



Usha alleges security threat in her academy

PTI THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/NEW DELHI



Legendary athlete and Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president P T Usha on Saturday broke down before the media alleging that illegal constructions were being carried out at her academy campus in Kozhikode district and strangers were trespassing into the property posing a security threat to the inmates.

Intervene into the issue and take immediate steps to stop the alleged encroachment and trespassing into the campus and ensure the safety of women athletes there.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, she said those at the Usha School of Athletics had been facing such harassment and security issues for some time and it has intensified after she became the Rajya Sabha Member.

"Of the 25 women athletes in the Usha schools, 11 were from north India. It is our responsibility to ensure their safety. I submitted a written complaint to the Chief Minister in this regard," she said.

Usha had been nominated to the Upper House by the BJP in July 2022.

A teary-eyed Usha also said waste is being dumped on a large scale in the campus, which is also facing threat from the drug mafia but the local panchayat was not letting the academy management to construct a compound wall.

Special governance camp for Kashmiri migrants launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE JAMMU



J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday inaugurated a Special Governance Camp for Kashmiri Migrants at Jagti Colony.

The 12-day long camp at 6 locations is aimed to ensure 100% saturation of Social security schemes for Kashmiri migrants. 18 departments have put up their stalls at the camp including the facilities for enrolment of youth for self employment, skilling and up-skilling.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor said, Administration is sensitive to the issues of Kashmiri Migrant families and PM Package

Employees. "Few unfortunate incidents had occurred. These attacks were not only on individuals but also on the integrity of India. There are a handful of people, who on the behest of the neighboring country are targeting innocent civilians.



CHANGE OF NAME

में बन्दी डे पत्नी श्री सुजय, मकान नंबर 0382 अजरचन्द कालोनी छज्जन नगर पल्ला नंबर 4, तिलवत रोड अजर नगर फरीदाबाद, मेरा शादी से पहले नाम बन्दी घोष था, जिसे अब मैं शादी के बाद बन्दी डे करना चाहती हूँ। कृपया मैं मुझे बन्दी डे के नाम से जाना जाए।

PD(90263)C

CORRIGENDUM

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

Notices under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. LBFDB0000242249 Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower JNANENDRA KUMAR JENA / KALPANA JENA / JTK LOGISTICS PRIVATE LIMITED / JITENDRA KUMAR JENA Demand Notice under section 13(2) notice dated July 06, 2021 and 13 2 Publication dated August 19, 2021 published in News Paper The Pioneer (Eng.) & The Pioneer (Hindi) and Symbolic Publication published in News Paper The Pioneer (Eng.) & The Pioneer (Hindi) dated March 29, 2022. We wish to mention that inadvertently and unintentionally a typographical error has occurred in the said notices and applicant address was mentioned as FLAT NO 502, 5TH FLOOR, TOWER-C1, DIPLOMATIC GREENS, SECTOR-110A AND 111, HARYANA GURGAON 122101 instead of FLAT NO 502, 5TH FLOOR, TOWER-C1, DIPLOMATIC GREENS, PH-1, SECTOR-110A AND 111, HARYANA GURGAON 122101. We therefore, request you to please read the same as FLAT NO 502, 5TH FLOOR, TOWER-C1, DIPLOMATIC GREENS, PH-1, SECTOR-110A AND 111, HARYANA GURGAON 122101. All other details mentioned in the said Notice dated will remain same. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to you in this regard.

Date: February 04, 2023 Place: Delhi/NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

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

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Lawyers, ex-judges of Madras HC accused of stalling Gowri's elevation

PNS CHENNAI

Lawyers and jurists in Tamil Nadu are of the view that a cartel of lawyers and former judges of the Madras High Court are covertly attempting to hijack the appointment of new judges to the High Court by spreading false allegations and canards against potential candidates.

The report about the possible appointment of Victoria Gowri, a senior lawyer hailing from Kanyakumari, as a judge of the Madras High Court had caused resentment and heartburning among a section of former judges and lawyers who pose themselves as human right activists, according to Arjun Sampath, founder of Hindu Makkal Katchi.

"I am not at all interested in who is being appointed as judge. But the persons who wrote a letter to the President of India demanding that the

name of Victoria Gowri be deleted from the list of potential candidates because of her rapport with Hindu organisations is highly condemnable," said Arjun Sampath in a statement.

A group of lawyers led by V Suresh, representing a pro-Maoist organisation had written to the President of India asking her to delete the name of Gowri from the list of persons to be appointed as judges of the Madras High Court which has been approved by the Collegium of Judges.

They had stated that Victoria Gowri has made hate speeches targeting Muslims and Christians and also of her disapproval of Love Jihad.

A probe by The Pioneer found that Victoria Gowri is the first woman lawyer in Kanyakumari district to open an office of her own and had endeared herself to the litigants because of her intelligence and expertise in jurisprudence.

Lion share of BMC Budget set aside for infra works, projects

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

In its whopping ₹52,619 crore budget for 2023-24, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Saturday set aside a lion's share of ₹27,247 crore — which accounts for 51.78 per cent of the budgetary outlay — on infrastructure works, including major projects like Coastal Road Project and Ghatkopar-Mankhurd Link Road (GMLR) and concretisation of roads, aimed at providing what it called "better quality of life" to Mumbai.

The outlay of ₹52,619.07 crore of the BMC budget for 2023-24 presented by Mumbai Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal is 14.52 per cent more than the budgetary outlay of ₹45,949.21 crore budget for 2022-23.

For the first time in its 134

year-old history, the outlay of the BMC has crossed ₹50,000 crore. In terms of the outlay, the budgetary outlay of the BMC — which is considered as one of the richest municipal corporations in Asia — is larger than that of many smaller States in the country.

The budget comes ahead of the crucial BMC polls to be held in the coming months. With the term of the previous elected body long over, the BMC is administered by the Municipal Commissioner.

The Shiv Sena used to rule the BMC till last year. With no elected body at the BMC's helm, the ruling Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena-BJP alliance is monitoring the administration at the civic body. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually kicked off the ruling alliance's campaign for the BMC polls.

Ex-AMU student shot at near varsity hostel

PNS ALIGARH

An alumnus of AMU was shot at RM hall of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) on Friday night. He has been admitted to JN Medical College.

The accused is also said to be a former student. The reason for the quarrel is not known yet.

The city SP Kuldeep Singh Gunawat and CO III Shivpratap Singh reached the Medical College to know the condition of the injured. The incident took place at around 8.30 pm.

Faizan, an alumnus of AMU, resident of village Chuharpur in Didoli police station area of Amroha who has completed BE final from AMU, was standing outside the RM hall canteen. Recently the Masood Cricket Cup is going to be organized.

Faizan told the police that he was busy preparing for the event. He keeps on helping the students. He did not have any dispute with anyone.

No tribal leader from J'khand allowed to complete full term as CM, says Soren

PTI DHANBAD

In a veiled attack on the Opposition BJP, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Saturday said that no tribal leader from the state was allowed to remain in the CM post for more than three years in the past two decades.

Referring to himself as a "Jharkhandi", the JMM leader also alleged that the opposition party is "hatching a conspiracy to remove" him by levelling "false charges".

"First Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Babul Marandi,

was removed before completing three years. Later, Arjun Munda was also not allowed to remain in the post for more than three years.

"But, at the same time, a Chhattisgarhi was made chief minister and allowed to complete a full five-year term," Soren said without taking the name of the BJP.

The JMM leader was apparently referring to former Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das who has his ancestral village at Boirdih in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district.

Veteran singer Vani...

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In a career spanning more than five decades, she has sung more than 10,000 songs in almost all Indian languages. Jairam became an overnight sensation with the songs "Bolire Pappi Hara.." and Hum Ko Mann Ki Sakthi Denaa.. she rendered for the 1971 Hindi film Guddi directed by Hrishikesh Mukherjee.

The music for the film was composed by the maestro Vasanth Desai. Since then there was no looking back for Vani Jairam. By 1972, she started singing for Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada films.

Music lovers who were accustomed to Lata Mangeshkar, P Susheela and S Janaki found in Vani Jairam a unique combination of diction, mellifluous and captivating voice. Starting her career as an employee of a nationalised bank, Vani Jairam opted for a profession in music and was an instant hit with music lovers.

Born Kalaivani in Tamil Nadu's Vellore district, Vani Jairam bagged the National Award for best playback singer three times. In addition to this, she was bestowed with all the awards a musician could aspire for including State Awards for the regional language songs she rendered. Songs rendered by Vani Jairam remain as fresh and new even after five decades, speaks lot about her calibre.

Besides being a singer, Vani was a poetess, painter of repute and a mimicry artist. The septuagenarian artist had retained the charm in her voice and music till the end making her a rare breed of singer who was held in high esteem by music maestros like M S Viswanathan, Naushad Ali, Ilayaraja, K V Mahadevan, Salil Chaudhari.

ED seizes heroin, arms in Punjab border...

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Following this, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), the lead agency for probing NDPS cases, was requested for verification and testing of the suspicious products. "As per the NCB officials, the substance recovered was suspected to be heroin weighing approximately 2.2 kg which was tested and seized by them in the presence of ED officials," the ED said in its statement.

Also, some packets of white powdery substance were recovered from the shop of Skattar Singh, Proprietor of Baba Sidana Trading Company at Nausheran Pannuan village for which NCB was requested for its verification and testing.

"As per the NCB officials, the same appeared to be suspected Narcotics contraband material weighing 13.980 kgs which was seized by them in the presence of ED officials," it further said.

The search operation also yielded recovery of arms and ammunition, including two rifles and three pistols along with some cartridges. These included one rifle, two pistols and cartridges recovered from the residential premises of Singh. A rifle and a pistol besides some cartridges were found at the residential premises of Makhn Singh, brother of Singh.

The recovery of the arms and ammunition was reported to the local police authorities. Since original licenses were not available for some of the arms recovered from residential premises, the same were handed over to the police for investigation under the relevant laws including the Arms Act, officials said.

The Jalandhar Zonal Office of the ED had taken up investigation under PMLA against these accused persons on the basis of multiple FIRs against Hardev Singh alias Rambo and others under various sections of NDPS Act and Arms Act.

Modi to open India's largest...

From Page 1

The factory will be augmented to produce other helicopters such as Light Combat Helicopters (LCHs) and Indian Multirole Helicopters (IMRHs). It will also be used for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul of LCH, LUH, Civil Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and IMRH in the future. Potential exports of civil LUH will also be catered to from this factory.

The HAL plans to produce more than 1,000 helicopters in the range of 3-15 tonnes, with a total business of over Rs four lakh crores over a period of 20 years. Besides generating direct and indirect employment, the Tumakuru facility will boost the development of surrounding areas through its CSR activities with large-scale community centric programmes on which the company will spend substantial amounts. All this will result in improvement in the people's lives in the region.

The proximity of the factory, with the existing HAL facilities in Bengaluru, will boost the aerospace manufacturing ecosystem in the region and support skill and infrastructure development such as schools, colleges and residential areas. Medical and health care would also reach the community residing in the various nearby Panchayats.

With the establishment of facilities like Heli-Runway, Flight Hangar, Final Assembly Hangar, Structure Assembly Hangar, Air Traffic Control and various supporting service facilities, the factory is fully operational. This factory is being equipped with state-of-the-art Industry 4.0 standard tools and techniques for its operations.

This factory will enable India to meet its entire requirement of helicopters without import and giving much needed fillip to the Prime Minister's vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' in helicopter design, development, and manufacture.

TN firm linked to vision loss...

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No stocks of the said batches were found during the investigation, the report said. "The firm has maintained the control samples for the said batches. The samples were taken for an analysis from the 4 batches of control samples. The sample of raw material Carboxymethylcellulose Sodium which was utilized for manufacturing of finished products was also taken for an analysis," the joint investigation report said

Also, the firm has stated that the media fill validation — a part of the validation of an aseptic manufacturing process — was carried out biannually. The records were verified for the same, according to the report.

Further, it is observed that the complete root cause analysis in respect of the above complaint and stated that it was under process, the report said. On the verification of records, it is noticed that the firm has done the stability studies — which helps understand how the quality of a drug product varies with time and environmental factors — for the representative batch of the said drugs yearly once, the report said. It said the manufacturing records of all batches, purchase invoices of raw materials, COA (certificate

Orphans will study free...

From Page 1

Such students will also be exempted from payment of any kind of fees, he said. The decision was taken in a meeting of the Executive Council on Friday.

Speaking to PTI, Vice Chancellor Singh said, "The initiative will help thousands of children every year. We are coming out of Covid. Many children lost their parents during the pandemic. The initiative will also help those students." In all colleges and departments of the university, one seat each will be reserved for orphan boys and girls in all classes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

"The University of Delhi understands the importance of providing higher education to every section of society, including those students who have unfortunately lost their parents and become orphans," he said.

The expenditure incurred for the admission and continuation of studies of such students in the university or its colleges will be met from the University Welfare Fund or the College Students' Welfare Fund.

The vice chancellor said this initiative would be a positive step towards the achievement of 50 per cent gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education by the year 2035 as envisaged in the National Education Policy 2020.





# RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT Soldiers freed in Russia, Ukraine prisoner swap

**AP ■ KYIV**  
Dozens of Russian and Ukrainian prisoners of war have returned home following a prisoner swap, officials on both sides said Saturday.  
Top Ukrainian presidential aide Andriy Yermak said in a Telegram post that 116 Ukrainians were freed.  
He said the released POWs include troops who held out in Mariupol during Moscow's monthslong siege that reduced the southern port city to ruins, as well as guerrilla fighters from the Kherson region and snipers captured during the ongoing fierce battles for the eastern city of Bakhmut.  
Russian defence officials, meanwhile, announced that 63 Russian troops had returned from Ukraine following the swap, including some "special category" prisoners whose release was secured following mediation by the United Arab Emirates.  
A statement issued Saturday by the Russian Defence Ministry did not provide details about these "special category" captives.  
At least three civilians have been killed in Ukraine over the past 24 hours as Russian forces struck nine regions in the country's south, north and east, according to reports on Ukrainian TV by regional gov-



ernors on Saturday morning.  
Two people were killed and 14 others wounded in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region by Russian shelling and missile strikes, local Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said in a Telegram update on Saturday morning.  
The casualty toll included a man who was killed and seven others who were wounded Friday after Russian missiles slammed into Toretsk, a town in the Donetsk region.  
Kyrylenko said that 34 houses, two kindergartens, an outpatient clinic, a library, a cultural centre and other buildings were damaged in the strike.  
Seven teenagers received shrapnel wounds after an anti-

# China plays down Blinken's cancelled visit over balloon

**AP ■ TAIPEI**  
China played down the cancellation of a visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken after a large Chinese balloon suspected of conducting surveillance on US military sites roiled diplomatic relations, saying that neither side had formally announced any such plan.  
"In actuality, the U.S. and China have never announced any visit, the US making any such announcement is their own business, and we respect that," China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Saturday morning.  
Blinken was due to visit Beijing on Sunday for talks aimed at reducing US-China tensions, the first such high-profile trip after the countries' leaders met last November in Indonesia.  
But the US abruptly cancelled the trip after the discovery of the huge balloon despite China's claim that it was mere-



ly a weather research "airship" that had blown off course.  
The Pentagon rejected that out of hand — as well as China's contention that the balloon was not being used for surveillance and had only limited navigational ability.  
Uncensored reactions on the Chinese internet mirrored the official government stance that the US was hyping up the situation.  
Many users made jokes about the balloon. Some said that since the US had put restrictions on the technology that China is able to buy to weaken the Chinese tech industry, they couldn't control the balloon.  
Others called it the "wandering balloon" in a pun that refers to the newly released Chinese sci-fi film called "The Wandering Earth 2."

# 50-car train derailment causes big fire, evacuations in Ohio

**AP ■ EAST PALESTINE**  
A train derailment and resulting large fire prompted an evacuation order in an Ohio village near the Pennsylvania State line on Friday night, covering the area in billows of smoke lit orange by the flames below.  
About 50 cars derailed in East Palestine as a train was carrying a variety of freight from Madison, Illinois, to Conway, Pennsylvania, rail operator Norfolk Southern said in a statement Saturday.  
There was no immediate information about what caused the derailment. No injuries were reported.  
The National Transportation Safety Board said Saturday that it was "launching a go-team to investigate" the derailment, and board member Michael Graham would "serve as spokesperson on scene."  
Firefighters have been pulled from the immediate area and unmanned stream devices are being used protectively while crews try to determine which cars are still actively burning, village officials said in a separate statement Saturday.  
They said they hoped to use drones to assess the scene in daylight, and warned that residents might hear more explosions as the fire burns.  
The village notified residents that an evacuation order remained in place Saturday morning for people within a mile of the scene.  
A high school and community center were opened to shelter dozens of people, while residents beyond that radius were urged to stay inside.  
The few dozen residents sheltering at the high school included Ann McAnlis, who said a neighbor had texted her about the crash.

# ASEAN vows to conclude pact with China on disputed territory

**AP ■ JAKARTA**  
Southeast Asian foreign ministers vowed to finalise negotiations with China over a proposed pact aimed at preventing conflicts in the disputed South China Sea in their annual retreat on Saturday in Indonesia's capital.  
In the final session of their two-day meeting, the ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed to unite in their approach to implement a five-step agreement made in 2021 between ASEAN leaders and Myanmar's military leader, Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing,

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

disputed waters.  
Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said that Indonesia, this year's ASEAN chair, is ready to host more rounds of negotiations over the proposed pact, the first of which will be held in March. She said ASEAN members are committed to concluding the discussions "as soon as possible." "Members are also committed to promote implementation of a declaration of conduct," Marsudi added.  
Marsudi did not elaborate, but in the past, China has accused Washington of meddling in what it calls an Asian dispute.

# Israeli army besieges homes of fugitives in West Bank raid

**AP ■ AQABAT JABR REFUGEE CAMP**  
The Israeli army raided a refugee camp near the Palestinian city of Jericho on Saturday, besieging houses it said were being used as hideouts for Palestinian attackers and shooting at residents who opened fire.  
The fighting wounded six Palestinians, two seriously, said the Palestinian Health Ministry, and jolted a generally quiet oasis town that has seen less violence than other West Bank cities.  
The army said it entered the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp southwest of Jericho in the occupied West Bank to search for suspects involved in a shooting attack last week at a nearby Israeli settlement.  
Last Saturday, with the West Bank on edge after the deadliest Israeli military raid in two decades and two subsequent Palestinian attacks in east Jerusalem that killed seven people, the army said a Palestinian gunman had opened fire in a restaurant at a settlement near Jericho. After firing one bullet, the gunman



fled the scene, the army said. No one was wounded.  
The army said several Palestinians had holed up in their homes after the shooting with the help of family and were planning future attacks.  
To force the fugitives to surrender, a military bulldozer clawed at the walls of one of the homes as an Israeli commander shouted threats over a loudspeaker.  
Camp residents reported receiving text messages urging families to keep their children inside and avoid clashing with Israeli troops.  
The suspects and family members trickled out of one of the homes and turned themselves in, the military said. Security forces had leveled much of the house, leaving a pile of rubble and twisted metal.

# Qatar boosts influence in Lebanon amid crises

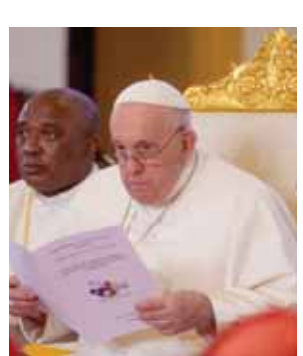
**AP ■ BEIRUT**  
Most wealthy Gulf Arab nations followed Saudi Arabia's lead in recent years and ostracised crisis-hit Lebanon because of the growing influence of the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah. The exception was Qatar.  
Doha has been silently expanding its influence in Lebanon. It continued receiving Lebanese leaders and pumped tens millions of dollars into helping the country's armed forces amid a historic economic meltdown.  
The small, gas-rich nation in late January began seeing the fruits of its investment, when state-owned Qatar Energy replaced a Russian firm in an international consortium that will search for gas in the Mediterranean Sea off Lebanon's coast.  
And on Monday, Qatar will for the first time join a meeting in Paris along with officials from France, Saudi Arabia and the US for discussions focusing on Lebanon's political and economic crises.  
Qatar portrays itself as a more neutral force in a coun-



try where for decades outside powers have used Lebanon's sectarian divisions to fight their proxy battles. Saudi Arabia long backed Lebanon's Sunni Muslim factions and tried to push out Iran's influence through Shiite Hezbollah. The rivalry repeatedly pushed Lebanon to the brink of armed conflict.  
Qatar, which has good ties with Iran, has been trying to advance negotiations between Tehran and Gulf nations. Its

# Pope encourages South Sudanese, will raise plight of women

**AP ■ JUBA**  
Pope Francis sought Saturday to console the long-suffering people of South Sudan as he opened his first full day in a country beset by conflict, poverty and humanitarian crises, encouraging priests and nuns to serve their flocks by joining in their tears.  
After arriving in the world's newest country on the first-ever papal visit Friday, Francis was spending Saturday ministering first to church personnel and then to South Sudanese who have been forced by fighting, flooding and other crises to leave their homes.  
Francis was highlighting in particular the plight of South Sudanese women, half of whom are married before age 18, are subject to rampant sexual violence and then face the world's highest maternal mortality rate.  
"Let us ask ourselves what it means for us to be ministers of God in a land scarred by war, hatred, violence, and poverty," Francis said in St. Theresa Cathedral in the capital, Juba.  
"How can we exercise our



ministry in this land, along the banks of a river bathed in so much innocent blood, among the tear-stained faces of the people entrusted to us?"  
Lush in oil and other natural resources but beset by years of civil war and conflict, South Sudan is one of the world's poorest countries and is responsible for Africa's worst refugee crisis: More than 2 million people have fled the country and another 2 million are displaced within its borders.  
Joined by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and the Presbyterian head of the Church of Scotland, Francis is seeking to draw global attention to the country's plight.

# Wikipedia blocked for not removing blasphemous content in Pak

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**  
Pakistan has blocked Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, for its failure to remove offensive or blasphemous material, the country's telecomunications authority said on Saturday.  
The blacklisting of Wikipedia comes days after the Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) degraded Wikipedia services for 48 hours, threatening to block it if the content deemed 'blasphemous' was not deleted.  
Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia, created and edited by volunteers around the world and hosted by the Wikimedia Foundation.  
PTA spokesperson Malahat Obaid said the ban had primarily been imposed for non-compliance with the orders.  
"The decision can be reviewed once Wikipedia removes sacrilegious content that has been identified by the regulatory authority," the spokesperson added.  
The PTA spokesperson earlier stated that Wikipedia was approached for blocking/removal of the said content by issuing a notice.

# 13 dead in Chile amid struggle to contain raging wildfires

**AP ■ SANTIAGO**  
At least 13 people were reported dead as of Friday night as a result of the more than 150 wildfires burning across Chile that have destroyed homes and thousands of acres of forest while the South American country is in the midst of a scorching heat wave.  
Four of the deaths involved two separate vehicles in the Biobio region, around 560 kilometers (348 miles) south of the capital of Santiago.  
"In one case they were burned because they were hit by the fire," Interior Minister Carolina Tohá said. In the other case, she said, the victims died in a crash, "probably trying to escape the fire."  
The fifth victim was a firefighter who was run over by a fire truck while combatting a blaze in the area.  
Later in the afternoon, a helicopter that was helping combat the flames crashed in the Araucania region, killing the pilot, a Bolivian national, and a mechanic, who was Chilean.

# Democrats set to shake up start of 2024 presidential primary

**AP ■ PHILADELPHIA**  
Democrats are poised to reorder their presidential primary schedule beginning next year, replacing Iowa with South Carolina in the leadoff spot as part of a major overhaul meant to empower Black and other minority voters critical to the party's base of support.  
The Democratic National Committee has worked for months to revamp the start of its voting calendar, and the full membership is set to vote on the plan on Saturday.  
Although changes are still possible throughout the summer and beyond, the formal endorsement during the party's meeting in Philadelphia is acknowledgement that the start of 2024's primary will look very different than the one in 2020.  
The proposal has been championed by President Joe Biden and would have South Carolina hold its primary on Feb. 3. That would be followed three days later by New Hampshire and Nevada, the latter of which is swapping the caucus it used to hold in favour of a primary. Georgia would vote fourth on Feb. 13, followed



by Michigan on Feb. 27, with much of the rest of the nation set to vote on Super Tuesday in early March.  
"This isn't just about us," Trev Robertson, president of the South Carolina Democratic Party, told a gathering of the DNC Southern caucus earlier this week. "This is a regional thing, and it's making us all look good."  
States voting early in the primary have major influence since White House hopefuls struggling to raise money or gain political traction often drop out before visiting areas outside the first five. The move marks a major shift from the current calendar, which had started with Iowa's caucuses for the last five decades, followed by New Hampshire's primary and subsequent contests in Nevada and South Carolina.

# Iranian director freed on bail after going on hunger strike

**AP ■ DUBAI**  
Acclaimed Iranian director Afshar Panahi was released on bail Friday, two days after going on hunger strike to protest his imprisonment last summer, his supporters said.  
Panahi was arrested last July and later ordered to serve six years on charges of propagandising against the government, a sentence dating back to 2011 that had never been enforced.  
He is among a number of Iranian artists, sports figures and other celebrities who have been detained after speaking out against the theocracy. Such arrests have become more frequent since nationwide protests broke out in September over the death of a young woman in police custody.  
Panahi, 62, had continued making award-winning films for over a decade despite being legally barred from travel and filmmaking. His latest film, "No Bears," was released to widespread praise in September while he was behind bars, a week before the protests erupted.

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

**PTI ■ PESHAWAR**  
A desperate Pakistan has sought Afghan Taliban chief Haibuttallah Akhundzada's help to rein in the outlawed Pakistani Taliban outfit responsible for a wave of terror attacks in the country, including the recent Peshawar mosque carnage that killed over 100 people, according to a media report on Saturday.  
Pakistan has been hit by a wave of terrorism, mostly in the country's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, but also in Balochistan and the Punjab town of Mianwali, which borders the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.  
In the Peshawar mosque attack on Monday, a Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up during the afternoon prayers, killing 101 people and injuring more than 200 others.  
During the Apex Committee meeting here on Friday, Pakistan's civil and military leadership decided to seek Afghan Taliban chief Haibuttallah Akhundzada's intervention to control the



Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), according to The Express Tribune newspaper.  
Pakistan's Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, who attended Friday's meeting, said the masterminds of the Peshawar Mosque attack could be in Afghanistan, and added that the federal government would raise this issue with their Afghan counterparts, the report said.  
Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday acknowledged the failure to avert the Peshawar carnage that killed over 100 people and called for "national unity" to tackle the menace.  
"There is a need for unity across the political spectrum. This act of terrorism managed to breach the security check post and reach the mosque. We should not feel hesitant in admitting the facts," Sharif said at the meeting.

# Sudan demands United Nations immediately lift arms embargo

**AP ■ UNITED NATIONS**  
Sudan is demanding the UN Security Council immediately lift an arms embargo and other sanctions imposed during violence in the western Darfur region in 2005, saying the punishment did not include conditions or require the military government to meet UN benchmarks.  
Sudan's UN ambassador, Al-Harith Idriss Mohamed, said in a letter to the council circulated Friday that the sanctions "are no longer relevant to the magnificent reality on the ground in Darfur today compared to the situation in 2005."  
"Darfur has, for the most part, overcome the state of war, as well as previous security and political challenges," he said.  
Mohamed said Sudan's transitional government is committed to addressing the remaining social and security issues in Darfur, including sporadic tribal clashes. He added that efforts are being made to form and deploy a Joint Security-Keeping Force to protect civilians.  
The Sudanese government has repeatedly urged the Security Council to lift sanctions but this letter was much stronger. It said that "Sudan will accept nothing less than the immediate lifting of these sanctions without conditions or benchmarks."  
The Darfur conflict began in 2003 when rebels took up arms against the authoritarian government in Khartoum then led by Omar al-Bashir, accusing it of discrimination and neglect. The UN previously estimated 00,000 people died in the conflict and 2.7 million fled their homes.  
Al-Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged atrocities in Darfur.

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

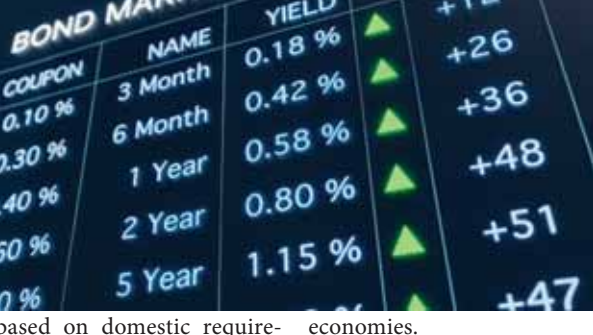
India will not bend over backwards to get included in the global bond indices, a top finance ministry official said on Saturday.

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

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

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

India's policies will be



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

He also urged the minister to extend the duty-free

# Godrej Properties sales bookings rise 77%: Pirojsha

Realty firm Godrej Properties sales bookings rose 77 per cent year-on-year to Rs 8,181 crore in the April-December period on strong housing demand, and will cross the target of Rs 10,000 crore for the full fiscal, its Executive Chairman Pirojsha Godrej said.

The company's sales bookings stood at Rs 4,613 crore in the first nine months of the last financial year.

In an interview with PTI, Pirojsha Godrej said: "We are very happy with the quarter gone by. Operationally, it has been a very strong quarter".

Sales booking during the October-December period jumped over two-fold to Rs 3,252 crore from Rs 1,541 crore in the year-ago period.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Revival of rural economy to take time in absence of specific triggers



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

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

An attempt is made to make the new tax regime more

# Educationists say more funds are required to meet NEP targets



making India a knowledge-based economy, Kumar added.

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

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

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

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

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

**अल्प कालीन ई-निविदा सूचना**

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

**निदेशक**

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

**RATHI STEEL AND POWER LIMITED**

CIN: L27109DL1971PLC005905

Regd. Off.: 24/1, Block A, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Estate, Mathura Road, New Delhi-110044

Email ID: investors@rathisteelandalpower.com, Website: www.rathisteelandpower.com

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

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

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

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 04-02-2023

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

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

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

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

**UJVN LIMITED**  
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)

H.O. : "UJJWAL" Maharan Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006  
Tel. : 0135-2763508, 2763808 Fax: 0135-2763507 Website: www.ujvnl.com

No. 116 Date: 04.02.2023

**e-Procurement Corrigendum No.-02**

Due to unavoidable circumstances, e-Tender Notice Reference: NCB/17/EE(E&M)/MB-II/Barrage/2022-23 (Tender ID 2022\_UJWB2\_52260\_1) Name of work: Design, Manufacturing, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Trashrack panels & one no. Hydraulically Operated Movable Trash Rack Cleaning Machine (TRCM) to safely handle rake capacity of 2.0 Tonne as well as log grappler capacity of 2.0 Tonne including dismantling of existing Trash rack panels & TRCM at Joshiyara Barrage, Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand, India, is amended and Corrigendum No.02 has been uploaded on the e-procurement portal **http://uktenders.gov.in**. Other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal **http://uktenders.gov.in** **Executive Engineer E&M**

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

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

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

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

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

The Finance Minister pointed out

**UJVN Limited**  
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)

H.O. : "UJJWAL" Maharan Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006  
Tel. : 0135-2763508, 2763808 Fax: 0135-2763507 Website: www.ujvnl.com

R.O. No.: 115 Date: 04.02.2023

**E-Tender Time Extension Notice-4**

Due to unavoidable circumstances the date of submission and opening of NIT No - NCB/17/EE(E&M)/MB-II/Barrage/2022-23: "Design, Manufacturing, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Trashrack panels & one no. Hydraulically Operated Movable Trash Rack Cleaning Machine (TRCM) to safely handle rake capacity of 2.0 Tonne as well as log grappler capacity of 2.0 Tonne including dismantling of existing Trash rack panels & TRCM at Joshiyara Barrage, Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand, India" invited by the office of Executive Engineer (E&M), Joshiyara Barrage, Joshiyara, Uttarkashi is hereby extended as follows:-

**Last Date/Time for receipt of bid in the portal - 10.02.2023 up to 16:00 Hrs.**

**Last Date of receipt of hard copy of bid - 13.02.2023 up to 11:30 Hrs.**

**Date of opening of bid on the website - 13.02.2023 at 11:30 Hrs.**

Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the e-procurement portal **http://uktenders.gov.in**.

**Executive Engineer**

"Save Electricity in the Interest of Nation"

नगर निगम फरीदाबाद के भवन का रिकॉर्ड में यूनिट प्रॉपर्टी आइडॉ नं. 189FB379 व मकान नं. 2H-22/2 एच. एच. 2 फ़रीदाबाद श्रीमान नवीन कुमार कालरा व श्रीमान अनंद प्रकाश कालरा के नाम पर दर्ज है। श्रीमान अनंद प्रकाश कालरा पुत्र श्रीमान छेमचंद कालरा की मूल दिनांक 8.02.2017 के पत्राचार जो कि इस भवन के रजिस्ट्री बुदा मालिकों में से एक थे के बारे में प्राथी श्रीमान नवीन कुमार कालरा, श्रीमती राज रानी(पत्नी) व श्रीमान भवन कुमार कालरा (पुत्र) ने आवेदन किया है कि यूनिट प्रॉपर्टी आइडॉ नं. 189FB379 व मकान नं. 2H-22/2 एच. एच. 2 फ़रीदाबाद के कानूनी मालिक हैं और इस की मालिकता श्रीमती राज रानी व श्रीमान नवीन कुमार कालरा के नाम दर्ज की जाए। यदि इस मालिकता निसका यूनिट प्रॉपर्टी आइडॉ नं. 189FB379 व मकान नं. 2H-22/2 एच. एच. 2 फ़रीदाबाद को प्राथी श्रीमान श्रीमती राज रानी कालरा व नवीन कुमार कालरा के नाम पर दर्ज होने हेतु किसी भी व्यक्ति को कोई पत्राचार है तो वह शैक्षिक प्रमाण सामाज्य पत्र में प्रकाशित होने के 30 दिन (1 माह) के भीतर अपना एतराज अधोस्तारों के कार्यालय में प्रस्तुत करना होगा। समाप्त।

समाप्त उपरोक्त भवन का रिकॉर्ड में प्रस्तुत दस्तावेजों के आधार पर दिया जाएगा। नगर निगम फरीदाबाद इसका उत्तराई नहीं होगा। सूचित रहे।

भवन एवं कक्षागत अधिकारी-III  
नगर निगम फरीदाबाद

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

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

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

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

# Exposition to promote clean fuels inaugurated

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

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

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

Pandey said in line with Prime

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

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Everton's board again stayed away due to rising tensions



between the club's hierarchy and supporters.

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

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

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

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

## GOODISON 'ROCKING'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Arsenal lacked composure in shock Everton defeat: Arteta

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

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

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

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

sive game-plan under new boss Sean Dyche.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Bopanna-Bhambri lose in Davis Cup



PTI ■ HILLEROD (DENMARK)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



AFP ■ PARIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

home team player's enforced error.

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AFP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

said Potter.

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

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

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

## HAVERTZ'S HAT-TRICK OF MISSES

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

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

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

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

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



cross on target.

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

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

The Moroccan is just one of a wealth of wide options now available to Potter and he wasted no time in hooking Mudryk despite his price tag after a disappointing first 45 minutes. The Ukrainian joined from Shakhtar Donetsk last month for a fee that could rise to 100 million euros (\$110 million).

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

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

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

The Australians are here for a training camp before heading to

Nagpur on Monday.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

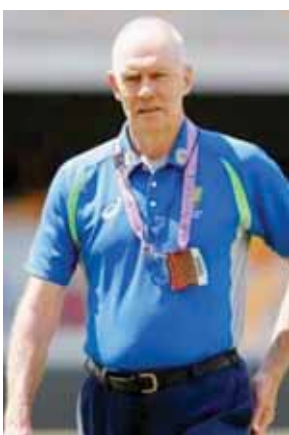
"You need to get into the grind at times. That role of the fast bowler, bowling a lot of overs for not a heap of reward but doing your job for your team. I really enjoy that aspect of the last tour. Much to play for this time," he said.

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

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

impression that it had gone 'the other way'.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

from a busy home summer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Our spinners R Ashwin,

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

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"Our spinners R Ashwin,

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

The Asia Cup was initially allotted

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

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

has been withheld for the time being.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ ALUR

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

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

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

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

"I played a four-day game



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



# THE CITY OF FLOWERS NOW AN EPICENTER OF VIOLENCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Pakistan reaches out to Taliban supremo

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

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

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

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

The meeting was presided over by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

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

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



tant meeting but it did not attend.

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

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

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

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

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

# NIP CANCER IN THE BUD

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

## TYPES OF CANCERS

### \* Gall Bladder Cancer

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

### \*Cervical Cancer

Screening tests and the HPV vaccine can help prevent cervical cancer.

### \*Colorectal Cancer

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

### \*Gynecologic Cancers

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

### \*Breast Cancer

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

### \*Ovarian Cancer

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

### \*Uterine Cancer

Uterine cancer is the most common cancer of the female reproductive system.

### \*Vaginal and Vulvar Cancers

Vaginal and vulvar cancers are rare, but all women are at risk for these cancers.



### \*Head and Neck Cancers

Cancers of the head and neck include cancers that start in several places in the head and throat, not including brain cancers or cancers of the eye.

### \*Kidney Cancer

To lower your risk of kidney and renal pelvis cancers, keep a healthy weight. Don't smoke, or quit if you do.

### \*Liver Cancer

To lower your risk for liver cancer, get vaccinated against hepatitis B, get tested for hepatitis C, and avoid drinking too much alcohol.

## PREVENTABLE CANCERS

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

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

### \*Lung Cancer

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

### \*Lymphoma

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

### \*Myeloma

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

### \*Prostate Cancer

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

### \*Skin Cancer

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

### \*Thyroid Cancer

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

## MOST COMMON CAUSES FOR CANCER

### TOBACCO

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

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

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

### ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

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

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

## Breast cancer Early detection key

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

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

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

### DOCTORSPEAK

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## ... Rural women caught unaware

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

study said, revealing an urgent need to focus on health awareness regarding breast cancer and BSE among rural women.

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

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

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

## CANCER: Close the care gap

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

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

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



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

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

On cervical cancer, the Region is achieving rapid, life-saving progress. Five Member States – Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand – have introduced nation-wide HPV vaccination of girls. New evidence shows that a single dose of HPV vaccine delivers protection comparable to the 2-dose schedule, which alongside additional cost reductions, should enable countries to reach every woman and girl.

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Yemenis' wait for war crimes justice lingers

The Yemen crisis continues. It has completed eight years. The country's internal political factions and Saudi-led military intervention have spawned the catastrophe. The intractable civil war initially has gradually transformed into a full-blown tragedy leading to the deaths of millions, especially children and women. And it has added more numbers to the international refugee crisis.

The real tragedy lies in blatant violation of all universal norms set by the UN and prescribed by the international humanitarian laws. The rules and principles of the global humanitarian framework provide full protection to all civilians and others who are not participating in the war. In fact, all sets of international humanitarian law demands and normally ensures from the conflicting groups the greatest possible measures to reduce human suffering during the conduct of fighting. Therefore, these laws clearly distinguish between military objectives and civilian objectives. The final objective is to minimise harm to civilian society. What has been observed in Yemen is flouting all humanitarian restrictions while pursuing military objectives. It has led to disproportionate attacks over civilian targets. Thus, many civil society organisations and global human right agencies are claiming that indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks carried out by the warring parties in Yemen are akin to war crimes.

As long as there have been conflicts and wars, attempts have been made by international jurists and other experts to define "war crimes". However, only by the 20th century, the very concept of war crime was defined in the legal sense of the term. According to the UN, a war crime is a serious breach of international law committed against civilians or enemy combatants during an international or domestic armed conflict. So to have a war crime, there must be an armed conflict. An armed conflict, international or non-international or



Assault rifles and missiles seized by the French Navy lay on the deck of a ship at an undisclosed location on Wednesday. French naval forces in January seized thousands of assault rifles, machine guns and anti-tank missiles in the Gulf of Oman coming from Iran heading to Yemen's Houthi rebels, officials said on Thursday, the latest such interdiction amid West Asian nation's long-running war

involving an armed international group is a prerequisite to war crimes and grave breaches (Gary D Solis 2018). In contrast to genocide and crimes against humanity, war crimes have to take place in the context of armed conflict.

Further the meaning of war crimes is clarified in four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Article 147 of the fourth Geneva Convention defines war crimes as "wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including... wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a protected person... taking of hostages and extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly". So the war crime as per this land-

mark article has been recorded in many corners of the world. The International Criminal Court established by the Rome Statute is the first international criminal court when it first started in the year 2002 with 123 member nations. This court has the authority to prosecute individuals — heads of state, military members and others — under three broad frameworks of international criminal acts: crime against humanity, war crimes and genocide. Again, the three main pillars of humanitarian law are the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. And if any one of these is violated, it could be established that a war crime has been committed.

Now the reality in Yemen is grim. In the year 2019, the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) released a devastating

report on Yemen. The report was prepared by a panel of independent experts empowered by the UNHRC to find out violations of human rights in Yemen during this war. The report clearly established the fact that though it was ostensibly a civil war, the outside powers are both direct and indirect belligerents and are responsible for war crimes. And here the main lead is taken by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The report found a litany of crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition that has targeted civilian sites a number of times. The report strongly suggested that Saudi Arabia's western backers, including the US, the UK and France, bear responsibility for war crimes. These global powers are consistently supplying arms and ammunition to Saudi Arabia for carrying out the war

in Yemen. However, the US has also offered technical assistance to Saudi Arabian forces while conducting massive bombing raids over enemy targets all across Yemen.

Yemen, a small nation located in the Arabian Peninsula has become a permanent war theatre today. The country has turned out to be a grievous site of human suffering particularly of children, women and ageing population. All global governance institutions, including the UN, except delivering peace sermons and urges, have simply become mute spectators, failing to stop the human carnage. And sadly, it is led indirectly by the world's most powerful nation, the US, on one side and the Islamic Republic of Iran by supporting Houthi Rebels on the other side. Who will be stopping them? Probably, no one until they withdraw on their own from the war field. And Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, popularly known as MBS globally, simply wants to showcase his prowess by demolishing the Iran-backed rebels which are unstoppable for now. At home, MBS remains popular for his innovative strategies to recast the regimes economic and techno visions, but internationally he has been unable to shake off the veil of suspicion for his alleged role in the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey in the year 2018. He is finding it too difficult either to withdraw or to outrightly declare his country as the winner of the Yemen War.

It is well known that the Saudis did not start the conflict. It is the Houthis who did it by marching to the historic capital city of Sanaa and overthrow the legitimate Yemeni Government in late 2014. Nevertheless, the conflict has its roots in the Arab Spring of 2011. Then an uprising of the public forced the country's long-time authoritarian President Ali Abdullah Saleh to hand over power to his Deputy Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. The transition, as expected by interna-

tional political analysts, was supposed to bring peace and stability to Yemen, one of the poorest nations in the West Asian region.

However, unfortunately Hadi had to subsequently handle militancy, Islamic jihadists, military officers having continued loyalty to former President Saleh and most importantly an economic downturn propelled by massive corruption charges.

When the Houthi Shi rebels took over the capital city of Sanaa, President Hadi had to flee and the real existential crisis of the legitimate government of Iran began. Again, the conflict took a turn of a regional war in March 2015, when Saudi Arabia and eight other, mostly Sunni Arab nations, backed by the US, France, and the UK began strikes against the Houthis to restore the Hadi Government in Yemen. This has given the war an international angle too and the Islamic Republic of Iran openly supported the Houthi rebels. In fact, the Saudis are seriously concerned about the continued success and rampage of the Houthi militants as it would open a stronghold for its rival Iran in its southern backyard for future.

Truly, there has been disaster for everyone whosoever has been involved in the war. But for the most part, it is no other than Yemen's impoverished and malnourished population who have become the central target of the war. The Yemenis are killing the Yemenis by taking global support for arms and ammunition from warmongering nations. And at the same time, the regional warring parties like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the rival Iran are bleeding their own coffers simply to re-establish their superiority in West Asia. And the final sufferers are no other than the ordinary Yemenis. It's time to stop this war crime. Enough is enough.

(The writer is the Head of the Department of Arts and Humanities at Geeta University, Panipat)

**The Yemenis are killing the Yemenis by taking global support for arms and ammunition from warmongering nations. And at the same time, the regional warring parties like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the rival Iran are bleeding their own coffers simply to re-establish their superiority in West Asia**



MAKHAN SAIKIA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Budget ensures economy's fundamentals remain solid

The 2023-24 Budget has proved all pundits wrong as they had predicted it to be a political Budget before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The last full-fledged Budget before the general elections is not populist on any parameter. It takes confidence and commitment to stick to the fundamentals of prudent fiscal management, when it makes complete sense to go all-out political. This attribute which was also visible during the handling of the Covid-19 crisis will keep the economy resilient.

The highlight of the Budget has to be the increased allocation for capital expenditure, which was hiked by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore and the total capex is expected to be around 13 lakh crore. After two consecutive years of blistering growth in Government capex, there was an expectation that the Centre would step off the accelerator and make more direct cash transfers under various social sector schemes. The increase in capex under this context is indeed a pleasant surprise.

The Budget continues to focus on the smooth functioning of the economy. Capital allocation for collateral-free lending to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector has been increased to Rs 9,000 crore. This will lead to an incremental lending of Rs 2 lakh crore to this sector. Customs duties have been reduced on a number of commodities to make manufacturing in India more competitive, with raw material availability at lower costs. These steps, together with the continued work on the ease-of-doing-business, will help the micro, small and medium enterprise sector in a major way.

Relief in personal income tax was widely demanded and the Budget has lived up to the expectation of the taxpayers. An individual can now earn up to Rs 7 lakh per annum and not pay any income tax. This is a 40 per cent increase over the current exemption limit of Rs 5 lakh per annum and has led to considerable rejoicing in the middle class. The relief has also been extended with people with very high levels of income. The surcharge on income above Rs 5 crore per annum has also been reduced and the highest marginal rate of taxation will come down from 42.75 per cent to 39 per cent. The Government has thus shown that it is not afraid to provide relief even to the rich if it believed that the rate was too high and political considerations did not come in the way.

This year's Budget is also a document for the future. The Government has listed seven priorities that will guide policy making on the road to 2047. These have elements of green growth and energy transition while not losing sight of inclusive development and reaching the last mile. The focus and commitment to sustainable growth can be seen from schemes like Mishti, for Mangrove plantation, along the coastline and Amrit Dharohar, for preserving biodiversity in wetlands. Scrapping of old vehicles also finds a detailed mention in the Budget. Establishing a centre of excellence for Artificial Intelligence (AI) shows that the Budget has ambition. The Skill India scheme will, henceforth, include AI, robotics, 3D printing and so on. The Government plans to set up 100 labs for the development of

5G services.

The Government's support to the agricultural sector and its commitment to the rural economy are evident from the setting up of the Agriculture Accelerator Fund and the millet development programme. Schemes such as GOBARdhan yojana and facilitating natural farming are a case in point. The target for credit to the agriculture sector has been fixed at Rs 20 lakh crore. It will ensure that the agriculture sector continues to grow at a healthy rate.

A major achievement has been the management of fiscal affairs. Several challenges on the macroeconomic front that stemmed from external factors, and were unseen at the time of the presentation of the Budget last year, unfolded as the year rolled by. The actual expenditure on food and fertiliser subsidy for the current year is much more than what was initially budgeted, while the excise tax collected dipped due to excise duty cut on petrol and diesel by the Central Government. Despite this, the Narendra Modi Government has managed to achieve the budgeted target of 6.4 per cent for fiscal deficit for the year 2022-23. The fiscal deficit target for the coming financial year has been put at 5.9 per cent of GDP. Thus, the march on the path of fiscal consolidation continues and while there is an absence of a glide path, the Government has committed to bringing it down to the range of 4.5 per cent by the year 2025-26.

A Budget that is not swayed by considerations of politics shows the maturity of the Government and the confidence it has in the ability of Indian voters' judgement to reward performance over

## Point-counterpoint



rhetoric. This Budget is, therefore, a historic document and shows the nature of changing politics unleashed by the Modi Government. This Budget will ensure that the fundamentals of the economy remain solid and the next Government will be able to build upon it.

(The writer is a Supreme Court advocate)



SAMBHRANT KRISHNA

# Budget ignores 90% of India's population

That loves to claim its nationalist credentials at the drop of a hat, it is not surprising at all that the subject of defence was not mentioned in the Budget speech of the Finance Minister at all. The UPA Government under the Congress devoted more than 2 per cent of the GDP to defence and the BJP at that time used to shout that the allocation was not adequate and it will increase defence allocation when it came to power.

It must also be reminded that the India-China border was largely peaceful during that period and now that the possibility of a border clash between the two countries is a real possibility, the defence sector has been given a short shrift. It is also very likely that the subject of defence was not mentioned in the Budget so that it does not antagonise China and if that's the case then it's indeed shameful.

A lot of noise is being made by the Government on its target to reduce the fiscal deficit to 5.9 per cent of GDP next year. If one looks beyond the headlines, one can easily see that the fertilizer subsidy in the coming year will come down drastically as the global prices, which had spiked after the start of the Russia-Ukraine war, have cooled down. Moreover, the Government has also stopped the free food grain distribution that it had started in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic and therefore the food subsidy will also come down. The planned reduction on the fiscal deficit therefore is not a result of sound fiscal management by the Government but is a result of factors beyond its control.

Another aspect of the Budget is that the numbers pre-

sented are not honest. While the budgeted increase in capital expenditure is hogging the limelight, revenue expenditure has not been subjected to the scrutiny it deserves. The budget for 2023-24 has projected only a marginal increase in revenue expenditure over the revised estimate for the current year. In fact, if the interest payment is subtracted from the revenue expenditure, the amount is lower than revised estimates for the current year. This is clearly unrealistic and it is very likely that the actual revenue expenditure will exceed the Budget estimates. Moreover, it does not take much to puncture the claim of the Government on achieving very high Central Government capital expenditure as a percentage of GDP. The Government in its last 10 year period has raided the retained earnings of the public sector enterprises as a result of which the capital expenditure by PSUs has come down.

The Government's only objective seems to win praise from business newspapers and industry bodies. These people dominate any post budget discussion and the concerns of rural and the poor masses are always relegated to the background. The allocation to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (MNREGA) has been reduced dramatically and the overall allocation to rural areas has come down. The Government likes to pretend that the country has fully recovered from the economic effects of Covid-19 but that is far from the truth. There is still widespread suffering in the rural areas and the Budget should have made increased allocation for the rural sector.

Unemployment is the biggest challenge facing our country but the Budget has nothing substantial for it. It seems that the youth will have no future to look forward to under the Modi Government. There was a lot of discussion on tourism in the Budget. It was projected as a magic pill to address the issue of unemployment in the country. However if one looks at the total allocation to the sector, it remains unchanged from what was allocated to it in the 2022-23 at Rs 2,300 crore.

The Budget is an all-round failure because it fails to prioritise its spending to areas that deserve urgent and continued attention of the Government. It criminally ignores 90 per cent of India's population and Indian voters will pay back in the coming State elections and the general election in the coming year.

(The writer is spokesperson, Uttarakhand Congress Committee)



DEEPAK BALUTIA

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

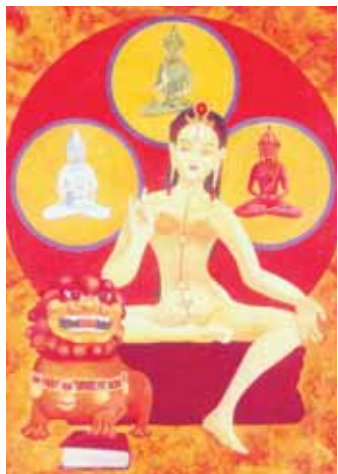
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

Your anxiety is evident in all your efforts. When it comes to your health, trust your instincts. Get a second opinion if a diagnosis doesn't feel right. Individuals who consume alcohol or drugs should avoid or take a break from intoxication at this time. You need to be a more caring and generous person at work. People turn to you for assistance; your buddy or colleague may want financial assistance from you. This is the moment to make long-term investments. Your generosity and kindness will make you a good name. There is anguish and grief in the connection. For the relationship to survive, both sides must be willing to work on and discuss it. This is the time to reflect and contemplate.

Lucky number 12  
Lucky colour Yellow  
Lucky day Wednesday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

It will be beneficial if you pay attention to your health this week. The week begins with creative energy that makes you feel lively, nimble, and joyful. However, as the week develops, various health concerns may arise that require your quick treatment. There is a cure for everything. Be optimistic; everything will work out. Professionally, if you are not committed to your work, you may have to pay for it. People are observing you and providing up-to-the-minute information to higher authorities. You may be questioned about your irregularities in tasks and funds. This is a very emotional phase in your relationship. Things can rapidly turn sour and awkward. Take a rest if necessary. Pick your battles wisely, and always treat your partner as a friend.

Lucky number 17  
Lucky colour Magenta  
Lucky day Friday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week will be difficult for you in terms of your health. Panicking at this point will just make matters worse. Every crisis is followed by the promise of a good time. It all relies on what you do about it. Be upbeat about it and seek assistance from others. Meditation will be quite beneficial. Things may not be going so well in your job. You are nearing the end of a project or assignment when you are confronted with another problem or task at work. You must be resilient and not be frightened by those who want to bring you down. On the personal front, you will have disagreements with people. You must recognize that honest communication with your partner may help you settle all of your disagreements.

Lucky number 10  
Lucky colour Brown  
Lucky day Tuesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week, your health and vitality should be excellent. If you need to change your behaviors to safeguard your health, now is an excellent moment to do so. Starting with minor objectives, such as a daily walk, might lead to a healthier and stronger you. Spend time balancing your body, mind, and soul. On the job front, there might be a monetary loss or a condition of unemployment. Your anxieties, addictions, and other unpleasant impulses may be causing a negative atmosphere around you. You are depressed and have a negative outlook on life. Be optimistic; now is the time to learn from your blunders. On the personal front, your situation is favorable, particularly in light of an ongoing romance. Your relationship will enter a lighter, more balanced phase in which you will respect each other as equals.

Lucky number 11  
Lucky colour Pastel Blue  
Lucky day Thursday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week, focus on health and follow-up workouts for people with serious illnesses. You could finally find it within yourself to give up certain unhealthy behaviors that you are aware are harmful. Take care of yourself first; only then will you be able to properly care for others. This week, you may receive some excellent news at work. You could get a call about a job with a better viewpoint, benefits, and facilities. Those who are waiting for posting may be able to travel to their selected location. This week brings monetary rewards for businesspeople. Relationships are not going as well as you imagined. You must work hard. Put your thoughts and opinions to your loved ones in a way that they will be easily accepted; else, they will be rejected.

Lucky number 20  
Lucky colour Mauve  
Lucky day Monday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week has some excellent news for you. Even if you are dealing with major health issues, a cheerful attitude may do miracles. If you believe something is amiss with your physical being, make sure you have access to medical care. Believe your intuition. On the job front, there is joy and celebration. You are going to see the fruits of your labor and efforts. If you are seeking for work, you'll find something greater than you could have imagined. Your contributions are recognized and respected. In terms of your relationship, your spouse's attitude may irritate you, and you may feel unhappy and lonely. You may have a sense of isolation. Try to broaden your horizons and think optimistically.

Lucky number 2  
Lucky colour Grey  
Lucky day Friday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Despite the strain and stress this week, you stay calm and composed. Your support system is your boundless energy and stamina. You must channel your enthusiasm into something productive. Your health is still fine, and you have control over your sensory delights. On the professional front, your dedication and willpower will help you reach your goals; otherwise, you will face several obstacles and delays in your job. In times of crisis, your tough decisions will give you the strength to proceed and set out the plan. Follow the advice of a senior person who understands your boundaries and is close to you. This week, you may confront pushback from close friends and family members. Family rifts and disagreements are probable. Be a little softer and more kind.

Lucky number 10  
Lucky colour Off-white  
Lucky day Monday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week, you are constrained in terms of your health. Fear, worry, and negative thoughts are interfering with your ability to live a normal life. You must strike a balance between your body, mind, and soul. When one's thoughts are negative or filled with anxiety, one's health suffers. If you meditate and listen to your body's voice, 50% of your issues will solve themselves. On the job front, you may experience an unexpected setback or unfairness. The post you have been eyeing may be filled by another candidate of comparable caliber. The dilemma of whether to stay in the current one or join the new one will prevail. On the relationship front, make an effort to stay connected in order to keep the flame alive.

Lucky number 31  
Lucky colour Red  
Lucky day Wednesday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week, your health may make you feel good. You should be full of energy and optimism for the future. Consider your regular frame of thought, and keep in mind that your attitude impacts your health. Maintain an optimistic mindset. You are now able to mentor others and share your spiritual insights. On the professional front, you are approaching the point where professional achievement and recognition are firmly within your reach. Make every effort to be orderly and productive. This will compensate you. Now is not the time to gamble or take chances. On the personal front, good fortune will accompany you in matters of the heart. If you are already in a relationship, it could deepen and improve. You are emotionally satisfied.

Lucky number 1  
Lucky colour Indigo  
Lucky day Friday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

You are feeling down and gloomy this week since things aren't going your way. There are several additional health conditions that have you concerned. Do not be too tense; this is only a passing phase. All tests will pass. The strain is the most serious sickness. You are likely to advance professionally. There will be money, status, and honor on the line. Business owners may make a lot of money. You schedule time for healing and massage therapy. This has been a decent emotional week. Romance is on the cards for the new love. Married partners must be concerned about and comprehend one other's sentiments. There is a communication gap that must be addressed since it is the primary cause of distance and isolation.

Lucky number 9  
Lucky colour Orange  
Lucky day Saturday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week, your health is likely to be good. You will be full of energy and excitement. However, exercise should be done with caution because minor sprains or injuries can occur. If you've been slacking on your health, it's time to get back on track. On the job, you may come across a man of influence and leadership abilities who would like to mentor you. His presence is required to point you in the proper route. If you've been dealing with difficulties, now is the moment to take command of the issue. You will be incredibly goal-oriented and visionary. This week will be spectacular in terms of relationships. This is a moment to follow your intuition.

Lucky number 3  
Lucky colour Peach  
Lucky day Saturday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week, your health difficulties will be resolved. You are probably aware that health is extremely essential and requires special care and attention. The phrase "prevention is better than cure" applies to you well. You attend healing therapy sessions and seminars and put them into practice in your life. On the professional front, you must break free from the self-imposed constraints that are impeding your career advancement. In some situations, you must be fluent and quick-witted, yet your mental confusion and dualism prevent you from doing so. Reduce your spending. Keep your eyes and ears open for chances that come your way. On the personal front, commitments are not made to be broken; if you do, you may suffer in terms of relationships.

Lucky number 14  
Lucky colour Green  
Lucky day Thursday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Educative import of Saraswati



The Mother is armed with Veena (a stringed musical instrument). We are all aware that pleasing sound emanating from the musical instrument comes into effect through harmony and symphony of varied sound notes excited by different strings. In an implied sense, She remains the beholder of all Sabdās— the

spoken as well as written words carrying meaning. And the word carries meaning only when the letters are placed in an orderly fashion. It also points to the fact that pleasing mannerism alone could help relate well and be in harmony with all and sundry, for a smooth run of life. Veena, the musical instrument of Mother thus metaphorically symbolises the beholder of words.

The mother is shown holding a book (the Veda) in one of her hands, meaning that scriptures provide us with the right lead. She is shown having a rosary in another hand. It implies that repeated reflection over knowledge acquired would be needed for realisation of the true import underlying the writup. She is shown moving freely in a water body, having beautiful Lotus flower around, growing out of the mud lying in its womb. This is in acknowledgment of the fact that the earthly matter acquired its form-existence when aided by water element, and which acquired its dynamism out of the Sakti provided by the consciousness element, contextually symbolised by Mother. The Lotus flower here symbolises both creativity and lustre evident with knowl-

edge. Though born in muddy water, not even a drop of water or mud particle can stick to the lotus flower leaves, thus implying a sense of detachment. So, true wisdom can be acquired only when explored with a sense of detachment.

A peacock is also shown around the Mother, which she uses as a carrier while moving up above in the sky. We cannot afford to lose sight of the forces routed through the infinite, inaccessible and indestructible space either. And, obviously tracking down the information laid down there is no easy task. It needs to be noted that the prized feed of a peacock is poisonous snake. When the peacock digests the snake's poison, it leads to a change in its body chemistry, which results in the beautiful colour its plumage reflects. Similarly, knowledge acquisition cannot be an easy task. It implies that only those who take on the pains associated with learning process kindly, would be able to acquire the knowledge and wisdom.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com