen from the Website www.tenderorissa.gov.in
OIPR-25110/11/0032/2324

| Procurement Officer | Bid Identification No. | Availability of tender Online for bidding | | Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification | Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/o S.E., R.W. Division-I, Keonjhar. |
|---|------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | | From | To | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-I, Keonjhar | Road Online NCB No.18 | Dt.29.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M. | Dt.05.02.2024 up to 5.00 P.M. | Dt.03.02.2024 up to 5.00 P.M. | Dt.06.02.2024 at 11.00 A.M. |

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
R.W.Division-I, Keonjhar

U-19 World Cup

Unbeaten India take on struggling USA

PTI ■ BLOEMFONTEIN

Having already sealed a super six berth, record five-time champions India will be expected to breeze past USA in their final group game of the U-19 World Cup here on Sunday.

India beat Bangladesh and Ireland in their first two games and will top the group if they win against a struggling USA, a squad full of Indian Americans.

The American outfit come into the game after losing both their games to Ireland and Bangladesh.

While Bangladesh did put the Indian batters under a bit of pressure, the Uday Saharan-led side hardly put a foot wrong against the Irishmen.

The top three teams from group A and B, and, from C and D, qualify for the super six.

Left-arm pacer Naman Tiwari has been impressive upfront while left-arm spinner Saumy Pandey has got the ball to turn and has been the pick of the bowlers with seven wickets in two games.

Number three Musheer Khan showed a lot of promise with a



hundred against Ireland, and like his elder brother Sarfaraz, would be looking to pile on the runs.

Opener Arshin Kulkarni would want to get a big score under his belt going into the next stage, having made 7 and 32 in the earlier games.

Skipper Saharan has led from the front with back-to-back fifties and would want to cash

in against a weaker team like the USA.

Sachin Dhas has played the role of a finisher well by getting the big hits towards the end of the innings. It will be India's third consecutive game at Mangaung Oval.

USA will have to punch above their weight to trouble the Indians. Their batting let them down in the first two games and

were all out for 105 against Ireland.

Squads: India: Arshin Kulkarni, Adarsh Singh, Rudra Mayur Patel, Sachin Dhas, Priyanshu Moliya, Musheer Khan, Uday Saharan (c), Aravelly Avaniash Rao, Saumy Kumar Pandey, Murugan Abhishek, Innesh Mahajan, Dhanush Gowda, Aaradhya Shukla, Raj Limbani and Naman Tiwari

USA: Amogh Arepally, Rayaayn Bhagani, Aaryan Batra, Khush Bhalala, Prannav Chettipalayam, Arya Garg, Siddarth Kappa, Bhavya Mehta, Aarin Nadkarni, Manav Nayak, Parth Patel, Rishi Ramesh (c), Utkarsh Srivastava, Ateendra Subramanian, Aaryaman Suri.

Reserves: Arjun Mahesh, Ansh Rai, Aryan Satheesh.

“People take different roads seeking fulfilment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost”
— Dalai Lama



Paradise is elusive in this world. Sometimes, even lost. But Lakshadweep is a paradise that not only exists but also retains its idyllic innocence. **CHANDAN MITRA** spent five heavenly days on the archipelago to discover its rare coral treasures. Photographs by **SHOBORI GANGULI**

(Timeline: October 2006. Given the time lapse since this was published many ground realities have changed)



LET'S FIX OUR LAKSHYA

Tilla couple of years ago when asked where I planned to spend the New Year, I would promptly reply “Somewhere the mobile doesn't work”. It has become increasingly difficult to locate such a place, although I did manage to herald 2006 at a resort near Ranaqpur in Rajasthan where the mobile, somewhat unexpectedly, did not catch the signal. I thought it would be the same when I planned a trip to Lakshadweep this year. As it transpired, connectivity is no longer an issue even in these far-flung islands that lie between 300 and 500 kms west of the Kerala coast. I had been told that BSNL provides a cellular service to Agatti, the island that has the archipelago's only airfield. What is instantly striking about Lakshadweep is its pristine serenity, untouched by civilisation. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, globally celebrated for creating the world's most famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, also wrote a gripping novel, The Lost World — an imagined account of a plateau in the wilds that survived the ravages of man and time to remain home to prehistoric species that were lost to the rest of the world. Purely fictional, it chronicles Sir Doyle's vivid imagination that can be traced to modern-day science fiction films like Steven Spielberg's Jurassic Park. A snorkeling or scuba diving expedition in the marine wilds of Lakshadweep would have definitely spurred the author's powers of imagination. If the phrase “out of this world” could truly be applied to a place very much a part of our Earth, it must be the bountiful marine life throbbing with vitality and variety all along the coral reefs of Lakshadweep's myriad islands. The sheer remoteness of this group of 62 islands, only 10 of which are inhabited, has allowed pristine marine life to prosper in splendid isolation. The sheer tranquility of the tiny islands encircled by emerald blue lagoons and peopled more by swaying coconut palms than by humans, makes for a therapeutic holiday for metro rat-racers. A place of exquisite natural beauty, spellbinding tranquility, rich in an

astonishing array of marine life, Lakshadweep is now face-to-face with a crucial decision about its future. Which way should it go? Should it emulate the example of its southern cousin, Maldives, which has become one of the world's most sought after destinations with tourism emerging as the backbone of its economy? Or, should Lakshadweep resist the temptation of mindless prosperity, choosing instead to retain its millennial lifestyle quaint but comfortable? It's a tough call. Lakshadweep is not too easily reached. There is only a 15-seater Dornier turbo-prop aircraft of Indian Airlines that aerially connects the island to Kochi on the Kerala coast. The plane commutes between Kochi and Agatti six days a week and is the lifeline of the Union Territory Administration and its officials. There is also the option of taking the ferry, a daily service that connects different islands to the mainland, covering the 404-km distance between the UT's headquarters at Kavaratti and Kochi. Adventurous travellers sometimes hire private boats for inter-island travel. We were told on Kadmat island that some people left for Bangaram at 2 am, intending to make it to the tourist resort by 7 in the morning. Journeys by such motorised boats are exciting; we were ferried to Bangaram from Agatti this way, but it could prove a trifle dangerous if the seas are choppy. One should not forget that Lakshadweep lies directly on the route of the monsoon as it advances towards the Indian Peninsula from the centre of the Indian Ocean. Having spent four magnificent days in these quaint islands, my understanding of marine life and empathy for ecology has multiplied manifold. I cannot ever forget that momentary glimpse of a turtle, which I suddenly found staring at me questioningly as it bobbed up from below while I was swimming in the lagoon at Bangaram. It seemed to ask what right I had to invade its privacy without so much as by your leave! It was the same feeling I got diving deep in the lagoon off Kavaratti as thousands of enchantingly multi-hued fish swarmed around me. I put out my palm at some of them;

A PLACE OF EXQUISITE NATURAL BEAUTY, SPELLBINDING TRANQUILITY, RICH IN AN ASTONISHING ARRAY OF MARINE LIFE, LAKSHADWEEP IS NOW FACE-TO-FACE WITH A CRUCIAL DECISION ABOUT ITS FUTURE. WHICH WAY SHOULD IT GO? SHOULD IT EMULATE THE EXAMPLE OF ITS SOUTHERN COUSIN, MALDIVES, WHICH HAS BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST SOUGHT AFTER DESTINATIONS WITH TOURISM EMERGING AS THE BACKBONE OF ITS ECONOMY? OR, SHOULD LAKSHADWEEP RESIST THE TEMPTATION OF MINDLESS PROSPERITY, CHOOSING INSTEAD TO RETAIN ITS MILLENNIAL LIFESTYLE QUIANT BUT COMFORTABLE? IT'S A TOUGH CALL



innocently, they came towards me assuming I was offering food and darted away furiously upon realising there was no meal on offer. Being first-timers, we did not risk diving or snorkelling in the deep seas beyond the coral reef, although diving instructors everywhere assured us that even those (like my wife Shobori) who could not swim had nothing to worry once a life jacket was worn. Apparently, the walls of coral that constitute the reef offer fantastic glimpses of marine life. After a couple of days familiarising with the idiom of deep-sea diving, it's worth stepping into the open sea beyond the reef. At Bangaram, we snorkelled close to the reef on which a ship had run aground 70 years ago. The sights we saw were reminiscent of underwater documentaries you watch on Discovery or National Geographic. Apart from thousands of small, colourful fish, many giant-sized fish have also made the wrecked hull of the ship their home, elegantly sashaying in and out of the protection it offers. A visit to the shipwreck at Bangaram is highly recommended as the water is shallow and one can always stand up in case of any difficulty. It is indeed a lost world waiting to be discovered in the warm, tropical waters of Lakshadweep. Living corals are rarely seen anywhere in the world today, but the waters off these islands are brimming with them. Islanders, however, mournfully point out that the El Nino of 1997 that brought swirling currents of warm water caused widespread death and

destruction of corals. “It's only now that the corals are regenerating once again. But it will take decades, provided there is no other ecological disaster, for corals here to regain their earlier vitality,” a diving instructor said at Kadmat. Interestingly, it could be dangerous at times to provoke live coral. Clamp-corals, for instance, close their apparently inert mouths tight if you happen to put your finger into them. Unless uprooted (which means killed), it isn't possible to make them let go. Moral of the story: Let sleeping corals lie. Similarly, the multifinned Lionfish can release sufficient poison if touched, to disable a human arm for around three hours. A good diving instructor is one who points to all these facts of underwater life even as he expertly guides you through the depths. We had to learn sign language to communicate underwater even for snorkelling. Making an ‘O’ by joining your thumb and forefinger is an exclamation of joy, putting your palm out and shaking it as if indicating ‘so-so’ actually conveys you are not okay, while the thumbs up sign means you aren't comfortable and wish to go up to the surface. Although scuba diving requires some detailed instructions to be carefully followed and carrying a lot of equipment like air cylinders on your back, it is actually quite simple once you get the hang of it. Personally, I found it easier than snorkelling, which entails pulling air from the surface through a nozzle into your lungs while floating

close to the surface. While diving, on the other hand, once you are in water, buoyancy ensures you don't feel the weight of the air cylinders; in fact, a belt studded with metal weights has to be worn so that you can reach the sea floor to get the best view of fish, corals, turtles and even octopuses. The Government-run Dolphin Dive Centre at Kavaratti boasts some of the best trainers, with Sikandar, Taha and Shaukat making us feel comfortable in no time. For the less adventurous, there is the option of travelling into the sea in glass-bottomed boats. I had done that in Maldives and Mauritius, but having experienced the real thing now, that seems rather amateurish. Our first halt in Lakshadweep was at Bangaram, reached by a 90 minute flight to Agatti from Kochi and thereafter another 90 minutes by boat. The day we arrived, the Pawan Hans chopper, the lifeline between the islands, got grounded due to a technical snag. Hence the boat-ride, which in fact, we quite enjoyed. Bangaram is Lakshadweep's most frequented destination, mainly because of a much publicised resort comprising 29 thatched cottages. Running for 17 years it now provides a model for similar development of other uninhabited islands. The Government facility, the Dak Bungalow with four independent cottages, shares the beach with this resort.

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BUDGET EXPECTATIONS 2024-2025

Expectations from the healthcare sector in a budget are significant, particularly in the context of public health and well-being. Industry players share some common expectations:



DR ANIL GULATI
Chairman and CEO, Pharmazz

The pharmaceutical industry in India has seen unprecedented growth in recent years and has to be prepared for increased growth in the coming years. It will be necessary to improve manufacturing quality while reducing costs. Innovation is essential to industry growth; therefore, the adoption of novel technologies to discover drugs from new chemical entities needs to be incentivized. In this upcoming budget, the government could advance policies that promote improved drug manufacturing quality and modernize regulations to aid new drug discoveries.



DR ANSHUL GUPTA
Director, of Medical & Haemato-Oncology, Medanta Hospital, Lucknow

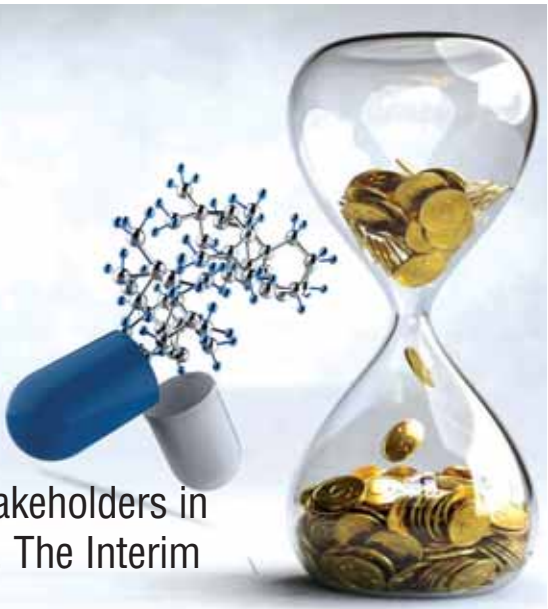
In 2023-24, the Union Health Ministry had allocated Rs 89,155 crore. This was an increase of 13% over revised estimates for 2022-23. So it is but natural that in the current fiscal, we expect the Government to further increase the health budget allocation so as to improve health care facility in the country. The proposed areas where this budget allocation should be done are:

- The health insurance coverage under Ayushman Bharat scheme should be revised / increased for cancer patients as the cancer care including cancer drugs and supportive care are expensive and the patients despite being the scheme's beneficiary could not afford the anti cancer care.
- For patients having their personal health insurance, additional benefits (over and above existing) under section 80 C should be given.
- Non-Governmental organizations including private hospitals and institutes should also be made eligible for Government funding for research projects.

ULTIMATE GOAL

HEALTH FOR ALL

Ahead of the budget, the HEALTH PIONEER catches up with the stakeholders in the Indian Pharma/Health sectors to get a glimpse of their wishlist. The Interim Budget will be presented on February 1, 2024.



KEY DEMANDS

NATHEALTH: Healthcare Federation of India, an organisation that involves leading healthcare service providers, medical technology providers (devices & equipment), diagnostic service providers and other stakeholders is seeking:

INCREASING HEALTH BUDGET ALLOCATION: India's public healthcare spending remains low, at only around 1.6-1.8 % of GDP, insufficient to tackle the magnitude of healthcare challenges. NATHEALTH recommends increasing budget allocation to 2.5% of GDP to augment the social insurance schemes, boosting healthcare reforms and infrastructure and fast-tracking digital health services across India.

RATIONALIZATION OF GST: Although increased budget allocation has been a longstanding request from the sector, there remains another persistent issue concerning the healthcare credit chain through GST. Indirect tax-

ation and lack of input credit for providers poses a significant challenge for the healthcare industry. NATHEALTH strongly recommends outlining a reform agenda in the Finance Bill aimed at restructuring the healthcare GST framework.

BOOSTING THE VALUE CHAIN: The focus should remain on augmenting local capabilities to extend care to the most remote areas, while concurrently emphasizing the localization of the value chain. Additionally, harmonizing global best practices necessitates integrated budget allocations for effective execution as well safeguards for quality and patient safety.

BOOSTING MEDICAL VALUE TRAVEL: Medical value-added services and Travel is expected to be USD 10 billion. To further aid the growth of this segment the issue of MAT credit needs immediate government attention. It is

crucial for individuals to benefit from exports. This move will give them an opportunity to offset it. It will create a more significant value proposition to focus on MVTs and boost capacity.

SEPARATE BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR SKILLING AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS: While the government announced the establishment of 157 new nursing colleges in the previous budget, strengthening health workforce situation in India is one such area that needs continuous government and policy focus. India's doctor-to-patient ratio is lower than WHO recommended threshold. NATHEALTH recommends that the government should allocate funds for training and development programs for doctors, nurses, and allied healthcare workers, putting special emphasis on digital learning stack and smart certification standards.



CHANDRA GANJOO
Group Chief Executive Officer, Trivitrion Healthcare

import bill of over Rs 63,200 crore, it's crucial for the government to catalyze domestic manufacturing. This not only reduces the financial strain but also propels India towards self-reliance in medical technology. The industry advocates for a comprehensive strategy: incentivizing R&D and indigenous production, streamlining regulatory processes for faster product approvals, and enhancing infrastructure and skills. Tax incentives for investment in advanced technology,

streamlining bureaucratic procedures, and fostering industry-academia collaboration can stimulate domestic manufacturing. This approach should align with global standards and ensure a stable regulatory environment to attract investments.



PAVAN CHOUDARY
Chairman of the Medical Technology Association of India (MTAI)

In recent years, the Medical Device industry has benefited hugely due to noteworthy initiatives by the government, such as the National Medical Device Policy (NMDP), the Promotion of Research & Innovation in the Pharma-MedTech sector (PRIP) scheme, the establishment of medical device parks and elevation of branding and promotional strategies for the growth of the sector. That said we must also be cognizant of the nuances of the medical device sector which comprises mechanical and engineering complexities. Unlike other sectors, most medical devices have a high value but are produced in low volumes. It may therefore not be economically viable to manufacture all devices in a single geographical area. Even countries with highly developed medical manufacturing hubs like the USA, Japan, Germany, etc. also rely on imports to cater to the healthcare needs of their country.

India's current tariff duty structure on medical device imports is very high. This high customs duty regime adversely impacts the costs of medical devices which contradicts the government's efforts to provide low-cost healthcare available to the masses through schemes like the Ayushman Bharat program (PMJAY). Therefore, we request the government that for products where the ability to import substitutes is still some time away, the customs duty rate should be reduced

- Increase in Custom Duty to a nominal 10%-15% Duty and a predictable tariff policy
- Correction of Inverted Duty by levying Health Cess of 5% custom duty on balance Medical Devices (this was not earlier applied to all HS Codes). Cess is used for Ayushman Bharat.
- Trade Margin Capping by monitoring MRP of Imports (if over 10 - 20 times of CIF)
- Income Tax benefits for project investments in Medical Devices Manufacturing.



RAJIV NATH
Forum Coordinator, Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMeD)

As per GTRI report of August 2023, the Indian medical devices industry can expand from USD 12 billion to USD 50 billion by 2030, reducing import reliance to 35% and boosting exports to USD 18 billion. Supporting policies are needed so that Indian Medical Devices Industry can make quality healthcare accessible and affordable for the common masses, aim to place India among the top five medical devices manufacturing hubs worldwide and help end the 80-85 per cent import dependence forced upon us and an ever-increasing import bill of over 63,200 Crore. We have the following Budget recommendations to cut down the ever-increasing import bill:

- Increase in Custom Duty to a nominal 10%-15% Duty and a predictable tariff policy
- Correction of Inverted Duty by levying Health Cess of 5% custom duty on balance Medical Devices (this was not earlier applied to all HS Codes). Cess is used for Ayushman Bharat.
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DOCTOR SPEAK

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR NEWBORN SAFE DURING WINTER

Winter months can be harsh for everyone, especially for newborns. These delicate little beings require extra care and protection to ensure their safety and comfort during the cold weather. Here are some essential pointers to follow when it comes to your little ones.



DR RAGHURAM MALLAIAH
Senior Director Neonatology, Fortis la femme, New Delhi

In India, it is a common practice to over wrap or over clad babies during the winter months. However, it is important to remember the golden thumb rule – dress your baby in one layer of clothing more than what you are wearing, regardless of the season. This ensures that they are adequately warm without the risk of overheating.

Room Temperature: Maintaining the right room temperature is crucial for your baby's well-being. Resist the temptation to keep the room excessively warm as overheating can be more dangerous than the cold. Aim for an ambient room temperature of around 22-23 degrees Celsius, which most babies find comfortable. If you decide to use room heaters, do so sparingly.

Avoid keeping them on for extended periods and limit their usage to specific tasks such as bathing, changing clothes or diapers, or during exceptionally cold spells. Continuous use of heaters can lead to dry skin, irritation of breathing passages, and even discomfort in their eyes.

Winter air tends to be dry and arid, which can cause discomfort for your baby. Consider using a humidifier to add moisture to the air, making it easier for your little one to breathe and ensuring a comfortable environment.

Keeping your baby's vaccinations up to date is crucial, especially during the winter months. Vaccinations protect your baby from dangerous respiratory infections that are more prevalent during this time of the year. Consult your pediatrician to ensure your little one receives the necessary vaccinations.

Practicing good hygiene is essential to minimize the transmission of viruses during winter. Regularly wash your hands before handling your baby, and avoid taking them to crowded places where the risk of contracting infections is higher.

Breastfeeding provides your baby with both hydration and protection against infections. It is essential to continue breastfeeding during winter months to ensure your little one stays healthy and well-nourished.

Cold weather can cause dryness and discomfort for your baby's delicate skin. Use baby moisturizers to keep their skin hydrated and prevent dryness.

Contrary to some beliefs, it is perfectly safe to continue giving your baby oil massages and warm baths even during winters. Just remember to keep the bathroom warm and cozy, ensuring your little one enjoys a soothing experience. A warm bath and massage before bedtime can promote better sleep as well.

If your baby develops a fever or cough, which are more common in winters, it is important to consult a paediatrician immediately. Prompt medical attention will help identify and address any potential health concerns.

Winter may pose challenges for newborns, but by following these guidelines, you can provide them with the extra protection they need. Remember, your little bundle of joy deserves a safe and comfortable winter experience. Stay attentive, prioritize their well-being, and cherish the precious moments with your newborn during this beautiful season.

BOOK REVIEW

Fostering Collective Prosperity Through Cooperatives

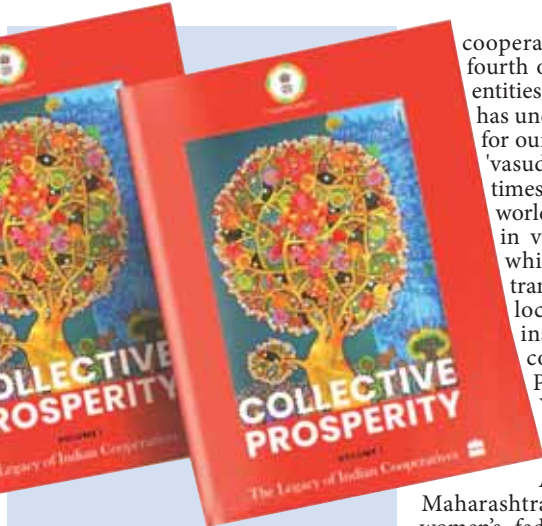
This coffee table book is not just a collection of stories but a testament to the resilience, empowerment, economic growth, and social embeddedness achieved by cooperatives across India. It also serves as a guidepost for the future as India strives to become a global leader

BY ARCHANA JYOTI

The coffee table book 'Collective Prosperity: The Legacy of Indian Cooperatives', is all about recognizing and celebrating the achievements of Indian cooperative societies over the 75 years, taking readers on a tour of as many successful cooperatives from diverse sectors. Recently unveiled by Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah in the national capital, the book is compiled by Pune-based Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (Vamnicom), a national institute under the aegis of the National Council for Cooperative Training (NCCT) and promoted by the Union Cooperation Ministry. The volume is the maiden effort by the institute highlighting the best practices in the sector to help the other aspirants to take a cue. One is therefore little surprised, as we delve into its pages, we embark on a journey treaded by historic cooperatives to the likes of India Coffee House, lesser known gems Looms of Ladakh to the Uralungal Labour Cooperative and iconic ones including Amul, IFFCO, Krishak Bharati Cooperativam and National

Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF) to name a few. Spread throughout the landscape of the country, these entities are silently working to bring prosperity while opening new opportunities for the individual and for the group to reach their individual and common goals, aligned with the vision of "Sahakar se Samridhhi" as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as also has been pointed out by Vamnicom's Director Hema Yadav who has played a significant role in the book's preparation. It is a valuable resource for individuals and communities looking to actively participate in cooperative endeavors.

The remarks of Union Cooperative Secretary Gyaneshwar Singh in his Foreword rightly emphasize the significance of the Indian cooperative system which is one of the biggest in the world particularly in supporting agriculture and allied sectors with almost 30 crore members forming the backbone of the rural ecosystem serving mainly



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Author: Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management team
Pages: 217 | Price: ₹799

small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, handloom weavers, fishermen, rural and urban poor, SCS, STs and other backward classes. It needs to be mentioned here that India is home to staggering 8.5 lakhs such

cooperatives- comprising one-fourth of the total number of such entities in the world. Cooperation has undoubtedly been a way of life for our forefathers who advocated 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam' from times immemorial. Some of the world's best known cooperatives in various sectors are in India which are continuously transforming the lives of our local communities. For instance, Asia's first cooperative sugar factory, Padmashri Dr Vithalrao Vikhe Patil Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Limited is at a small village Pravaranagar, Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. Similarly, India's first women's federation, the Gujarat State Women's SEWA Co-operative Federation Limited was formally established with an aim to support its members in capacity-building for management, marketing and policy and advocacy interventions with key stakeholders.

The Dhundi Solar Pump Irrigators' Cooperative Enterprise (SPICE) established in 2016 at Dhundi, in Anand district, Gujarat is the world's first-ever

enterprise to use solar power to run their irrigation pumps while SWaCH is country's first wholly-owned cooperative of self-employed waste collectors in Pune, Maharashtra. Kerala-based AYCOOPS is India's first cooperative media production house in the cooperative sector which, unlike the traditional cooperatives, operates like a start-up. New-age Eco-friendly Cooperatives. Commendably, these cooperatives belong to different parts of the country, which is an indicator of a fair distribution of development across the land even though a lot still remains to be done in this respect.

For instance, as the book extends its reach to highlight cooperative hospitals in India, it is revealed that most of them are located in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh. This calls for spreading in populated States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Odisha to fill the widening demand-odisha gap in the sector.

In tough times like those during the Covid-19 crisis when the entire world was swept by economic slowdown painting a gloomy future, AMUL, MILKFED, NAFED, MARFED, and other organizations provided necessary services

to the people and the farmers despite the supply chain being disrupted by the lockdown.

The narrative also touches upon the significance of cooperative banks, exemplified by the Saraswat Bank, and health cooperatives, providing a holistic view of the diverse roles cooperatives play in India's economic and social landscape. The impact of cooperatives on poverty alleviation, food and nutritional security, social integration, and employment generation is acknowledged, portraying them as social instruments of development, complimented by the recent initiatives of the Ministry to fortify the sector's growth.

For instance, by expanding the scope of cooperative activities and integrating them into various facets of the economy, the aim is to create a dynamic ambience that resonates with the aspirations of the younger generation while drawing their energy and ideas.

In essence, this compact collection not only shines a spotlight on the past achievements of Indian cooperatives but also serves as a guidepost for the future, as India strives to become a global leader. No doubt, the cooperative sector can be a springboard propelling India towards 'Atm Nirbharta' (self-reliant).

(The writer is retired Principal
Chief Conservator of Forests
(Head of Forest Force)
Karnataka)

