

No Dalit in AAP's top leadership, Arvind Kejriwal's words are hollow: Rahul

New Delhi, Jan 31 (GNS) Holding a picture of Aam Aadmi Party's 'Team Kejriwal' poster in his hand, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday launched a scathing attack at the Delhi's ruling party, claiming that there is not a single Dalit in the party's top leadership. "See here, this is a picture of Team Kejriwal's top leadership; following names are written here: Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Atishi Singh, Sanjay Singh, Satyendra Jain, Raghav Chaddha,

Sandeep Pathak, Saurabh Bhardwaj and Avadh Ojha; show me one name from Dalit, Adivasi, OBC, minority community in the team leadership," Gandhi said. The leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha who was addressing a public rally in Madipur in support of Congress candidates, criticised AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal for "having failed to keep his promise to protect Dalits". "Kejriwal, your words are hollow. You had said that you would protect the

Dalits and the minorities. But when the riots happened, Kejriwalji was not with you. Whereas the Congress stood with you with full strength because the Congress party is not opportunistic," he said. He also reminded the audience of Kejriwal's initial promise to bring about "clean politics". Gandhi said, "The truth is, when Kejriwal entered politics, he claimed he wanted to introduce a new kind of politics. He even climbed a pillar and used to arrive in a small

car, a WagonR." Gandhi said, "He came in a WagonR and went straight into the parking of the 'Sheeshmahal'." Addressing the issue of the Yamuna, he challenged Kejriwal, saying, "Forget about the Yamuna; you should drink water from these jhuggi clusters and the regular water of Delhi." He continued, "You blame others for polluting the water, but it was your responsibility to clean the Yamuna, a promise you made five years ago."



Budget session from today; Waqf Bill, Kumbh deaths set to rock Parl

● FM to present record 8th Budget in a row tomorrow - Govt lists 16 Bills

New Delhi, Jan 31 (GNS) The Budget session of Parliament is set to commence on Friday with the government listing 16 draft legislations for consideration, including a Bill to regulate immigration and another to amend the Waqf Act of 1995. The principal highlight of the session will be the presentation of the Union Budget by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the record eighth time on February 1. The session is expected to be a stormy affair with the Opposition all set to take on the government over Maha Kumbh stampede deaths and the Waqf Amendment Bill. The two-part session — from January 31 to February 13 and then from March 10 to April 4 — will start with President Droupadi Murmu's address to a joint sitting of both Houses on Friday. After her address, the Economic Survey will be tabled by Sitharaman. Later part



of the session will be devoted to a debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address to which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will reply. On the legislative side, the ruling BJP is all set to push legislation on one of its major electoral planks — illegal immigration. The Immigration and Foreigners Bill 2025 has been listed among 16 legislative agendas. Although the contours of the Bill are unclear, it appears intended to regulate

the entry of immigrants into India and could be framed as an overarching law on the subject currently governed by multiple legislations — The Foreigners Act 1946, The Passport Entry into India Act 1920, and the Registration of Foreigners Act 1939. The Bill, though listed for consideration, can only be taken up once the Union Cabinet approves it. The Cabinet is yet to take up this draft legislation for approval.

In a setback to AAP, 7 MLAs quit party ahead of Delhi polls

New Delhi, Jan 31 (GNS) In a major jolt to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) less than a week ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, seven sitting MLAs have tendered their resignation and quit the party. The legislators who quit the party -- Bhawna Gaur from Palam, Naresh Yadav from Mehrauli, Rajesh Rishi from Janakpuri, Madan Lal from Kasturba, Rohit Mehrauliya from Trilokpuri, Bhupinder Singh Joon from Bijwasan, and Pawan Sharma from Adarsh Nagar -- were not given a ticket by the party for the ensuing Assembly polls.

Most of the MLAs in their resignation letters cited that they had "lost faith" in the party over its leaders' involvement in corruption scandals. "I joined the Aam Aadmi Party for honesty. But today I can't see that honesty anywhere. I spoke to several people of my Mehrauli constituency and most of them said that AAP is completely embroiled in corruption," Mehrauli MLA Naresh Yadav's letter read. Yadav in December, 2024 was sentenced to two years in prison in the 2016 Quran desecration case by a court in Punjab's Malerkotla.

Following his conviction, Yadav had on December 20 posted on X that he had requested Arvind Kejriwal not to give him a ticket for the Assembly polls. "I will not contest elections until I am honorably acquitted. I am completely innocent and the allegations levelled against me are politically motivated and false. That



is why I have requested them to free me from contesting elections," Yadav had posted on X on December 20. Bijwasan MLA Joon stated that he took the decision after witnessing a significant deviation from the values and principles on which the party was founded.

"AAP was envisioned as a transparent, people-centric organisation committed to eradicating corruption and fostering ethical governance. However, over time, the party has increasingly exhibited traits of centralisation and a lack of internal democracy," Joon stated. He further said that the party initially took a strong stand against giving tickets or membership to individuals with criminal background. However, it has now chosen to field a candidate from Bijwasan AC-36 who has multiple criminal cases registered against him, including offences of moral turpitude.

Beware of Misleading Narratives: Syrian Developments and the Islamic State Trap

Recent developments in Syria have sparked heated debates and diverse narratives, some of which are dangerously misleading. Among the most concerning is the attempt by certain radicals to portray these events as a victory of the Islamic State (ISIS) or to frame them as part of a broader, divinely sanctioned campaign that Muslim youths should join. This distorted interpretation is false and a dangerous trap, particularly for young and impressionable minds.

Like many others in the Middle East, the Syrian conflict is multifaceted, with various factions vying for control, influence, and survival. Some extremist groups, including remnants of ISIS, are trying to present these developments as part of their so-called "Caliphate," a concept rooted in their radical ideology. However, this narrative is far removed from the true Islamic understanding of governance, justice, and the concept of an Islamic state.

It is important to understand that the term "Islamic State" is not a mere political slogan, nor can it be achieved through violence, extremism, or territorial conquest. The true concept of an Islamic state in Islam is one that upholds justice, peace, and the rule of law based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The actions of ISIS, or any such groups that claim to be establishing a caliphate, are rooted in extremism, violence, and a misinterpretation of Islamic teachings. The so-called "Islamic State" under ISIS was built on destruction, oppression, and terrorism.

It was a political entity that violated the fundamental principles of Islam—such as justice, mercy, and respect for human dignity. Rather than bringing peace and prosperity to the Muslim ummah, ISIS brought suffering, bloodshed, and division. Its tactics of terrorism, sectarian violence, and brutality in the name of Islam have not only undermined the faith but also disillusioned many Muslims worldwide. Some radicals and extremists are now trying to frame the developments in Syria as a victory for the cause of the so-called Is-

lamic State. They aim to recruit Muslim youths into their ranks by appealing to emotions and presenting themselves as the "true" defenders of Islam. They may use images of battles, slogans, and even references to "jihad" to paint a picture of a victorious caliphate being reborn. However, this narrative is based on a false understanding of what Islam teaches and what the concept of jihad truly means. Jihad, in the Islamic tradition, is primarily a struggle for personal improvement and striving to uphold justice and righteousness in society.

It is not a call for senseless violence or the establishment of power through terrorism. True jihad is about fighting oppression, injustice, and tyranny, and this can be done in many forms—through education, charity, peaceful resistance, or defending one's community from aggression. It is never about joining a group that promotes violence and chaos under the guise of religious duty.

For Muslim youths considering involvement in any conflict, it is crucial to understand the conditions under which fighting in the cause of Allah (jihad) is permitted. Islam has clear guidelines about what constitutes legitimate self-defence and warfare, which primarily includes legitimate authority, just cause, protection of innocents, peaceful resolution and consultation/consensus. Only a legitimate Islamic state, led by a just and capable ruler, has the authority to declare war in defence of the Muslim community.

This means that no individual or group can unilaterally declare war on behalf of Islam without the sanction of a recognised Islamic government. The concept of a "caliphate" cannot be imposed through force by self-declared groups; it must come from a genuine, legitimate state that upholds the principles of Islam. Similarly, Jihad in Islam is permitted only to defend against oppression, tyranny, or aggression. It is not an excuse to initiate violence for personal gain or political power. The principles of justice, mercy, and human dignity must always be maintained. Needless to say that Islam strictly forbids targeting of innocent civilians,

women, children, and non-combatants. Any action that causes harm to innocent lives, under the guise of jihad, is against the teachings of Islam. Extremist groups that engage in terrorism violate these basic principles. Before resorting to any form of warfare, Islam encourages efforts to resolve conflicts through peaceful dialogue and negotiation. The path to peace should always be sought first. Moreover, decisions regarding warfare or significant political actions should be made through consultation (Shura) and with the consent of the broader Muslim community. This ensures that actions are taken with wisdom and in the best interest of the Ummah.

The radical attempt to frame the Syrian conflict and similar crises as the establishment of a caliphate is deeply misleading. The youth who are drawn into such movements may find themselves entangled in an ideological web that leads to violence, destruction, and personal harm, all in the name of a distorted understanding of Islam. The true path of Islam is one that promotes peace, justice, and the well-being of humanity, not senseless conflict or sectarian violence.

Muslim youths need to educate themselves, seek guidance from knowledgeable scholars, and understand the true teachings of Islam. Islam encourages seeking knowledge, striving for justice, and contributing positively to society. There is no glorification of violence or destruction in Islam, and it is the responsibility of every Muslim to safeguard the unity of the Ummah, promote peace, and stand against extremism in all its forms. Muslim youths should remember that the true path to success lies in following the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, in working towards justice and righteousness, and in upholding the dignity of every human being. In this way, they can contribute positively to society, protect their faith, and stay far away from the dangerous traps set by those who seek to exploit them for their own extremist agendas.

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Poor thing, was getting tired by the end: Sonia's remarks on President's address trigger controversy

● BJP chief JP Nadda hits back saying Congress is back to insulting the top constitutional office



New Delhi, Jan 31 (GNS) Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, on Friday said President Droupadi Murmu was very tired by the end of her speech and could hardly speak. "Poor lady, the President was getting very tired by the end. No, she could hardly speak, poor thing," Sonia said when asked by reporters outside Parliament to comment on the President's address. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi first said no comments, later when Sonia made her remarks, he said:

"The President was repeating the same thing again and again." Moments after Sonia's remarks on President Murmu, BJP chief JP Nadda hit back saying the Congress was back to insulting the top constitutional office. "Former Congress President Sonia Gandhi's use of the phrase 'poor thing' to refer to the President is deeply disrespectful and underscores the opposition's continued disregard for the dignity of the highest constitutional office. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. While the President was highlighting the government's achievements, the opposi-

tion—driven by its feudal mindset—chose instead to mock the empowerment of backward classes and women, a transformation brought about under Prime Minister Modi's leadership," said Nadda. He said the focus today should have been on celebrating India's remarkable progress, as outlined in the President's address.

Nadda listed the following highlights from Murmu's address: India's rise as a pillar of economic, social, and political stability in an increasingly unstable world, setting a global example; women-led development, ensuring women take the lead in driving the nation's progress; health insurance for six crore senior citizens aged 70 and above under the Ayushman Bharat scheme; expansion of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, aiming to provide new homes to an additional three crore families, ensuring housing for all; inclusion of street vendors and small shopkeepers in the banking system for the first time in seven decades through the PM SVANidhi scheme; India's youth making the nation proud in fields ranging from startups and sports to space exploration.

Mollycoddling the fundamentalists

On July 28, as many as 20 people were killed in a Taliban attack at the office of the vice-presidential running candidate Amrullah Saleh in Kabul. He, however, was evacuated. Three days later, a bus ran over a roadside bomb, planted by the Taliban on the Kandahar-Herat highway, killing 34 passengers, mainly women and children — an act of inhuman, senseless killing. On August 1, 10 Afghan police officers were killed at the Daikundi province police checkpoint. Overall, in recent decades, one of the nations in the world which has been intensely afflicted with recurring fratricidal violence and tormented with grave externally driven political instability, unquestionably, has been the land of the Hindu Kush, namely Afghanistan. A victim of America's inability to bring about a modicum of peace despite the superpower's involvement in it for nearly 18 years — the longest war in its history — with costs amounting to at least \$2 trillion and thousands of fatalities, Afghanistan displays no signs of normalcy returning to it. That the situation inside Afghanistan has been aggravated by regional rivalries, the unholy ambitions of the extremist Afghan Taliban and neighbouring Pakistan's eternal quest for a pliant regime in Kabul is beyond question. The major stakeholder in hapless Afghanistan since the launch of Operation Freedom in 2001 to rid Afghanistan of the then alive terrorist kingpin Osama bin Laden and his formidable network of terrorists has been, undoubtedly, the US. However, it is more than clear that, in the last five years or so, the US has shown signs of being militarily fatigued and financially exhausted with its prolonged deployment in Afghanistan. Thus, successive US administrations, including those of Barack Obama and Donald Trump, have been eagerly looking for an honourable exit from Afghanistan. Just the other day, the mercurial President Trump casually stated that if he desired, he could solve the Afghan problem in a week's time but did not do so as there would be 10 million casualties! That this statement coming from the head of the sole global super power is nothing short of being bizarre and irresponsible is to say the least. In the last two years, the US has

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endeavoured to open up channels with the totally anti-Kabul government militant Taliban to strike some sort of a deal which would give the US a face-saving exit from Afghanistan. And now with the US General Election approaching early next year, President Trump appears to be in an ignoble hurry to strike an agreement with the same lot of terrorists, who continue to not only target US soldiers but also innocent Afghan civilians, with impunity and utter disdain. That the Trump administration is negotiating with the Afghan Taliban behind the back of the democratically elected government of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, it officially supports, is reprehensible. The US talks with the Afghan Taliban, spearheaded by its special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad (himself of Afghan origin) and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, too, appear to be in haste to arrive at some agreement with the wily, violence-sprouting Taliban. That the latter are more than conscious of the US' tearing hurry to depart from Afghanistan is enabling the Taliban to extract the maximum they can from the US, disregarding the Ashraf Ghani ad-

ministration in toto. That the Taliban will mount their major offensive against any Kabul government, once the US departs, is beyond question. If that happens, Afghanistan will revert to the dark ages with a highly medieval fundamentalist Islamic government in power. Such an eventuality also portends likely instability and terrorism spreading throughout the region. Apart from the Taliban, Pakistan, largely isolated by the global community for years and ostracised by its one-time mentor, the US, is now back in business, thanks to its supposedly close links with the Taliban. Just last week in Washington, during his maiden visit to the US, Pakistan PM Imran Khan too was feted by Donald Trump to influence the Pak-friendly Taliban to arrive at a suitable agreement with the US. That the crafty Pakistanis would pull out all stops to extract maximum financial and military aid from the US for any so-called assistance vis-à-vis the Taliban is a foregone conclusion. Meanwhile, Pakistan has successfully ensured that India, despite having excellent relations with Afghanistan and being a major donor in civil

aid to Kabul has been marginalised in the current negotiations being conducted for the future contours of Afghanistan. India also appears to have, after many years, again been hyphenated with Pakistan by the US in regional affairs. Nevertheless, India must endeavour to synergise its Afghan policy with Russia and Iran and not get relegated to regional oblivion, thanks to the US strategic blundering in South Asia. India must steer clear of the myopic US policies for Afghanistan and the region. Accordingly, it must transform its civilisational links with Afghanistan into a stronger strategic partnership for enhancing peace in the region. God forbid, if the Taliban ever come to power in Afghanistan, terrorism in greater potency, will be a natural outcome to enter our boundaries and give an additional boost to terrorism in Kashmir. The Government of India may wish to send a strong message to the US not to aggravate Kabul's misery by any hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan. The security situation demands a strong US presence in support of a democratically elected Afghan Government.

Game theoretic approach to India-Pakistan conflict

The tensions between India and Pakistan refuse to abate. Ties between the two countries are probably at their lowest point in two decades. The deep hostilities today are only overshadowed by the ghosts of the Kargil war in 1999 and the 2001 Parliament attacks. Even the 2008 Mumbai attacks did not bring the relations between the two nations to such a low. This comes riding on a series of events starting from the shocking Pathankot attack (2016), Uri attack (2016), Amarnath Yatra Attack (2017) to the recent Pulwama attack (2019). As a result, the leaders of the two nations have not met since 2015.

The matter reached a crescendo when India abrogated Article 370, which ended the special status that had been accorded to Kashmir and brought it under central control. Even though the matter is a domestic issue for India, Pakistan has made concerted efforts to internationalise the issue. Imran Khan even went on to appeal to the international community through The New York Times for wider involvement over the issue arguing that a "threat looms over the world ... under a nuclear shadow." The developing animosity does not seem to be nearing its end anytime soon. While the

threat of nuclear war has been repeatedly used by Pakistan to rile up international support over the Kashmir issue, India needs to practice restraint in its approach towards the issue. The gains from peace far exceed the returns from adopting a belligerent stance. In this regard, the idea of reconsidering India's no first use (NFU) posture on nuclear weapons is quite problematic. This can be understood from a game theoretic viewpoint. What remains of utmost importance is whether India should revoke its no first use policy or not. This question can be answered using a classic example of a "Prisoner's dilemma." The game involves two players - India and Pakistan, each having two sets of strategies to choose from, i.e. to launch a nuclear attack (called "attack") or not to attack. If only one country attacks, the attacker receives a positive payoff, and the opponent gets a negative one. Fixing the strategy of other players as attack or not attack, attacking will always give the maximum payoff to each. Therefore, the dominant strategy of each player is to attack, which is the only Nash equilibrium in the game. However, both the players would be understandably better off by choosing not to attack at all. Their overall

payoff would be higher than the dominant strategy Nash equilibrium. Hence, reconciling their differences and not attacking can indeed provide higher gains to both. This is so because the country attacking first might have first-mover advantage, but it would be followed by a series of counter strikes and eventually both would receive negative payoffs. Thus, even though both countries have a dominant strategy of attacking each other, both would be better off by cooperating. The NFU policy acts as an assurance for Pakistan that India would not attack first, which allows it to choose the strategy of not attacking. If India abandons the policy, then it brings an element of uncertainty into the game. In such a case, when there is a deterioration in ties the next time, Pakistan will be uncertain of India's actions. And given the history of wars that both countries have fought, Pakistan would be skeptical of winning a conventional military strike. So, the best strategy for Pakistan would be to use nuclear weapons at the very beginning. Uncertainty in such case would indeed act as a catalyst in a nuclear strike from Pakistan's end. This is because Pakistan will be afraid of India's possible actions. If India uses its nuclear weapons, it will in all likelihood

destroy its neighbour's nuclear capabilities. Fearing that if such a situation arises, the chances of Pakistan losing the war using conventional force would be extremely high, the country will strike first. Thus, ambiguity is likely to escalate the chances of a nuclear war. The NFU policy is a tool to ensure peace in the region and should not be abandoned.

If India sticks to its no-first-use policy, Pakistan's best response should also be to not attack. The policy ensures that the countries do not gravitate towards the Nash equilibrium where both countries attack each other. It acts as a deterrent that forces both countries to remain at the Pareto superior condition of not attacking where both of them are better off. This game theoretic model also shows that if India asserts its commitment to NFU, Pakistan would choose to attack in spite of its warmongering. Pakistan would be fully aware of the repercussions that would follow if it attacks India. Apart from destruction, the fear of a social boycott by the world would also be a deciding factor for Pakistan. Thus, calmer heads should prevail in such times instead of a needless engagement in a futile standoff.

It's advantage BJP in Haryana, Maharashtra

The BJP-led NDA is never short of showcasing virtues of holding simultaneous polls. But when it came to holding the Jharkhand Assembly polls along with those of Haryana and Maharashtra, it developed cold feet. There has been no plausible explanation as to why Chief Minister Raghubir Das did not toy with the idea of recommending the dissolution of the House a month ahead of its schedule. As per the constitutional provisions, an elected government, enjoying majority in the House, can advance polls by six months. The North Block, which has been proactive under the leadership of BJP chief Amit Shah, too, has maintained a stoic silence. Political grapevine has it that advancing Jharkhand polls did not get the go-ahead as the political situation in the state is not conducive, as in Haryana or Maharashtra. This is one state where alliance talks are still on among the Congress, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Jharkhand Vikas Morcha

(Prajatantrik), RJD and the Left parties. The Congress alliance with the JVMP and JMM was, however, not rewarding in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections as the BJP had walked away with 12 out of the 14 seats. An opinion poll conducted by ABP News-C-Voter has shown that both the Manohar Lal Khattar- and Devendra Fadnavis-led BJP-NDA governments are set to return home with ease. The survey findings for Haryana predict 78 seats for the BJP and a single digit tally of eight for the Congress out of 90 Assembly seats in Haryana. In Maharashtra, the BJP-Shiv Sena combine is projected to get 205 out of 288 Assembly seats. The opposition seems happy to be unhappy. Going by this survey's indication, the electoral chances of the Congress in Haryana and Maharashtra appear to be next to nothing. But the party is making no attempt to reach out to anti-BJP parties in these states to put up a joint fight. Perhaps, the failure of the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj

Party in Uttar Pradesh during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls has had a demoralising effect on the entire opposition. In Parliament, too, there were no signs of floor coordination on triple talaq or even on gaining control of the parliamentary panels that were constituted recently. The Trinamool Congress was treated shabbily, but it found itself protesting alone. The BSP, which has some presence in Maharashtra and Haryana, is going solo in the coming round of Assembly polls. BSP supreme Mayawati is not sitting idle. Rather, she plans to consolidate her traditional support base of Dalits in these states. The development is bad news for the Congress which has bravely made Selja, a Dalit, as Haryana PCC chief. The painstakingly-worked out efforts to retain Bhupinder Singh Hooda have averted a split in the Haryana Congress, but the grand old party would be struggling to get 30-odd Assembly seats in the state. Even as Maharashtra gets ready for the polls, the

Congress, facing many desertions, is left wondering whether its reliance on Maratha votes would help it put up a credible fight. A Congress-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) alliance has been worked out. Since 1999, the Congress has contested three successive elections with the NCP. During the 2014 Assembly elections, the NCP broke the alliance literally a few hours prior to the announcement of polls, leaving the Congress in the lurch. The Congress-NCP ugly spat hugely helped the BJP to come to power, reducing its ally, the Shiv Sena, to a poor second spot. The BJP had won 122 seats in the 288-member Assembly, while the Shiv Sena won 62 seats. The Congress and the NCP bagged 42 and 41 seats, respectively. Both the Congress and NCP have been badly hit by exodus. Senior NCP leader Udayanraje Bhosale, a descendant of warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, quit his Lok Sabha membership to join the BJP.

Debt Market Outlook: Term spreads remain attractive

What went by: Bonds continued their positive run with the 10-year bond yield falling by 51 basis points (bps) while the 10-year 'AAA' and 10-year SDL eased by 33 bps on the decision of the government to stick to fiscal consolidation in their FY20 budget, announcement of sovereign bond (which could help balance domestic demand/supply gap) and positive global cues. The curve bull flattened with the 10-year to 5-year G-Sec spread reduced to 6.5 bps from 15 bps on an average in June as market participants started pricing in more easing.

The FY20 Budget surprised the market by lowering the fiscal deficit target to 3.3 per cent of GDP vis-a-vis the indicated level of 3.4 per cent presented earlier in the interim budget in February 2019. In the final budget, FY20 estimates (versus the interim budget) were cut by Rs 51,000 crore for income tax and Rs 98,000 crore for total GST collections. However, no overall expenditure cuts or higher borrowing is planned. This reduction in revenue estimates is planned to be met by higher customs (Rs 11,000 crore), excise duties (Rs 40,000 crore), non-tax revenues (Rs 41,000 crore from higher RBI and nationalised bank dividends, possible spectrum auctions, among others) and higher non-debt capital receipts (Rs 17,000 crore from disinvestments, among others).

Furthermore, the government announced its decision to start raising a part of its gross borrowing programme in external markets in external currencies. The Finance Secretary has said first bond may take 3-5 months and that they will target borrowing 10-15 per cent of gross borrowing offshore. India's merchandise trade deficit was broadly flat month-on-month (m/m) at \$15.3 billion in June (May was at \$15.4 billion). Exports fell 9.7 per cent year-on-year (y/y) in June, the weakest print since January 2016 (May was at +3.9 per cent), and imports declined 9.1 per cent (May was at +4.3 per cent), a 31-month low. Industrial production growth for May 2019 saw a moderation in growth to 3.1 per cent from 4.3 per cent a month back and 3.8 per cent, a year ago. Economic activity-wise classification show that this moderation was largely due to the manufacturing sector which grew by 2.5 per cent.

On the user based classification, strong performance came from consumer non-durables at 7.7 per cent and infra and construction at 5.5 per cent. Growth for capital and intermediate goods remained weak at 0.8 per cent and 0.6 per cent, respectively. June wholesale, or WPI, inflation further moderated sharply to 2.02 per cent (consensus: 2.25 per cent) as against 2.45 per cent in May owing to favourable base effects and moderation in manufacturing, fuel and power inflation. In a widely expected move, the US Federal Reserve cut interest rates by 25 bps to a new range of 2.00-2.25 per cent. The Fed also announced plans to end the reduction of its \$3.8 trillion asset portfolio, effective August 1, two months earlier than previously expected. In the press conference post the meet, the Fed chair described the cut as a mid-cycle "insurance" cut in order to make sure that the recovery prolongs in the face of global and trade related headwinds and also to give support to inflation. In particular, he was focused on the cumulative change in financial conditions since early in the year during which the Fed has turned from being on a hiking cycle, to being on a patient hold, to finally cutting rates by 25 bps.

Outlook:

The RBI's MPC in its August policy cut the repo rate by 35 bps to 5.40 per cent, while maintaining the policy stance as accommodative. The move to cut was decided with the 35 bps to 25 bps vote counting as 4:2. It may be recalled that RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had earlier floated the idea of challenging the conventional 25 bps moves, with unconventional steps like this one possibly reaffirming the signalling effect of policy direction as well. The policy is largely in line with the dovish end of expectations. There is no decision with respect to the working group on liquidity management framework. However, the Governor did note the very large surpluses in the system today and reaffirmed the commitment to provide abundant liquidity. Thus, the implementation basis to the recommendations of the framework is very likely to be consistent with the current market view that the RBI has already moved to targeting surplus liquidity.

The BC is the authority of social mobilization

- Former KUDA Chairman Sangam Reddy Sundar Raj Yadav
- Succeed the BC Political War Council

Warangal, 31 January : Former KUDA Chairman Sangam Reddy Sundar Raj Yadav has called for the success of the BC Political War Bharati Convention on February 2 at the Hanmakonda Arts College grounds, as part of the social mobilization of BCs. Speaking at a press conference on Friday at the Hanumakonda Arts College grounds, he said that the majority of BCs are dominated by minorities as minorities. He said the BC politicians in all parties are preparing for a collective struggle. He demanded the Congress

government to implement the 42 per cent reservation in the Kamareddy Declaration not only to the local bodies but also for the assembly parliamentary seats. He demanded the abolition of this WS Pazio 10 per cent of the top tier. He demanded the government to immediately declare fee reimbursement to students, as well as the implementation of the BC Atrocity Act in the same manner as the SC ST Atrocity. He criticized the government for allocating budget corporations for BCs with a population of 2 crore. He said that

the House of BCs will be the same caste as a single caste through this House. Secunderabad Gymkhana Ground is preparing to form a huge open house with 15 lakh people in the House. DMK MP Wilson, RJD Lal Prasad Yadav's daughter, BC leaders R Krishnaiah, film actor Suman and Tinmar Mallanna are participating in the meeting on the 2nd. The meeting was attended by BC relatives Kishore Yadagiri Goud Puli Rajinikanth Shyam Malleshmani Naresh Srinivas Goud Aruna Suresnder Sivashankar Rajagopal.



KCR has ruined real estate: Jagga Reddy

► KCR has become the seasonal opposition leader

Hyderabad: 31, January (Khaja Moinoddin): Jagga Reddy congress committee working president criticized former cm telangana. He said that KCR has destroyed real estate before the elections KCR asked your Revanth to come to the assembly. The opposition leader should hold a meeting. But here it is the reverse. He is asking every party leader to come to the assembly. The speaker is also asking the same. You are in a

farmhouse, you don't come out of your house whoever comes... should come to your house. You don't come to the assembly... should you bring the assembly to your house? If KCR hits, it will not be normal. What will you hit? The strength in words..is not in hands. Our workers get angry and say oops and it will be blown away. Are you insulting him by saying that people have hopes for gold..? They have insulted the people of Telanga-

na.... Apologize to the people. Are the people that degraded..KCR has become the seasonal opposition leader. If KCR holds a meeting with five lakh people. Is our CM Revanth less. We will hold a meeting with five lakh and one thousand people, If Rahul Gandhi holds a meeting, I will hold it, only if we hold a meeting with five lakh people...Become a Mogul as the opposition leader. If we hold a meeting with more people than you, we will



make the Moguls feel like Moguls.

A Milestone in Telangana's Healthcare : Dr Kota Neelima

Hyderabad: Telangana is set to witness a major transformation in its healthcare infrastructure with the construction of a state-of-the-art 2,000-bed hospital. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy performed the groundbreaking ceremony and laid the foundation stone today, marking a significant step toward expanding healthcare services for the people of Telangana.

The new hospital, replacing the dilapidated Osmania General Hospital, will be constructed at Gosha Mahal Stadium, covering an area of 32 lakh square inches. Designed to meet modern standards set by the National Medical Commission (NMC) and Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS), the facility will feature a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP), an advanced biomedical waste management system, and high-tech collection facilities. Dr. Kota Neelima, Congress in-charge of Sanathnagar, hailed this development as a revolutionary step in healthcare. "This hospital will be a leader in medical expertise, patient care, and sustainability. The Congress party is committed to providing advanced medical care to every citizen of Telangana, re-



gardless of economic status, class, or religion," she stated. Dr. Neelima further elaborated on the hospital's cutting-edge facilities, including 29 major and 12 minor operation theaters, surgery units, robotic surgery capabilities, and a specialized transplant theater, all equipped with the latest surgical technology. She emphasized that Congress is delivering on its commitment to public health through concrete actions, unlike the previous administration. This hospital is expected to set a new benchmark in healthcare delivery, ensuring quality medical services for Hyderabad and Telangana's residents.

Sammakka Sarakka Provide all facilities to the devotees coming to the fair

Bhadradri Kothagudem Bureau ; Tribals are the most B. ITDA project officer that the concerned authorities should take special care to provide all kinds of accommodation facilities till the end of the fair without causing any inconvenience to the devotees who come from far away places to attend the Sammakka Sarakka fair. Rahul said. In his chamber on Friday, he directed the officials to make all the arrangements as the tribals of the village have asked to provide facilities to the families of special priests and devotees who will come for the Sammakka Sarakka fair, which is traditionally celebrated by tribals in Chirumallo next month in Karakagudem mandal. MPDO and Gram Panchayat to provide electricity facility, sanitation,

fresh water facility, tents for devotees to rest, temporary camp for women to change clothes from Sammakka Sarakka Gaddela where the fair is held. The EORWS officials should see to it that according to their instructions, the Devasthanam Committee should make proper arrangements for flooring and repairs, painting, ITDA DEE and AE around the stalls, and also the police department should see to it that the parking place & provision are made.

He said that medical camps should be set up on behalf of the medical department, temporary toilets and shower baths for baths should be fully surveyed by the RWS officials and arrangements should be made according to the devotees. He said that sanitation

► Rahul is the PO of ITDA



and fresh water facility should be made very strict and all kinds of medicines should be made available on behalf of the medical department. He said that all the officials should coordinate and work

hard to make this week-long fair a success. Tasildar Nagaprasad, MPDO Devara Prasad, Electricity Department AD Venu, DE Madhukar, AE Yogesh and others participated in this programme.

PIC TALK

Sangareddy District January 31 : A great honor for 40 years of continuous service in the town of Patancheru Former sarpanch of Patancheru honored Ramulu Sattiah, who retired as a GHMC worker from the Gram Panchayat. MDR Foundation Chairman Devender Rajugaru, Prithviraj participated.

Sattiah, a tractor driver who has served the town of Patancheru for the last 40 years and Ramulu, who has rendered exemplary service in the irrigation department, were felicitated on the occasion of their retirement.

They were felicitated with a shawl at the MDR Foundation office on the occasion of their dedicated service during the last sarpanch of Patancheru town Devender Raju and appreciated their services. On this occasion, they are happy with family, He wished to live a healthy retirement life.



He said that their services in the development of Patancheru town were unforgettable. As a tractor driver, Sattiah worked continuously in Gram Panchayat and later GHMC and played a vital role in urban cleanliness and maintenance of infrastructure. Ramulu, while work-

ing in the Irrigation Department, paid special attention to providing continuous water to the people of the town. He said that whenever there was a water problem anywhere in the town, they would solve it quickly. He praised that the then Gram Panchayat and GHMC em-

ployees were taking care of the town as much as a mother takes care of her children with immense dedication to public service. In recognition of their services, it is said that employees with service orientation are always recognized. Wished for a peaceful post-retirement life.

Firasath Baqri under House Arrest for protest against Osmania General Hospital



Firasath Ali Baqri BJP Senior Leaders & Former Spokesperson Under House Arrest By Mirchowk Police to Prevent March for Bhoomi Pooja Ceremony - Laid Foundation Stone Of The New Osmania General Hospital Building At Goshamahhal By Chief Minister of Telangana Shri A Revanth Reddy Ji. Mir Firasath

Ali Baqri Former State Spokesperson said urged the government to build the hospital in the area behind the existing old Osmania General Hospital Afzal Gunj. The protest created a tense atmosphere, prompting heavy police deployment at the Goshamahhal Stadium to ensure the Bhoomi Pooja without disruption.

Declare economic emergency in Telangana: BJP

Hyderabad, Jan.31 (NSS): Former MLA and BJP Telangana State vice-president N.V.S.S. Prabhakar today urged Governor of the State to declare economic emergency in the State by keeping in view of financial crisis. He said even though Telangana was formed as a rich State, the BRS party State government failed in governance in the last 10 years and pushed the State into a debt trap. "The State's financial situation has worsened due to the wrong financial decisions taken by the Congress government now. Misappropriation of expenses, political appointments and advertisements with

public money worth crores of rupees led to this situation. In view of the current economic situation, there is an urgent need to declare a financial emergency in the State. We appeal to the Governor to take note of the State's financial situation and declare an economic emergency immediately," he said. He also said the matter would be taken up with the Union Finance Minister by their party. He claimed that the State government was unable to pay salaries to the employees as its coffers were running out of money and the State reached beyond the FRBM limit indicating the alarm bells.

People are facing serious problems with Ash lorries

- Transporting ash with heavy loads is the cause of public illness and accidents
- Criticisms that the concerned department is acting indifferently as if they do not see it

Peddapalli, Jan 31: Passengers, people, motorists and people living in the houses on both sides of the road are facing severe problems due to overloaded NTPC ash moving trucks in Peddapalli district. Many accidents happen all the time. Without following the minimum norms, as ash is being transported in overloaded lorries, the ash in the lorries is scattered behind the lorry in the wind and heaps fall on the road as vehicles pass over it, suddenly the ash dust rises and accidents occur. Motorists, commuters as well as those living in the houses on both sides of the road are facing severe difficulties. From

the NTPC ash pond, ash is regularly transported to Karimnagar, Hyderabad, Jagityala Warangal, Khammam, Nalgonda and other towns in hundreds of trucks with overload. There are no accusations that the relevant authorities are acting indifferently as if they are not seeing the lorries that are transporting ash with overloaded load. People are getting sick due to the speed of the lorries due to the overloaded lorries, the ash blown by the wind and inhaling it into the eyes and noses of those walking on the road. Motorists and passengers coming behind the lorries are confused and accidents are happening. Ash



handling with heavy loads has become home to public health and accidents. People want the transport department authorities to take appropriate action against the trucks carrying ash with overload.

Rajeev Shukla, Virat Kohli meet Vice President Dhankhar

► BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla met Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday. Star batter Virat Kohli was also present during the meeting.



New Delhi, Jan 31 (GNS) BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla met Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday. Star batter Virat Kohli was also present during the meeting. "Lovely to meet honourable Vice President of India Shri Dhankharji. Glad to have the company of @imVkohli", Shukla said in a post on X. Virat Kohli is taking part in the Group D Ranji

Trophy match between Delhi and Railways. Virat has faced a decline in form in recent matches. In 39 Test matches since the start of 2020, he has scored just 2,028 runs at an average of 30.72, with three centuries and nine fifties to show. His best score has been 186. Virat ended the ICC World Test

Championship 2023-25 cycle with 751 runs in 14 matches and 25 innings at an average of 32.65, with two centuries and three fifties. His best score was 121. In 10 Tests last year, he scored just 417 runs at an average of 24.52 with just one century and fifty, to conclude a disappointing year. The 36-year-old's

last appearance in Ranji was back in November 2012 against Uttar Pradesh, in which he was dismissed for 14 and 42 runs in both innings by pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar. Overall, in his Ranji career, Virat has scored 1,573 runs at an average of 50.77, with five centuries and six fifties in 23 matches.

Virat Kohli's first Ranji Trophy innings in 13 years lasts 15 balls



New Delhi, Jan 31 (GNS) Virat Kohli's first Ranji Trophy innings in 13 years lasted all of 15 balls, extending his lean run and fueling the raging debate over his form. For the 5000-odd crowd that assembled here to watch Kohli (6 off 15 balls), it was fun while it lasted but when he had his off-stump uprooted by Railways pacer Himanshu Sangwan in the 28th over of Delhi's first innings, a majority of them took no time to exit the

Arun Jaitley Stadium. The frequent chants of 'RCB, RCB' and 'Kohli, Kohli' dried up as the superstar took the long walk back to the dressing room, giving Railway employee Sangwan the most prized scalp of his career. Ahead of his first domestic red-ball appearance since November 2012, Kohli had trained with former India coach Sanjay Bangar to iron out flaws in his batting that crept up on the tour of Australia.

Sultan of Johor cup: India claim bronze; defeat New Zealand 3-2 in shootout

Malaysia, Jan 31 (GNS) Goalkeeper Bikramjit Singh showcased nerves of steel, making three crucial saves as the India outwitted New Zealand 3-2 in a thrilling shootout to secure the bronze medal at the Sultan of Johor Cup junior men's hockey tournament here on Saturday.

After the match ended in a 2-2 stalemate in regulation time, strikers Gurjot Singh, Manmeet Singh, and Sourabh Anand Kushwaha converted their penalties in the tense shootout, while Bikramjit made three outstanding saves to secure victory against New Zealand.

Earlier in regulation time, Dilraj Singh (11') and Manmeet Singh (20') had given India a roaring start but New Zealand thwarted India's plans in the final quarter with goals by Owen Brown (51') and Jonty Elmes (57'). India got off the blocks with tactful and com-

pact attack. Swift, short passes and skillful dribbling helped them find success as early as in the 11th minute when Dilraj scored from an assist made by Mukesh Toppo to put India ahead 1-0.

India controlled the game in the second quarter too. Their defence was on point and stalled New Zealand forwards from creating scoring opportunities.

However, a defensive error in the 19th minute saw India concede a PC. But the defence line did well to block back-to-back PCs.

In the following minute, a brilliant display of stickwork and combination between Manmeet, Anmol Ekka and Mukesh saw them score stupendous field goal.

The 2-0 lead in the 20th minute put India in good stead. Riding on a good start, India created a flurry of chances before the second hooter but they could not



extend the lead. While the third quarter was goalless, New Zealand bounced back in the fourth

quarter scoring two crucial goals that put India's hopes of winning the bronze in a limbo.

Pan Pacific Open: Kenin advances to final

Tokyo, Jan 31 (GNS) Former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin has advanced to the final of the Pan Pacific Open with a 6-4, 6-4 win over ninth-seeded Katie Boulter on Saturday.

Kenin, who won the Australian Open in 2020 and was a French Open finalist the same year, broke the British player's serve in the seventh game of the second set and the American served out to win the match for her best tournament performance of the season.

Kenin will play No. 1 seed and Paris Olympic gold medalist Zheng Qinwen, who beat Diana Shnaider 7-6 (5), 6-3 in the other semifinal. The 25-year-old Kenin was ranked as high as No. 4 early in 2020, but a series of injuries, including ankle and quadriceps ailments, has seen her WTA ranking drop to its current 155. Boulter, ranked 33rd, had not lost a



set during the Tokyo hard-court tournament. Kenin beat Boulter in the only other time they have played but it was when Boulter retired with an injury in the second set while trailing 4-1 to Kenin after losing the first set in Acapulco in 2019.

Manika Batra's WTT Champions campaign ends after defeat to China's Tianyi in quarters

New Delhi, Jan 31 (GNS) Star paddler Manika Batra crashed out of the WTT Champions after a quarterfinal straight game defeat against China's Qian Tianyi in Montpellier, France. The Indian, a world No. 30, went down to Tianyi 8-11, 8-11, 10-12 in just 25 minutes on Saturday night.

Batra, a multiple Commonwealth Games medallist, fought well in all three games, but her Chinese opponent played the crunch points better to emerge the winner. The first Indian to enter the WTT quarterfinals, Batra had shocked world number

14 Bernadette Szocs of Romania 11-9, 6-11, 13-11, 11-9 on Friday to enter the last eight.

Tianyi too had caused an upset in the pre-quarterfinals, stunning world No. 4 compatriot and the top seed here Yidi Wang 11-7, 11-9, 13-11.

Tianyi will now face third seed Japanese Miwa Harimoto in the semifinals on Sunday. Sreeja Akula, the other Indian competitor in the WTT and world No. 25, had made a first-round exit after a defeat to world number 13 Adriana Diaz of Puerto Rico 6-11, 11-7, 11-1, 8-11, 11-8.



England, Jan 31 (GNS) Manchester City's Erling Haaland scored an early goal to take the champions provisionally top of the Premier League with a 1-0 victory over lowly Southampton at Etihad Stadium on Saturday.

Pep Guardiola's team have 23 points after nine games, two ahead of Liverpool, who visit Arsenal on Sunday. Southampton are still without a win in their first season back in the top flight after a season away and sit second-bottom on one point.

Haaland had gone three Premier League games without a goal but ended that drought in the fifth minute on Saturday. Wrestling with defender Jan Bednarek, the Norwegian stabbed the ball into the roof of the net with a toe while falling onto his backside. Southampton had a terrific chance to level right before the break but Cameron Archer smashed his shot against the bar.

Premier League: Haaland early strike helps Man City win



Sports fraternity shocked after medal-yielding events excluded

New Delhi, Jan 31 (GNS) India's leading sportspersons and administrators expressed surprise and helplessness after the country's medal prospects took a hit with the exclusion of hockey, shooting, cricket, badminton and wrestling from the roster of a heavily scaled-down 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

Relocated to the Scottish capital after Victoria's withdrawal as host due to an increase in projected costs, the Games will feature just 10 events, which is nine less than the previous edition held in 2022 in Birmingham. Table tennis, squash and archery are also not part of what will

be a massively pruned down Games. The organisers have said having lesser events at just four venues will ensure that the showpiece is able to manage the financial and operational risks involved.

But the roster has stunned the Indian sports fraternity. "It's a shocking news and very disappointing but it's not in our hands," said Harmanpreet Singh, under whose captaincy the Indian men's hockey team won a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics in August. Table tennis great Sharath Kamal, who has won innumerable medals at Commonwealth Games over the last two decades,

understood the impact the games organisers' decision could have on the country's overall tally. "It is a pity that table tennis has been taken off the CWG programme but the organisers have informed they had very short notice as it moved from Melbourne to Glasgow.

One of the country's finest squash players, Dipika Pallikal expressed her disappointment when reached out for a reaction. "I think squash really deserves to be part of all the multi sport events and it's definitely a huge loss that our sport cannot be showcased at the CWG," she said. The news of hockey's



omission from the program did not go down well with the sport's

global governing body (FIH) as well as Hockey India. "Most of the

medal winning sports for India have been dropped.