

NEET-PG 2024: SC seeks Centre's response on plea for fresh counselling

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought responses from the Centre, the National Medical Commission and others on a plea seeking fresh counselling of all India quota (AIQ) round 3 of NEET-PG 2024.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K Vinod Chandran issued notice on the plea for the responses and posted the hearing on February 7.

The petitioners, who are eligible for NEET-PG 2024 counselling, said round 3 of AIQ counselling for NEET-PG started before round 2 of counselling was concluded in certain states.

The plea, drawn by advocate Tanvi Dubey, said petitioners were aggrieved by the clash in the counselling schedule for AIQ and state quota. It said several candidates from the state quota who were otherwise ineligible to register for AIQ round 3, got a chance to register and block a seat in AIQ round 3.

The plea said when the state round 2 counselling opened, they had an option to choose between the best option and leave the AIQ seat if they were getting a better seat in the state round of counselling.

"This created a grave

prejudice to the petitioners and similarly placed candidates since they were deprived of the seats which were blocked by the candidates from the states whose round 2 did not commence earlier," the plea said.

It said the seats blocked by them were not available to the other candidates including the petitioners.

"If the AIQ round 3 would have been conducted after the state round 2 counselling for all states was concluded, a group of candidates would not have gotten an undue advantage of blocking a seat in AIQ round 3 and leaving it later

while participating in state round 2," it said.

The plea claimed the medical counselling committee conducting the AIQ round 3 counselling before the state round 2 was concluded led to blocking of seats by candidates from Madhya Pradesh where round 2 of the state counselling had not concluded by then.

It said blocking of seats led to a situation in which many meritorious eligible candidates end up losing the seat. The plea alleged the act of respondents was inconsistent with the schedule of NEET-PG counselling laid down by the apex court.

It said all the other states except Madhya Pradesh were done with round 2 counselling before the result of AIQ round 3 counselling.

"The act of depriving the candidates with the seat for which they are otherwise eligible is violative of their fundamental right guaranteed under Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution," it said.

The plea sought directions to the medical counselling committee to cancel the AIQ round 3 of NEET-PG 2024 counselling and to conduct it afresh in view of the anomalies in the counselling process.

Bomb threat to two Indore schools a hoax; FIR registered

PTI, INDORE: Two private schools in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city were evacuated after they received bomb threats through emails on Tuesday, which later turned out to be hoax, police said.

The police then registered two cases against unidentified persons for the bomb threats, they said.

Due to the bomb threats and the resulting search operations, an examination of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) being conducted in one of these schools was affected and a practical exam in another school was postponed, the police and school authorities said.

"Separate emails were received by the city's New Digamber Public School, located on Khandwa Road, and Indore Public School in Rau area on Tuesday



Security check at the NDPS International School after a bomb threat was received via email early morning

morning, threatening to blow up these educational institutions with RDX and a human bomb," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Vinod Kumar Meena told PTI.

businessday



An Israeli Arab agricultural worker harvest gundelia in a field in Kibbutz Ayelet HaShahar in the upper Galilee region of northern Israel, on Tuesday

Welspun New Energy inks pact with Odisha for Rs 13,500-cr clean energy projects

NEW DELHI: Welspun New Energy has signed a pact with the Odisha govt to invest Rs 13,500 cr for the development of two clean energy projects in the state. Welspun New Energy has committed investments worth Rs 13,500 crore to develop a 1,200 MW pumped hydro project and a 1,000 MW floating solar power project in Odisha, its parent firm Welspun World stated. These projects are expected to enhance the state's energy storage capacity, support the integration of renewable energy into the grid, and contribute to India's overall target of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, it added. "The projects, backed by our Rs 13,500 cr investment in green technologies, mark a key milestone in our mission to accelerate renewable energy adoption in the state, highlighting our unwavering commitment to innovation and sustainability," Kapil Maheshwari, Executive Director & CEO of Welspun New Energy, said.

| currency | | bullion | |
|----------------|--------|----------------|----------|
| US Dollar | 87.07 | Silver (Rs/Kg) | 95,735 |
| British Pound | 108.65 | Gold (Rs/10gm) | 83,649 |
| Euro | 90.38 | | |
| Russian Ruble | 00.87 | | |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 282.11 | | |
| Bahraini Dinar | 231.58 | | |
| Qatari Riyal | 23.92 | | |
| Emirati Dirham | 23.71 | | |
| Omani Rial | 226.19 | | |
| | | markets | |
| | | Sensex | 78583.81 |
| | | Nifty | 23739.25 |

voice of business

GST Council to decide on rates, number of slabs, soon: FM

PTI, NEW DELHI: The GST Council will soon take a decision on having fewer and lower rates as the review work is almost complete, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday.

GST RATIONALISATION

Currently, Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a four-tier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18 and 28%. Luxury and demerit goods are taxed at the highest bracket of 28%, while packed food and essential items are in the lowest 5% slab.

The Council, chaired by Sitharaman and comprising her state

counterparts, has set up a group of ministers (GoM) to suggest changes in GST rates as well as reduce slabs.

"To be fair to the GST and the ministers who are all in the council, the work on rationalising and simplifying GST rates has already commenced. In fact, it had commenced nearly three years ago," she said at a post budget event.

Sitharaman said later the scope was widened and now the work is almost complete.

Mentioning that she told ministers in the Council to have a more in-depth look at the rates since they relate to everyday items consumed by common people, the minister said it was important to ensure that an opportunity was

“It was also important that we don't lose an opportunity, that we can even bring down the number of rates, which is also the original intent that we wanted fewer rates and lower rates. So work has got to happen on that, and I hope the GST Council will decide on it soon

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not lost.

"For me, it was also important that we don't lose an opportunity, that we can even bring down the number of rates, which is also the original intent that we wanted fewer rates and lower rates. So work has got to happen on that, and I hope the GST Council will decide on it soon," Sitharaman said.

Days after presenting the Union Budget 2025-26 that also

provides significant income tax relief to the middle class, the minister asserted the country's economic fundamentals are strong and there is no structural slowdown.

Tax relief in the Budget is a reflection of the prime minister's commitment to the taxpayers, Sitharaman said and refuted speculations that the move was aimed at Delhi assembly elections.

She also told the gathering



that there is no proposal to "shut down" the old tax regime.

On a question related to capital expenditure, the minister further said the capex has not come down, in fact it has increased to Rs 11.21 lakh crore which is 4.3% of the GDP.

For fiscal 2025-26, the Budget proposed to spend Rs 11.21 lakh crore towards capital expenditure (capex), higher than Rs 10.18 lakh crore in the Revised Estimates for FY25. It was Rs 10 lakh crore in FY24, Rs 7.5 lakh crore in FY23, Rs 5.54 lakh crore in FY22 and Rs 4.39 lakh crore in FY21.

The Budget pegged a fiscal deficit of 4.4% of GDP for FY26 and lowered the target for FY25 by 10 basis points to 4.8% of GDP.

Budget non-inflationary, focuses on fiscal prudence: Fin Secy

Says monetary policy should work in tandem

PTI, NEW DELHI: Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Tuesday said the government has taken measures to lower fiscal deficit and delivered a non-inflationary Budget, and hoped that the RBI's monetary policy will work in tandem with fiscal policy to support growth.

He also said that although rupee depreciation increases inflation on imported inputs, it also adds to export competitiveness.

Pandey said that the government has bettered its fiscal deficit projections for the current fiscal as well as the next. The fiscal deficit for FY'25 has been pegged lower at 4.8% of GDP, lower than budgeted 4.9%, while for FY'26 the deficit is projected to be 4.4%, lower than what was given in the consolidation roadmap.

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“It is very important to be very clear that we (government) have to remain within a certain fiscal regime. We have, to that extent, aided the monetary authorities to say that if they (RBI) have to do what they have to do, we are supportive. The fiscal policy and monetary policy need to work in tandem not at cross purposes

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in a certain fiscal regime. We have, to that extent, aided the monetary authorities to say that if they (RBI) have to do what they have to do, we are supportive. The fiscal policy and monetary policy need to work in tandem not at cross purposes," Pandey said.

The Secretary said the economy would reap a lot more benefits with monetary easing and keeping inflation under control.

"Inflationary policies can really work only in the short-run in terms of pushing growth. If we have to have sustained growth, we need to have a good grip on

inflation. That's the balancing that we need..." Pandey said at an Assocham post-Budget interaction.

The monetary policy committee (MPC) of the RBI will begin its three-day meeting on February 5. The MPC will announce its policy decisions on February 7.

To a question on whether the Monetary Policy Committee will decide to cut policy rates, Pandey said "I think it's a call that MPC will take. They are seized of the situation. They will take a call."

Asked if depreciating rupee could lead to a concern on the inflation front, he

said: "there are other factors that need to be taken into consideration by the RBI. Of course, the depreciation also brings to some extent imported inflation, but it also adds to export competitiveness to products".

On Monday, the rupee plunged 49 paise to close at an all-time low of 87.11 against the US dollar. The rupee recovered 11 paise to close at 87.16 against US dollar on Tuesday, as the American currency index retreated from its elevated level after President Trump agreed to pause tariffs on Mexico and Canada.

"Rupee is in a free-float system, external things are working. The RBI is watching, we are watching," Pandey said.

With the economic growth slowing to 4-year low of 6.4% in current fiscal, as per NSO data, there is a growing clamour for a cut in benchmark policy rates.

India to evaluate OECD's global tax deal post US walkout: Fin Secy

PTI, NEW DELHI: India will evaluate the benefit of joining the OECD's global tax deal as the US deciding to withdraw from such a global pact has made it "impractical to implement", Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said.

US President Donald Trump on January 20 in a Presidential memorandum had said that the "Global Tax Deal have no force or effect within the United States", thus nullifying the progress made so far by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to bring 140 countries on the same platform to levy a minimum 15% tax on profits of multinational corporates.

To a question on what would be India's stand on the global tax pact, Pandey said the US exit has added a lot of uncertainty and if the US is not joining it then such a pact doesn't work out.

Pandey said the tax deal is a multilateral approach where the US is much inte-

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"We have not enacted any legislative measures. Some countries have already... If the US withdraws from this process, then I think we will have to evaluate what benefit it will have," Pandey said.

CLASSIFIED CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

TOURS & TRAVELS

Zion Tours- Holyland Pilgrimage- 16th March & 11th May 2025, Amazing Vietnam- 07th May 2025, Georgia- A Hidden Gem- 19th May 2025, Exotic Turkey- 27th April 2025. Contact: 7498023167/ 8208537106. Margao Office: 2739932, 7822969683Email: holyland@ziontours.net.in, www.ziontours.net.in

VEHICLES AVAILABLE

Hyundai Venue SX, automatic purchased on Sep 2023, 4000kms, blue colour, petrol engine for sale. Price: 14.5 lakhs, slightly negotiable. Tel: 8793896015.

Alto original model 2010 RTO passing done upto 2030. Very good condition. Contact 9011266892

VEHICLES WANTED

We buy all Car's & Bike's. Maruti, Toyota, Hyundai, Honda (Vintage Car's) etc, even accidental and scrap car's. Spot payment-8381027157

Wanted Fortuner, Bmw, Audi, Mercedes car not more than 10 years old whatsapp photos with model n year to 7972761466

Required Yezdi Roadking Classic 250 Bike for purchase old model. Immediate purchase Margao Goa. Contact: 9850436276

PTI, NEW DELHI: Activist short-seller Nathan Anderson, known for his high-profile campaigns against the likes of Adani Group, said the decision to shut his firm, Hindenburg

BANKING TRENDS

Research was not because of any legal or any other threat, but due to workload. And that he stands by all its reports including the one against Adani Group.

Anderson told PTI that Hindenburg's January 2023 report accusing Adani Group of "the largest con in corporate history" was a result of following "red flags" raised against the conglomerate in media reports.

Adani Group had repeatedly denied all allegations

in the report.

He termed as "goofy conspiracy" the attempts by some to link Hindenburg with alleged anti-India groups like OCCRP and George Soros, saying his outlet never commented on them as it followed the policy of not feeding into "silly conspiracy theories".

Anderson, who came to be known for meticulously detailed reports against companies he alleged were committing fraud, last month announced shutting down his forensic research firm nearly eight years after he founded it.

Asked why he chose to shut down Hindenburg when he could have stepped back and passed on the reins of the company to someone else, he said there is "no way to separate me from the brand."

“Hindenburg is basically synonymous with me. If it was a software application or a bicycle factory you can sell the application or the factory. But when it's research driven by me, you can't really just hand that off, and so I would not actually be 'done'. But I am happy to support the team if they want to launch a new brand, which I expect they will

— Nathan Anderson, Founder, Hindenburg Research

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He had spent much of the last eight years either in fights or preparing for the next fight. Many times dur-

ple of why I am happy to instead be enjoying more time with family, friends and good music," he said.

Hindenburg has said it is not under investigation by the US SEC over anonymous reports linking its founder to a hedge fund for preparing reports targeting companies.

Asked if he stood by Hindenburg's reports, particularly against the Adani group, Anderson said, "We 100% stand by all of our research findings."

Hindenburg had alleged that Adani Group had used a web of companies in tax havens to inflate its revenue and manipulate stock prices, even as debt piled up. The conglomerate vehemently denied all claims but the damning report at one point sheared over \$150 billion off its value, losses it eventually

ly recouped in over a year's time. This, as it slashed debt, pared share pledges and won new investors.

The issue was agitated before the Supreme Court which did not find any need for a probe other than the one markets regulator SEBI had initiated into certain issues prior to the Hindenburg report.

On some seeing the Hindenburg report as against India and India's growth story, Anderson said, "We have always believed in India's potential and view market transparency and strong corporate governance as key factors that can fuel India's growth story."

"We initially saw media articles outlining red flags, took a closer look, and just kept following the evidence," he said on why the Adani group was chosen.

THE MIRACLE PRAYER

Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked many favours. This time I ask you this special one (mention favour). Take it dear Heart of Jesus and place it within your heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will become your own favour not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three times for three days and your favour will be granted. Never been known to fail. Must promise publication of prayer.

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