

In major diplomatic victory, Indian lawyer elected to ILC

UNGA Returns Rajput By Record Vote

TNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi: In what the government described as a major diplomatic victory for India, 33-year-old Supreme Court lawyer and PhD student Aniruddha Rajput was elected to International Law Commission (ILC) by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) with a record number of votes. Established by UNGA, the Geneva-based ILC encourages promotion of international law and its codification. Rajput got 160 votes, topping the Asia-Pacific group in the election which was held through secret ballot.

"This is a real honour for me and I want to thank the ministry of external affairs



Aniruddha Rajput (L) with India's permanent representative to UN Syed Akbaruddin, just before the result was announced at UNGA on Thursday

(MEA), especially India's permanent representative to UN Syed Akbaruddin, for their support," Rajput told TOI.

Japan's Shinya Murase got the second highest number of votes in the Asia-Pacific group at 148, followed by Mahmoud Daifallah Hmoud of Jordan and Huikang Huang of China with 146 votes each, Korea's Ki Gab Park with 136 votes, Ali bin Fetais

Al-Marri of Qatar with 128 votes and Hong Thao Nguyen of Vietnam with 120 votes.

This was the first time that the MEA did not nominate anybody from its pool of lawyers for the membership and instead decided to go with an outsider.

An alumnus of the London School of Economics and Political Science, Rajput was a member of an expert group

appointed by the Law Commission of India to study and comment upon the Model Bilateral Investment Treaty 2015 of India, according to his profile submitted to the UN. He has written several books, chapters, articles, conference papers on diverse legal subjects.

The newly elected members will serve five-year terms of office with the Geneva-based body beginning January 2017. The members have been elected from five geographical groupings of African, Asia-Pacific, Eastern European, Latin American and Caribbean and Western European states.

While some have said that Rajput's links with RSS might have had a role in his nomination, which is denied by MEA, he himself said, "International relations is important but member-states of the UN have to vote for the candidate who has recognised competence in international law and the number speaks for itself."

Kerala rape: CPM names survivor

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram: CPM suspended on Friday two members suspected to be involved in the Wadakkanchery gangrape case, but triggered another controversy by revealing the identity of the survivor and her husband.

The two members were identified as Wadakkanchery municipal council member P N Jayanthan and Bineesh. CPM's Thrissur district secretary K Radhakrishnan announced the decision after a meeting of the district secretariat in the afternoon. However, the party has asked Jayanthan to continue in the council. It was at the press conference that Radhakrishnan revealed the names of the survivor and her husband. Despite reporters pointing out that it was illegal to identify a rape survivor, he remained defiant. "If the name of the accused can be revealed, the complainant can be identified too," he said, adding that the couple had "ignored their children for years".

Prime suspect Jayanthan, in a Facebook post, said dubbing artist Bhagyalekshmi and actor-activist T Parvathi could have sought his version before conducting a news conference with the survivor on Thursday. The alleged assault came to light through an FB post by Bhagyalekshmy on Wednesday.

Move to buy Japanese planes gathers steam

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New Delhi: India has revived the stalled project to acquire a dozen Japanese US-2i amphibious aircraft, worth around Rs 10,000 crore, ahead of PM Narendra Modi's visit to Tokyo on November 11-12 to further cement the bilateral strategic partnership.

While the inking of a civil nuclear cooperation agreement is likely to be the centrepiece of the meeting between Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe, sources say the declaration of India's intention to acquire the US-2i aircraft is also going to be a major highlight of the summit.

The US-2i project, with six of the huge amphibious planes each for the Navy and Coast Guard, is also slated to be taken up by the defence acquisitions council (DAC) meeting on Monday. "The DAC will take up the... inking of a bilateral MoU between the two countries for the procurement of the 12 aircraft," said a source.

Powered by four big turbo-propellers, the US-2i is capable of short take-offs from land as well as water. While basically meant for search and rescue operations, the US-2i can also rapidly transport 30 combat-ready soldiers to "hot zones" in an emergency. Though the Navy has



TIGHTER EMBRACE WITH EYE ON CHINA

- ▶ With an assertive China in Asia-Pacific, backed by its rapid military modernisation, India and Japan are stepping up bilateral strategic ties
- ▶ Military-to-military ties also being expanded, with a focus on maritime security, regular exercises & top-level meetings
- ▶ Japan made regular participant in the annual Malabar naval drill of India & US, which has irked China
- ▶ Decision to enhance discussions on cooperation in defence equipment and technology

US-2i Amphibious Aircraft

- ▶ India to acquire 12 aircraft for around Rs 10,000 crore
- ▶ Can operate from rough seas with short take-off and landing capability
- ▶ Designed for air-search and rescue ops, can also rapidly transport 30 combat-ready soldiers to "hot zones"
- Height:** 9.8 metre
- Wing Span:** 33.2 metre
- Cruising speed:** 480 kmph
- Range:** Over 4,500 km
- Take-off weight:** 43-47 tonne

much more critical operational requirements ranging from submarines to multi-role helicopters, the proposed US-2i deal is intended to send a strong signal to an increasingly belligerent China in the Asia-Pacific region.

Both India and Japan are wary of the China's aggressive territorial claims. India has till now ruled out joining the quadrilateral security dialogue proposed by the US, with Japan and Australia being the other members. But Japan since 2014 has become a regular participant of the annual Malabar naval exercise between India and the US, which has irked China.

Negotiations for the US-2i aircraft deal, which will be the first-ever purchase of military equipment from Japan since it ended its five-decade-old self-imposed embargo to export military hardware, have been underway since 2013 but were stalled on the high costs involved.

Japan has now agreed to somewhat reduce the price, which was earlier pegged at \$1.6 billion or Rs 10,720 crore for the 12 aircraft, to clinch the deal and expand its strategic partnership with India.

Bill Gates to address top policymakers

New Delhi: Microsoft founder Bill Gates is likely to address India's top policy makers as part of Niti Aayog's lecture series on "Transforming India" on November 16.



Gates' talk on "Technology as an Agent of Change" will be the second such lecture organised by the government's premium think tank. The first was given by Singapore's deputy prime minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam in August.

The government has planned a full house for the lecture by the technology czar and philanthropist as nearly 1,400 delegates, including all Cabinet ministers, senior government officials and state representatives are expected to attend the session. The address will be followed by closed door panel discussion and brainstorming session as was scheduled during Shanmugaratnam's talk on "Fulfilling India's Potential in the Global Economy".

The lecture by Gates has been organised considering the government's focus on increasing use of technology in governance to check corruption and improve public delivery system through its direct benefit transfer scheme and using Aadhaar numbers. "The idea is to listen and discuss with Microsoft founder... at a time the government's focus is on Digital India," said an official.

SIMI episode: MP govt ordered 5 probes in 5 days

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bhopal: After the jailbreak on Diwali night and "encounter" of eight SIMI suspects on Monday, the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government has so far announced five different probes into the incident — the latest being the judicial inquiry headed by a retired high court Justice S K Pandey.



Immediately after the jailbreak, chief minister Chouhan announced the first investigation by former DGP Nandan Dubey on security lapses in the high-security prison on Monday morning. By evening, Chouhan announced a second investigation — this time by National Investigating Agency (NIA).

Talking to reporters, the chief minister had said that since SIMI and terrorism are issues affecting the nation and not just limited to Madhya Pradesh, NIA would conduct its own investigation.

By this time, opposition Congress with senior functionaries like Digvijaya Singh and Kamal Nath began questioning the veracity of the encounter. On Tuesday morning, Congress began demanding an independent judicial probe into the encounter while home minister Bhupendra Singh

On Thursday night chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan ordered a judicial probe to be conducted by retired high court judge S K Pandey

remained in denial mode.

Bhupendra Singh categorically told reporters that only the jailbreak would be investigated and there was no need for a probe into the encounter. By then the combat video had gone viral and broadcast by news channels. The government was in a dilemma and there was another announcement by DGP Rishi Kumar Shukla who said, "It is required by law that the state CID will investigate the encounters for a fair probe." This was the third probe ordered.

Meanwhile, Leftists joined the clamour for a judicial probe. Congress threatened to take the matter

'80 Bhopal jail guards assigned to mantris, officers'

Amid questions being raised on the security at Bhopal Central Jail following the escape of eight SIMI prisoners, it has been learnt that 80 of the 160 jail guards have been assigned for the security of ministers and senior officials. This effectively means that security at the jail is halved, and lapses are bound to happen, sources added. Congress state president Arun Yadav said that this "... is proof of the lapse in security at the Bhopal jail".

to the Supreme Court. Senior CPM functionary Sitaram Yechury argued, "Judicial inquiry is required because all statements and facts are contradictory to each other. There are a lot of unanswered questions."

DGP Rishi Kumar Shukla then announced a fourth probe. He said a SIT (Special Investigation Team) would be constituted for a probe into the jailbreak and encounters.

Finally, on Thursday night the chief minister ordered a judicial probe. A state government release said the judicial probe would be conducted by retired high court judge S K Pandey. This

Youths drag dog with bike, kill it

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Pune: Five unidentified youngsters have been booked for tying a stray dog to a motorcycle by its neck, and dragging it over two kilometres. The animal died in the assault, which took place at Sus village here on Thursday.

Animal rights activist Anson Palakkal (29) said two witnesses had told him that the men had first beaten the dog unconscious with sticks near the gram panchayat office. Police suspect the assailants might be residents of Sus.

Diamond merchant takes 300 workers, families on paid trip

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Haridwar: Taking a leaf out of the book of some Chinese tycoons who have in the recent past been in the news for sending their entire staff on all-paid holidays, a Gujarat diamond merchant has brought his team of 300 people along with their family members totalling almost to 1,200 on a 10-day trip to Uttarakhand. The merchant, Govind Dholakia, who runs Surat and Mumbai-based Shree Ramkrishna Exports, has declared a 15-day holiday

at his offices and booked an AC special train at a reported cost of Rs 90 lakh to facilitate the travel of his workers. An employee of the organisation, who did not wish to be named, said that this was

SWACHH DRIVE

a "yearly outing" of all employees organised by Dholakia who is referred to as 'Kakaji' by his staff members. "Our employer treats us like his own family members and travels with us." Besides sightseeing, the

group also does a bit of social work during their holiday. On Thursday, they cleaned the Swargashram area in Rishikesh with the help of nagar panchayat members.

Manish Rajput, who is associated with the Swargashram Nagar panchayat, said that the group "cleaned an almost 500 metre-stretch from Ramjhoola to Ved Niketan Ashram on Thursday." While attempts to reach Dholakia remained futile, one of his staff members told TOI that he did not like to "publicise" these initiatives.

CIC pendency up from 13 to 22 months

PENDENCY-HIT STATES

The top 5 information commissions likely to take the longest to hear a plea, and the waiting time at the CIC (as on January 1, 2016)

Assam	30 years
West Bengal	11 yrs, 3 mths
Kerala	7 yrs, 4 mths
Odisha	2 yrs, 9 mths
Rajasthan	2 yrs & 3 mths
CIC	1 yr & 10 mths

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Despite an increase in the number of ICs in the Central Information Commission, pendency has increased from 13 months to 22 months.

A study of the performance of information commissioners is being carried out by the Research Assessment and Analysis Group and Satark Nagrik Sangathan.

The key findings don't bode well when it comes to implementing the RTI Act as matters have worsened since the last RTI study in 2014.

The waiting time in the Assam IC, which was two years eight months in 2014, has now shot up to 30 years. West Bengal has improved its pendency, cutting the waiting time down from 17 years 3 months to 11 years and 3 months. But Kerala fares badly, with the waiting time increasing to seven years four months from two years three months in 2014.

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