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Ramani absolved of Akbar's defamation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Declaring that the right of reputation cannot be protected at the cost of right of life and dignity, a Delhi court on Wednesday threw out former Union Minister and editor MJ Akbar's criminal defamation suit against journalist Priya Ramani, who has accused him of sexual harassment.

Delivering the landmark judgment being hailed as a watershed moment for the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment, the court maintained that a woman has the right to put forward her grievances before any platform of her choice even after decades.

A woman cannot be punished for raising her voice against sexual abuse, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ravindra Kumar Pandey said as he dismissed Akbar's complaint and held that no charges were proved against Ramani.

The time has come for society to understand sexual abuse and harassment and their implications on victims, the judge said while acquitting the journalist. The court asked her to furnish a bail bond of ₹10,000 in case of an appeal.

It feels great to have the truth validated before the court, a beaming Ramani told reporters after the verdict.

"It feels amazing, truly



In this file photo, senior journalist Priya Ramani (front left) outside the Patiala House Court after getting bail in a defamation case filed by former Union Minister MJ Akbar in New Delhi

PTI
does. I feel vindicated on behalf of all the women who have ever spoken out against sexual harassment at the workplace. It was me the victim who had to stand up in the court as an accused," Ramani, who named Akbar in a tweet with reference to an article titled "To the Harvey Weinsteins of the World" she had written in Vogue India in 2017, added.

The tweet was on October 8, 2018, when the #MeToo movement was gathering pace. Seven days later, Akbar, a celebrated editor, filed a criminal complaint against her for allegedly defaming him by accusing him of sexual misconduct decades ago when he was a journalist.

Two days after that, on October 17, 2018, he resigned

as minister of state for External Affairs and denied all the allegations of sexual harassment levelled by several women.

Delivering a 91-page verdict in the keenly followed case, the court said it is shameful that incidents of crime and violence against women are happening in a country where epics such as the "Mahabharata" and "Ramayana" were written around the theme of respect for women.

"... the right of reputation cannot be protected at the cost of the right of life and dignity of woman as guaranteed in Constitution under article 21 and right of equality before law and equal protection of law as guaranteed under article 14 of the Constitution," it said.

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'Jab in open market likely by yr-end'

After 2nd dose, AIIMS Director says Covid shot completely safe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said that no clear-cut or final decision has been taken on the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines in the private market yet, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Director Dr Randeep Guleria on Wednesday said that the jabs might be available for masses by this year's end after the prime targeted people are covered and there is an equivalence of supply and demand in the market.

"Vaccine will be available in the open market only when prime targets — people to be vaccinated — are covered. And there has to be equivalence in supply and demand. Hopefully, there would be such a situation by year-end or before that. Then, there may be a likelihood

of vaccine to come to the open market," Dr Guleria said.

Sharing his experience of his past 28 days (a time duration for the second dose), Dr Guleria, said, "Today I took the second dose of Covaxin vaccine and I haven't found any side effect from the first dose.

"I didn't face any difficulty. I would urge people not to fear the vaccine and it is totally safe. People should come out and take the vaccine. This is essential if we want to come out of the pandemic."

He highlighted that pandemic is still not over and India is in a good position but people should not have vaccine hesitancy and get inoculated.

"Right now our situation is fine and many might believe that in India pandemic case is less but I would say this is our window of opportunity to get the vaccine as the pandemic is



AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria receives the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine at AIIMS in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI
still not over and the situation can change anytime. As we have seen in Brazil, Europe, South Africa and the United Kingdom lockdown has been imposed again as the cases spiked. We should maintain the present situation in the country as it is necessary," the AIIMS Director added.

On Monday, the Union

Health Minister said that one must appreciate that the vaccines are approved under Emergency Use Authorisations (EUA). "During the course of EUA, it is the responsibility of the Government to keep things totally under control. This is the reason vaccines are still not available in the open market," he added.

New SOP for international arrivals from February 23

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Wednesday released an updated standard operating procedure (SOP) for international passengers arriving in India after cases of the South Africa and Brazil variants of the Covid-18 virus were detected.

The Ministry in its updated SOP said the guidelines will supersede the one issued since August 2, 2020 and will come into effect from 23.59 hours on February 22.

There are fresh guidelines for all international travellers coming/transiting through flights originating from the UK, Europe and West Asia.

Continued on Page 2

India announces gift of 2L Covid doses for UN peacekeepers

United Nations: India, hailed as the pharmacy of the world, on Wednesday announced a gift of 2,00,000 Covid-19 doses for UN peacekeepers.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made the announcement at the UN Security Council open debate on the implementation of resolution 2532 (2020) on the cessation of hostilities in the context of the

Covid-19 pandemic.

"Keeping in mind the UN Peacekeepers who operate in such difficult circumstances, we would like to announce today a gift of 2,00,000 doses for them," Jaishankar told the UN Security Council in a virtual address. Quoting the Bhagvad Gita, Jaishankar said, "Do your work with the welfare of others always in mind."

CAPSULE

BENGAL MIN HURT IN BOMB ATTACK

Baharampur: West Bengal Minister Jakir Hossain was seriously injured after unidentified attackers hurled bombs at him in Nimtita railway station in Murshidabad district on Wednesday night, police said. At least two other persons who were with him were also injured in the incident. Hossain, the minister of state for labour, was waiting at platform no 2 of the station to catch a train to Kolkata at around 10 pm when he was attacked, a senior police officer of West Bengal Police told PTI.

INDIA ASKS OPEC TO EASE OUTPUT CUTS

New Delhi: India, the world's third-biggest oil consumer, on Wednesday urged Saudi Arabia and other global oil producers to ease production cuts, saying rising international oil prices are hurting economic recovery and demand.

INDIA IS BRIMMING WITH CONFIDENCE: PM

Mumbai: India is brimming with confidence, and the events on the borders and Government's decision to liberalise geospatial data are representative of the same, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday.

24 foreign envoys visit J&K to see grassroots democracy

To take stock of ground situation in Union Territory

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A delegation of foreign diplomats from 24 countries on Wednesday arrived on a two-day visit to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir to take stock of the ground situation and assess how democratic institutions at the grassroots level were working in the region after the revocation of its special status in August 2019.

On their arrival by a special flight in Srinagar, the delegation was accorded a red carpet welcome amid heightened security arrangements.

The Modi Government organised similar visits first in October 2019 and the second in January 2020.

Envoys of Chile, Brazil, Cuba, Bolivia, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, EU, Belgium, Spain,



Foreign envoys during their visit to the Hazratbal in Srinagar on Wednesday

Sweden, Italy, Bangladesh, Malawi, Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, Malaysia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are part of the visiting delegation.

Incidentally, parts of Srinagar witnessed shutdown even in the absence of any formal shutdown call by any group or political party.

Soon after their arrival in Srinagar the foreign diplomats visited Magam in the central Kashmir district of Budgam to witness "Block Diwas", a public outreach initiative organised every week by the local administrations in Jammu & Kashmir.

At the venue they were briefed on Panchayati Raj and grievance redressal through "Back to villages" programme, when administration reaches the doorstep of people.

"The visit provided the envoys an opportunity to interact and hear from the public and their local level people's representatives on functioning and empowerment of grassroots democratic institutions, devolution of power, developmental activities among others," official sources present at the venue said.

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Nursery admissions to begin in Delhi today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The process for nursery admissions in schools across Delhi will begin from Thursday and the application window will close on March 4. The Directorate of Education last week notified the admission schedule, bringing respite for anxious parents who have been waiting for the notification for over two months.

As per the notified schedule, the first list of selected children will be displayed on March 20, followed by second list on March 25 and subsequent list for admission, if any, on March 27. The entire admission process will conclude on March 31.

Usually, nursery admissions in around 1,700 schools in the national capital begin in the last week of November. The DoE releases guidelines and schools are asked to furnish required information, following which the application process is rolled out in December. However, there has been no development on it in 2020.

Boost for Cong eyeing to win next Assembly polls in 2022

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Reaffirming the Congress' trust among Punjab voters, the ruling party on Wednesday captured six of the seven municipal corporations, the elections for which were held amid the farmers' agitation, with the BJP finishing close to a complete wipeout.

The Congress won Bathinda, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, Abohar, Batala, and Pathankot corporations, besides 106 of the total 109 municipal councils or nagar panchayats that went for polls on Sunday, registering 71 per cent voter turnout.

In Moga Corporation, the Congress though secured the highest 20 seats, it failed to secure majority. The result for Mohali Municipal Corporation would be declared on Thursday as the State's poll panel had deferred the counting of votes for a day to conduct a repoll on two polling booths.

The election result has come as a boost for the Congress, which is also eyeing to win the Assembly elections due early next year, with Chief



Congress candidate Baljinder Kaur Rinki celebrates her win in the municipal election in Patiala district on Wednesday

Minister Capt Amarinder Singh terming it as a "foretaste" of 2022 Assembly elections.

Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar, elated over party's performance, maintained, "This victory has further increased the party's responsibility towards the State and its people, and party is initiating its campaign for next year Assembly polls."

Other Opposition parties — the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Aam Aadmi Party, and the BJP — failed to make a mark in the elections for the municipal

corporations. Independent candidates finished second by securing 20 per cent of the total seats. Of the more than 1,800 wards that went for poll, the SAD could secure just 252; 29 by BJP, 51 by AAP, and five by BSP.

The ruling party celebrated the victory in Bathinda, a known Akali citadel and SAD MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal's constituency. As the Congress won 43 wards and the SAD just seven, Punjab Finance Minister and Bathinda Urban MLA Manpreet Singh Badal said that Bathinda will now get its first Congress mayor in 53 years.

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Modi, Shah, Didi to raise political pitch in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal is set to witness high voltage political slugfest over the next few days with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah raising poll pitch in the election-bound State and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee planning to address counter-rallies.

Mamata will address her counter rallies at places where Central BJP leaders including the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and BJP national president JP Nadda will hold their meetings.

Accordingly Mamata will hold a rally at Chinsurah in Hooghly district a day after Modi addresses a rally on February 22. Whereas the



Chief Minister and her nephew and MP Abhishek Banerjee will hold simultaneous rallies at South 24 Parganas where Shah will hold rallies on Friday.

Shah will reach Kolkata on Wednesday and flag off the BJP's fifth and final parivartan rath yatra from Namkhana in South 24 Parganas on Thursday. On the other hand, the PM is expected to hold a public rally in Hooghly on Wednesday 22 after inaugurating the 4-km extension of the city's north-south Metro corridor

from Noapara to Dakshineswar on February 22.

The fifth rath yatra will pass through the prestigious constituencies of Diamond Harbour and South Kolkata. The first one is represented by Abhishek Banerjee, while Mamata Banerjee is the MLA of Bhawanipur Assembly constituency in South Kolkata.

The rally is likely to proceed through Sirakol in Diamond Harbour where the convoy of BJP national president JP Nadda was attacked on December 10, 2020.

About 20 per cent booths of Bengal are violence prone, sources quoting the EC said, adding the poll panel is making an elaborate arrangement to ensure free and fare polls.

Continued on Page 2

Govt trying to destroy farm stir: SKM on 'rail roko' eve

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha on Wednesday accused the Centre of trying to "counter and destroy" the farmers' movement against the new agri laws and said it has appealed for peaceful protests during the "rail roko" agitation on February 18.

The statement of the umbrella body of protesting unions came a day after BJP chief JP Nadda and Home Minister Amit Shah met party functionaries, MPs and MLAs from Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in the wake of mahapanchayats being organised by farmer leaders.

During the meeting, the BJP leaders from the farm community of these States were asked to clear misconceptions about the laws, sources had said.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which had last week announced the rail blockade to press for its demand to repeal the legislations, said that it "appeals to everyone for a peaceful protest in the nationwide 'rail roko' programme on February 18".

Earlier, farmer unions had called a "chakka jam" on February 6 and a 'tractor parade' in Delhi on January 26, during which a section of protesters clashed with police, overturned vehicles while some hoisted a religious flag from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

"The (rail roko) programme will be organised from 12 pm to 4 pm in which support is expected from all over the country," the SKM said in a statement.

The SKM has taken note of the high-level meeting of the BJP president, Shah and other

ministers with elected party leaders from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan, it said.

Continued on Page 2

Man brandishing swords at Red Fort arrested

New Delhi: A 30-year-old man allegedly seen swinging swords with the intent of "motivating" and "energising" protesters at Red Fort during the violence on Republic Day has been arrested, police said on Wednesday.

Maninder Singh, who runs a sword training school near his home in Swaroop Nagar in northwest Delhi and works as a car AC mechanic, was arrested around 7.45 pm on Tuesday.

Air quality in Delhi poor, to improve from Feb 20

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Air quality in Delhi was recorded as poor with overall Air Quality Index (AQI) being measured at 321µgm-3 on the National Ambient Air Quality Index (NAAQI).

According to SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), the air quality is likely to improve from February 20.

The values of suspended particulate matters (SPMs) also recorded high on the SAFAR's index. Values of primary pollutants — particulate matters (PMs) 10 and 2.5 were 311 and 147 in microgram per cubic on Wednesday.

Meanwhile in short range air quality forecast, SAFAR said overall Delhi air quality is in the low-end of the very poor

category as forecast. Surface winds are low and forecasted to improve and change in direction to easterly. Better ventilation is likely to influence AQI positively. AQI is likely to stay in the lower end of very poor for the next two days. AQI is likely to further improve on February 20.

SAFAR updated air quality in Delhi University, Pusa Road, Lodhi Road, Mathura Road, IIT Delhi, Indira Gandhi International Airport (Terminal 3) and Ayanagar recorded air quality in the very poor category with an AQI of 332, 314, 330, 365, 323, 326 and 332 respectively.

AQI between 51 and 100 is considered as satisfactory or very good, 101-200 moderate, 201-300 poor, 300-400 considered as very poor. Whilw levels between 401-500 fall under the hazardous category.

MAHA UNVEILS CARAVAN POLICY TO BOOST TOURISM

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In an effort to attract tourists to Maharashtra in a big way, the Shiv Sena-led MVA Government on Wednesday approved its own Caravan policy to promote leisure travel and tourism in the State.

In line with the existing Caravan tourism policy of the Government of India, the Uddhav Thackeray dispensation unveiled its own Caravan policy - under which the state-

run Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) will allow private players to construct Caravan Parks, accommodations for tourists and operate camper vans in around the designated tourist destinations.

At a weekly Cabinet meeting presided over by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray here, the state Cabinet cleared the Caravan Tourism Policy which the state government intends to implement during the post-

Covid-19 period in an elaborate way.

State Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray, who is pushing the implementation of the policy, said: "Caravan Tourism will add to the experiences offered by the State government to the tourists".

The caravan and caravan park professionals shall be trained in marketing, hygiene, and management of the new niche sector through the Directorate of Tourism.

It may be recalled that the MTDC had released a draft Caravan Tourism Policy in September last year and sought suggestions and objections from various stake-holders.

Under the policy, the private players can set up Caravan parks by procuring the Caravans and creating other infrastructure for promoting tourism in the state. These parks will be allowed to be set up in the buffer zone of a forest, near a dam or foothills of

a fort. The policy will facilitate provision of caravans and camper vans to provide all the facilities to tourists in areas where permanent construction is prohibited. At the caravan parks, recreational vehicles will be allowed to be parked. These vehicles will have all the facilities including water refill, battery charging and disposal of sewage will be made available.

The caravans with single, twin axles, tent trailers, folding

or camper trailers would have a kitchen, bed facilities, toilet, a living area and other amenities to make the journey smooth.

Given it is known for its picturesque beaches, forts, mountain ranges, hill stations, forests, heritage sites, caves and dams, Maharashtra has huge potential to promote Caravan tourism.

The MTDC plans to promote caravan parks and caravans through Public-private

partnership (PPP). While the MTDC will provide land, the state holders will create various amenities.

To be promoted and marketed under MTDC's Mahabhraman scheme, the caravan parks will remain operational 24X7 during tourist seasons. They will be connected by fair-weather roads from main carriageways.

According to the policy, each park will come upon a minimum of 2.5-acre space

and will have a maximum of 20 parking bays. Further, such centres will have to adopt a tourism-friendly policy which also benefits the local community and is eco-friendly.

"The private players and operators interested in participating in Caravan Tourism will have to register themselves online with Directorate of Tourism and at www.maharashtratourism.gov.in respectively," a senior MTDC official said.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

India inches close to 1 crore mark, 92 lakh beneficiary so far

New Delhi: India is gradually inching towards one crore milestone with around 92 lakh beneficiaries being administered Covid-19 vaccine in the country so far since the launch of the nationwide vaccination drive kicked off from January 16, this year. Around 37 people have been hospitalized after the vaccination and 29 deaths have been reported so far. However, none of them were related to the jab.

In a media briefing in New Delhi on Wednesday, an Union Health Ministry official said that a total of 91,86,757 beneficiaries have been inoculated with Covid-19 vaccine doses. He said that on Wednesday 1,87,527 beneficiaries were inoculated.

Maximum number of

doses has been administered today in Karnataka followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

The official said that a total of 65,21,785 health care workers have been inoculated with COVID-19 vaccine doses. "More than 61,79,000 health care workers have been administered the first dose whereas more than 3,42,000 have been inoculated with the second dose so far while 26,64,972 frontline health workers have been administered the COVID-19 vaccine jab," he added.

In terms of first dose coverage, Bihar stands at top position with 84.7 per cent coverage followed by Tripura, Odisha, Lakshadweep and Gujarat. Around 37 people

have been hospitalized after the vaccination and 29 deaths have been reported so far. However, no new case of hospitalization and new death have been reported in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, India's total active caseload currently stands at 1.36 lakh (1,36,549) as on Wednesday, just 1.25 per cent of India's total positive cases.

Eighteen States/UTs have not reported any COVID-19 deaths in the last 24 hours. These are Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, J&K, Jharkhand, Puducherry, Himachal Pradesh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Ladakh, Assam, Andaman and Nagar Islands, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Dadar and Nagar Haveli. **PNS**

SC allows Centre to reply to panel chief's letter linking Chardham project to U'khand disaster

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed the Centre to respond to the "allegations" of the Chairman of committee on Chardham project linking broadening of the road to the recent flash floods on Dhauliganga river, which damaged Tapovan hydro project and caused loss of lives in Uttarakhand.

Venugopal said that the high powered committee chairperson Ravi Chopra has on his own written a letter to the government linking the disaster with the Chardham project. Taking note of his submission, a bench comprising Justices R F Nariman, Hemant Gupta and B R Gavai, said "You file response to it" and listed the matter for hearing after two weeks.

The strategic 900-km Chardham highway project aims to provide all-weather connectivity to four holy towns -- Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath -- in Uttarakhand. **PTI**

Chardham highway project on the widening of the roads up to Indo-China border in Uttarakhand.

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Govt trying...

"It is clear that instead of resolving the ongoing struggle and emands, the BJP is trying its best to counter and destroy it. SKM condemns this attitude of the ruling party," the SKM said. It demanded that the government resolve farmers' issues immediately.

"SKM avows that it will intensify the struggle and mobilise more farmers in its support," the outfit asserted.

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and his cabinet colleague Sanjeev Balyan were also among those who attended the meeting called by Shah and Nadda on Tuesday.

Farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, are protesting at Delhi's borders against the legislations since November 28 last year and demanding these be repealed.

Their agitation is against the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of

Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

In a mahapanchayat held in Bilari in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday, the "impressive" turnout of farmers in the public meeting indicated that the ongoing farmers' movement is gathering more strength, the SKM statement said.

The outfit also alleged an attack by an outfit on a "peaceful" protest that was being organised by All India Krishak Khet Majdoor Sangathan in Muzaffarpur.

The banners, placards and sound system of the protestors were destroyed by the attackers, SKM said and alleged "inaction" of the local police.

The farmers protests at Delhi borders continue as 11 rounds of talks between their leaders and the central government failed to break the deadlock.

Atal Bhujal Yojana to be extended across UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After the initial success of the Uttar Pradesh Atal Bhujal Yojana, the Yogi Adityanath Government has decided to extend it across the State. The scheme, which aims at ensuring public participation and improvement in groundwater conservation and management, was introduced as a pilot project in 10 districts Mahoba, Jhansi, Banda, Hamirpur, Chitrakoot, Lalitpur, Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, Baghpat and Meerut.

"After getting a favourable response, the government has decided to implement the scheme in other 65 districts as well. Now, the scheme will be implemented all over the state," a senior official said. A government order (GO)

in this regard has been issued. It says that barring the work under convergence, the budget on other works will be borne by the departmental budget.

Out of the 826 blocks in the state, the scheme was implemented in only 26 groundwater-stressed blocks but from April 1, 2021, all 826 blocks would be covered by this scheme, a government statement said.

The scheme has been designed with the principal objective of strengthening the institutional framework for participatory groundwater management and for bringing about behavioural changes at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management. Public participation through tangible support as well as on awareness

level has been the major component of this scheme.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's sustained efforts to double the income of farmers will also be served by this scheme as improvement in groundwater profile will automatically fulfill the irrigation requirements.

"With this focus, 10 districts, many of them from the Bundelkhand region, were taken up in the first go as these were the areas where water management was required the most," the official said.

The scheme, which has to be implemented till 2026, will take up development of water security plan in the first year, cover 75 over-exploited blocks in second year, critical blocks in the third and semi-critical blocks in the fourth year.

SC allows HP, MP to be made parties to plea against laws on conversion due to interfaith marriage

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday permitted an NGO to make Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh as parties to a pending petition challenging the controversial state laws regulating conversions due to inter-faith marriages.

A bench headed by Chief

Justice S A Bobde also allowed Muslim body Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind to become a party to the petition on the ground that a large number of Muslims are being harassed under these laws across the country.

The apex court on January 6 had agreed to examine controversial new laws of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand regulating religious conversions due to interfaith marriages. The bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, however

refused to stay the controversial provisions of the laws and issued notices to both the state governments on the petitions.

The pleas, filed by advocate Vishal Thakre and others and an NGO 'Citizens for Justice and Peace', have challenged the Constitutional validity of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020 and the Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act, 2018 which regulate religious conversions of interfaith marriages. **PTI**

Cong...

From Page 1
The Congress won 49 wards in Abohar, leaving just one for the Akali Dal. It bagged 41 wards in Hoshiarpur, letting the BJP, the AAP and independents split the difference. In Kapurthala, the Congress won 45 of the 50 wards and the Akalis got three. In Pathankot and Batala, it won 36 of the 50 wards in each corporation. Earlier, the municipal corporations of Moga, Hoshiarpur, Bathinda and Pathankot were run by the SAD-BJP combine, when the two parties were allies and in power in the State. The elections to municipal corporations of Abohar, Batala and Kapurthala

were held for the first time. The election campaign was marred by stray clashes between rival party workers with Opposition leaders alleging that their candidates were being stopped from filing nomination papers. SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal thanked party workers who he said emerged as the "only challengers" to the "corrupt and incompetent Congress". "Our workers battled unprecedented repression, money bags & govt machinery & yet emerged as a force to reckon with. Writing on the wall: 2022 elections on - Congress gone (sic)," he tweeted. AAP leader Harpal Singh Cheema said that his party contested the civic polls in the State for the first time and would analyse its performance.

24 foreign...

From Page 1
DDC chairman, Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan, who also interacted with the foreign diplomats said, "It's been a month since we assumed our posts and we received the opportunity to interact with foreign delegation. We interacted about our development schemes, work done and work which remains to be done."

Later, the diplomats attended a separate luncheon meeting with the elected district development council

members, elected members of the urban local bodies and representatives of political parties.

The Mayor of Srinagar Municipal Corporation Junai Azim Mattu, who also attended the meeting, told reporters that the visiting dignitaries were apprised of the landmark elections of DDC and urban local bodies. "They wanted to know the ground realities. Elected representatives from all political opinions and parties participated," he said.

The key issue discussed was decentralisation of power and planning and empowerment of the grassroots representatives. "I believe the most important thing happening now is the empow-

erment of local elected representatives at grassroots level," he said.

The members of the delegation also visited the revered shrine of Hazratbal located on the banks of world famous Dal Lake.

The group of foreign envoys was received by the Imams of the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar and was briefed on its significance as the holy relic of Prophet Muhammad is preserved in the mosque. The delegation is scheduled to visit Jammu on Thursday. During their day-long visit they are expected to meet Lt-Gov Manoj Sinha, members of the civil society and others before returning to the Capital.

Modi, Shah, Didi...

Bengal will poll in a couple of months from now. According to EC sources, about 18,801 booths have been identified as highly sensitive whereas "about 50 per cent of total numbers of booths are critical".

The State has more than 1 lakh booths. In 2016 and 2019 elections Bengal had 78,903 polling booths. However, considering pandemic situation the EC has increased the number of booths to 101,790. Considering about 30 per cent rise in the number of booths the poll panel has decided to deploy a record 1

lakh Central security personnel in the State which is about 25,000 more than what it was in 2019 or 2016 elections.

According to sources the Commission has identified five districts as highly sensitive and is taking measures accordingly. These districts are Murshidabad, Nadia, South 24 Parganas, Hooghly and East Midnapore. While in Murshidabad the ruling TMC is likely to get a stiff challenge from the Left-Congress combine in the remaining four places the TMC will have a tough fight with the BJP.

Ramani absolved...

Accepting Ramani's contention that Akbar is not a man of stellar reputation on the basis of testimony of witnesses, the court said it cannot be ignored that the offence of sexual-harassment and sexual abuse mostly takes place behind closed doors.

Sometimes victims themselves do not understand what is happening to them or that what is happening to them is wrong, it observed. Despite how well respected some persons are in society, "they in their personal lives could show extreme cruelty" to females, it added.

The court also made note of "systematic abuse at workplace" due to the lack of mechanisms to redress grievances of sexual-harassment at the time of the incident, before the Vishaka guidelines were issued and the enactment of The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention,

Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

"The 'glass ceiling' will not prevent the Indian women... For their advancement in the society, if equal opportunity and social protection be given to them," it said.

The court referred to "social stigma" and "shame" attached with the sexual harassment of women and the trauma they have to face. Sometimes, victims of sexual abuse don't speak a word for many years, the judge said, adding, "The victim may keep believing that she is at fault and victim may live with that shame for years or for decades."

The sexual abuse takes "away her dignity and her self confidence", the court said.

Reacting to the verdict, Ramani's lawyer Rebecca John said it was perhaps the most important case of her career. "It was an extremely difficult trial. When you fight powerful people and you have only truth on your side, the journey becomes very very relevant to you personally," she told reporters.

As the case drew to a close after two years, scores of women activists, lawyers, showbiz celebrities and civil society members welcomed the decision which they saw as an empowering one that would give courage to more women to speak up against abuse and exploitation. "Bravo #PriyaRamani. Your abuser @mjakkar hit you with a SLAP suit but you stand vindicated. Verdict empowers women, saying we should understand that sometimes a victim may for years not speak up due to mental trauma, cannot be punished for raising her voice against sexual abuse," said Kavita Krishnan, secretary of the All India Progressive Women's Association.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising called the verdict a big win for women.

"Congratulations to Priya Ramani and her able legal team led by Rebecca John, a big win for women in general and for her in particular. Thank you Priya for speaking up when you did. This is a big victory for the #MeToo move-

ment," she tweeted. "Thappad" star Taapsee Pannu said the verdict had instilled her faith in justice at a time when the world looked bleak.

"Amidst all the wrongs and unfair happening around, this did bring a ray of hope that somewhere something is keeping our hope in righteousness alive. Long live truth and justice," she wrote on Twitter.

Filmmaker Onir called the Delhi court's verdict a "milestone judgement". "This is spectacular. A milestone judgement when it comes to sexual harassment. Important that the court points out that it's not time-bound. Amazing #PriyaRamani #RebeccaJohn" he tweeted.

Screenwriter-editor Apurva Asrani said Ramani's acquittal is a "relief" for those women who found the courage to call out their abusers but said it's only half the battle won.

"MJ Akbar must be held accountable for the harassment that she has endured. #MeToo," he wrote.

Nursery admissions to begin today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The admission process for enrolling nursery students in private and Government aided schools across the national capital will begin from Thursday and the application window will close on March 4. The Directorate of Education (DoE) last week notified the admission schedule, bringing respite for anxious parents who have been waiting for the notification for over two months.

As per the notification, DoE, the first list of selected children will be displayed on March 20, followed by second list on March 25 and subsequent list for admission, if any, on March 27.

The entire admission process will conclude on March 31. Usually, nursery admissions in around 1,700 schools in the national capital begin in the last week of November. The DoE releases guidelines and schools are asked to furnish required information, following



which the application process is rolled out in December. However, there has been no development on it in 2020.

It may be recalled that Delhi government officials in December said that a proposal to scrap nursery admission is being considered as the schools have been closed for nine months due to Covid-19 and will remain closed till a vaccine is available.

A whole year of online learning for small children seems unviable, they had said.

But school principals had opposed this idea.

"Since schools are closed in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and physical class room learning is not going on for entry level classes at present, schools have been directed that no fee except prescribed registration fee, admission fee, caution fee (if school already had) and tuition fee, shall be charged at the time of admission by the schools and thereafter only tuition fee shall be charged from the students

till further orders.

"No deviation from the notified schedule shall be permitted. Each school shall display the admission schedule on its notice board and website. Further each school shall ensure that application forms for admission are made available to all applicants till the last date of submission of admission's application form," a senior DoE official said.

Schools can only charge a non-refundable amount of Rs 25 from the parents as admission registration fee and the purchase of prospectus of the school by the parents has been kept optional.

Schools were asked to notify their number of seats and admission criteria by February 15. DoE has directed that the number of seats at the entry levels shall not be less than the highest number of seats in the entry level classes during the last three years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21. "Schools shall develop and

adopt criteria for admission which shall be fair, reasonable, well defined, equitable, non-discriminatory, unambiguous and transparent.

"No school shall adopt the criterion abolished by the department including charging a capitation fee or donations. Pre-schools or montessori schools run by registered societies or trusts as branches of recognised unaided schools will have to follow single admission process for their pre-school and main school considering them as one institution," the official said.

A monitoring cell is being constituted in each district under the chairmanship of the Deputy Director (District) concerned, who shall ensure that each private school uploads the criteria and their points on the online module and further ensure that the school shall not adopt those criteria which were abolished by the department and upheld by the Delhi High Court.

Mayor: Road crossing to be named after Rinku Sharma

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash on Wednesday visited the family of Rinku Sharma at Mangolpuri who was killed last week and announced that the road intersection near his house will be named after him.

He also appealed to the Delhi Government to release Rs 1 cr in compensation and offer a job to his next of kin. A day earlier, Delhi BJP leader Kapil Mishra had met Sharma's family to provide financial assistance of Rs 1 crore, and alleged that the youth was targeted and killed for taking part in collection of donation for Ram temple construction in Ayodhya.

"I met Rinku Sharma's family to express my condolences to them. As a mayor, I made the announcement there that the 'chowk' near his house

I also appeal to the Delhi Government to release ₹1 crore as compensation to his family



—Jai Prakash, North Delhi Mayor

will be named after him," Prakash said.

Also, efforts will be made to see, if a job can be offered to his next of kin, he said, adding, "we have asked for the biodata from his family". "I also appeal to the Delhi Government to release Rs 1 crore as compensation to his family," he said. The mayor condemned Sharma's murder and demanded that strictest action be taken against the culprits.

"The North Delhi Municipal Corporation will name Mangolpuri chowk in the name of the deceased, Rinku Sharma, for which a proposal

will be brought by the area councillor Raj Prakash," he was later quoted as saying in a statement issued by his office.

Police has denied any communal angle in the murder of the youth in Mangolpuri last week, though BJP, VHP and Bajrang Dal leaders have been charging it was the fallout of his participation in a donation drive for the Ram temple.

Police has arrested five people in connection with 25-year-old Sharma's killing.

The case has been transferred from local police to the Crime Branch of Delhi Police.

REPUBLIC DAY VIOLENCE

Man brandishing swords at Red Fort arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a man who brandished swords in his both hands, with the intent of "motivating" and "energising" protesters at Red Fort during the violence on Republic Day.

The accused has been identified as Maninder Singh, who runs a sword training school near his home in Swaroop Nagar in northwest Delhi and works as a car AC mechanic.

According to Pramod Singh Kushwaha, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Special Cell, Singh was arrested around 7.45 PM on Tuesday near the C D block bus stop in nearby Pitampura.

"Singh was seen in a video swinging two swords at Red Fort with the intent of motivating or radicalising and energising violent anti-national elements indulging in brutal assault and attacking police

persons on duty with swords, 'khandas', iron rods, axes, 'barsaas', sticks etc and damaging the historical Red Fort on Republic Day," said the DCP.

"Singh was 'radicalised' by seeing provoking Facebook posts of various groups. He would frequently visit the Singhu border and was 'highly motivated' by speeches made by leaders there. He also 'motivated' six people from the neighbourhood who had accompanied the tractor parade that headed from Singhu border towards the Mukarba Chowk," said the DCP.

"Two swords -- 4.3-foot-long 'khandas' -- used by Singh have been recovered from his house. According to the plan, Singh, five of his associates and other unknown armed men entered the Red Fort where he did a sword dance," said the DCP.

"That sword dance moti-

ated violent protesters to cause more mayhem at Red Fort by indulging in all sorts of violence against public servants, including policemen on duty there, and causing damage to the Red Fort," said the DCP.

"The video of him swinging swords at the Red Fort was found in his mobile phone. Other photos of his presence at Singhu border are also there and an investigation was on," said the DCP.

Over 120 people have been arrested so far in connection with the violence across Delhi on January 26, officials said.

Clashes broke out between protesters and police during the tractor parade called by farmer unions to highlight their demand for a rollback of the Centre's three farm laws. Many protesters reached the Red Fort on tractors and entered the monument, some hoisting religious flags on the flagstaff and its domes.

Police to probe Patterson role in kisan tweet storm content

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Marina Patterson, who is a member of the UK chapter of Extinction Rebellion (XR), role will be investigated by Delhi Police after the ongoing probe revealed that she allegedly along with Nikita and Shantanu drafted content for a tweet storm on February 4 and 5. Police said along with Nikita and Shantanu drafted content between February 1 and 2 for next tweet storm planned for February 4 and 5.

The senior police officials said while examining the WhatsApp chats, another name Thilaka, also a member of XR, emerged and during investigation, police found that Thilaka also helped them in drafting the document and was in contact with Nikita and Disha, which is being investigated by the police teams.

According to a senior police official, Marina Patterson made a package and added to the document through hyperlink.

"The toolkit was accidentally published when she was simultaneously editing it. she wrote that police are attacking protesters... many injured, many disappearing and many individuals are already reported dead. This was created to mislead in future. They wrote it before the actual thing happened," he said.

Meanwhile, police giving details about the sequence said that there was a connection established between Nikita, Shantanu and Disha during 2019-2020 and Puneet, a Canada based woman and member of Poetic Justice Foundation (PJF), connected with Nikita and Shantanu on Instagram in the first week of December.

On December 6, Disha, Nikita, Shantanu and Disha started a WhatsApp group and Shantanu created an email id scrapfarmacts@gmail.com on December 11. PJF started its work on January 26 protest on January 3. On January 9, PJF announced Global day of Action on January 26, police

said.

Zoom meeting was held on January 11 between all collaborators, including PJF founder Mo Dhalwal, its co-founder Anita Lal along with Nikita, Shantanu and others, police said.

PJF and other organisations added several hyperlinks to the toolkit document. One of these is genocidewatch.com, they said.

Nikita, Shantanu and Disha and others collaborated with others to finalise the toolkit content between January 11-12. On January 18, AskIndiaWhy.com site was launched by PJF, police said. On January 20, the draft toolkit Google doc was shared between Nikita, Shantanu and Disha for final vetting. Shantanu was here in the national capital from January 21 to 27 at protest site, police said.

Police, however, claimed that despite the violent activity by farmers on Republic Day, the desired impact could not be created due to police restraint.

Youth Cong activists protest after petrol price soars to ₹100/L

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A group of Indian Youth Congress (IYC) activists staged a demonstration at Connaught Place here on Wednesday against rising prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas, and demanded that the government roll back the hike.

The protesters gathered at Outer Circle of Connaught Place, rode bicycles and wore cricket kits to highlight how petrol and diesel prices are rising and about to hit the century mark -- Rs 100 per litre.

By increasing the prices of petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders again, the Modi government has made it clear that it was not concerned about the problems of the common people, said Indian Youth Congress (IYC) president Srinivas BV.

"...common people are badly hit by inflation. Petrol and diesel prices are increasing continuously despite the low prices of crude oil in the international market," he said.

Petrol and diesel prices on Monday were hiked for the seventh day in a row as a rally in international oil prices took retail rates in India to new highs. Petrol price was increased by 26 paise per litre and diesel by 29 paise, accord-



ing to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. The hike took petrol price in Delhi to a record Rs 88.99 per litre and diesel to Rs 79.35 a litre. The cooking gas cylinder prices have increased by Rs 75 within the last 14 days. It is a "pity" for the Modi government that a new record is being set in the prices of petrol and diesel, Srinivas said.

National media in-charge of Indian Youth Congress (IYC) Rahul Rao said, "We demand that the increased prices should be withdrawn with immediate effect and the increase in excise duty should be rolled back to provide relief to the masses suffering from inflation and recession." The protesters also included IYC national secretary Khushboo Sharma, secretary Mukesh Kumar, Delhi Youth Congress vice president Ramvijay Singh Lochav and Shubham Sharma among others.

Multi-level parking lot to decongest Sadar Bazar

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The vehicles parking problem will soon be resolved in the city's oldest Sadar Bazar area. For this, a six floor multilevel parking space is being built close to Sadar Bazar near Sohna Chowk on the Old Railway Road. The construction work of this project is going on in full swing.

Local MLA Sudhir Singla, who took sort of the undergoing project on Wednesday said, this multilevel parking lot near Sohna Chowk will have the facility to park around 404 small and large vehicles.

"There is a lot of parking problem in the old city. Especially in areas like Sadar Bazar where a footfall of people is very high. In view of this, the government had given approval to build multilevel parking near Sadar Bazar," Singla said.

He informed that the basement work is almost complete of the project. Construction work that was disrupted due to Corona epidemic is now being done at a rapid pace.

"The construction company has given time to complete the project in 24 months. 404 vehicles can be parked in this parking lot costing 39.93 crores,

which includes 238 four wheelers (cars) and 166 two wheelers," the MLA asserted.

Singla said that this parking will be of six floors. Out of which there will be 3 basements. The remaining three floors will have shops on the ground and first floor, the second, third, fourth and fifth floors will be used as parking, while the sixth floor will have a grand banquet hall which will be used for multipurpose along with parking".

Meanwhile, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) officials said that the state government has framed a parking policy to stop unauthorised parking on roads.

Located within a radius of a kilometre of each other, Sadar Bazar and Sohna Chowk are among the city's most congested commercial and residential spaces. Despite housing more than 1,100 shops and inviting a daily footfall of more than 10,000 people, Sadar Bazar has no designated parking space. "These parking lots will surely help to decongest parking issues at these locations in the city. It will also help to curb unauthorised parking on the city roads. Multilevel parking space will also provide a better facility to the visitor," said a MCG Official.

Campaign to educate public about economic offences



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In an initiative towards economic offences, the Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police has designed a Economic Offences Awareness

Rath - 'Prabodhini' in collaboration with State Bank of India for public awareness.

According to Anil Mittal, the Additional Public Relation Officer (APRO) of Delhi Police, this vehicle is equipped with all

necessary and modern Audio-Visual Aids.

"With the help of this awareness rath, sincere efforts will be made at the malls, parks, colleges, schools and other public places to make

public aware and alert about the economic offences by providing them the latest information," said Mittal.

"Prabodhini will play vital role in establishing active communication with the public at various places for imparting knowledge through short films, course material and mass interactions. The various economic offences will be explained in detail with regard to the preventive measures to be taken against them," said Anil Mittal.

"The questions and doubts of the people pertaining to these offences will also be addressed appropriately. The representatives of Reserve Bank of India, SEBI and other Financial Institutions will also be included in this Awareness Campaign. This is a special initiative of Delhi Police for value based Social Consciousness and Meaningful Engagement with more and more people," Anil Mittal added.

Devotees bid adieu to Goddess Saraswati

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Saraswati Puja was celebrated with much fanfare at Greater Noida by the residents of La Residencia society. People, especially students worship Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and knowledge on this occasion.

The puja was organized following social distancing norms in which people participated extensively in painting competitions and cultural programs. Rupam Varma, one of the organisers informed that Basant Panchami marks the beginning of the spring and conclusion of the winter and all the residents including children participated in puja with great zeal. The idol was immersed in Hindon River, she said.

Worshippers offered 'Pushpanjali' (floral offering) to the Goddess of Learning amid chanting of hymns.



Man arrested for attacking SHO

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a man for allegedly attacking a Station House Officer (SHO) and fleeing with his car at the Singhu border, where farmers are protesting against three new agriculture laws of the Centre. According to a senior police official, the incident that resulted in minor injuries to the officer took place around 8 pm on Tuesday.

"The accused, who was in an inebriated state, snatched the car keys of one of the officers at the protest site and fled the spot. Being chased by the

police, the accused abandoned the vehicle, snatched a two-wheeler from another man and fled," said the senior police official.

"The security personnel finally overpowered him near the Mukarba Chowk around 8.30 pm and the station house officer (SHO) sustained injuries caused by a sword on his finger and neck while trying to nab him," he said.

"The SHO was taken to a hospital, from where he was discharged after treatment. The accused has been arrested and further investigation is underway," he added.

CABINET OK'S CHANGES IN JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT DMs, ADMs to play key role in rollout

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved amendments to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015, increasing the role of District Magistrates and Additional District Magistrates.

Addressing the media on the Cabinet decision, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said in every district, the DM and ADM will get the power to monitor functions of agencies responsible for the implementation of the Act. The district child protection unit will also function under the District Magistrate, she said.

Irani said till now there was no specific direction to carry out a background check of people who are to become members of the child welfare committees (CWC). According to the amendments cleared by the Cabinet, before becoming a member of the CWC, background and educational qualification checks will be included, she noted. Minister said earlier any organisation which wanted to run a child care institution would need to give its purpose to the



In the proposed amendments, before registration of a child care centre, the DM will conduct its capacity and background check and then submit the recommendations to the State Government

state government.

In the proposed amendments, before registration of a child care centre, the DM will conduct its capacity and background check and then submit the recommendations to the state government, she said. The DM can independently evaluate a specialised CWC, juvenile police unit and regis-

tered institutions.

The scope of the Juvenile Justice Act has been expanded. Child victims of trafficking and drug abuse and those abandoned by their guardians will be included in the definition of "child in need of care" and protection, she said. At present, the Act has three categories of petty, serious and heinous crimes.

"One more category will be included that offences where the sentence is more than seven years but no minimum sentence is prescribed or a minimum sentence of less than seven years is provided shall be treated as serious offences under the Act," she said.

Now, financial powers in Armed Forces delegated to command heads

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to speed up modernisation and acquisition process, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved enhanced delegation of Financial Powers under Capital Procurement to levels below Vice-Chief of Armed Forces.

As per the approval, under Other Capital Procurement Procedure (OCPP) of Defence Acquisition Procedure-2020, financial powers up to Rs 100 crore has been delegated to General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C), Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) at Services Command and Regional Commanders, Indian Coast Guard (ICG).

Powers up to Rs 200 crore has been delegated to Deputy Chief of Army Staff (CD & S)/MGS (Master General Sustenance), COM (Chief of Material), AOM (Air Officer Maintenance), DCIDS (Deputy Chief Integrated Defence Staff) and ADG ICG (Additional Director General Indian Coast Guard).

This delegation of powers within Service Headquarters and up to Command Level for items of Capital nature such as

overhauls, refits and upgrades will enhance the utility of existing assets and will facilitate faster processing and implementation of projects for modernization of Armed Forces to meet the security challenges.

The Cabinet has also approved enhanced financial powers in the Make-I category under which Government funding up to 70% of the prototype development cost is available for Design & Development of equipment, systems, major platforms or upgrades thereof.

Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS), Vice Chief of Naval Staff (VCNS), Deputy Chief of Air Staff (DCAS), and Director General Coast Guard (DG(CG)) have now been given powers to sanction Government support up to Rs 50 crore towards cost of prototype development.

Financial powers have also been enhanced for other competent financial authorities under 'Make-I' in line with the government's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India' for a robust defence industrial ecosystem.

ANNUAL COMBINED COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE LAC, LoC situation to figure in PM's interaction

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh and continuing belligerence by Pakistan at the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir are likely to figure prominently during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction at the Combined Commanders' conference in March.

Operational readiness to deal with emerging challenges in the Indian sub-continent will also come up during the conference to be held in Kevadia, Gujarat. The Prime Minister is expected to give the direction to the military top brass on strategic and international relations, sources said here on Wednesday.

The Combined Commanders' Conference is held annually and the Prime Minister addresses the top commanders. They include officers from the Navy, Indian Air Force and the Army. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and three Services Chiefs are some of the prominent officers to take part in the deliberations.

Modi will be briefed about the various modernization processes on in the Services to fight the modern day war with the advent of information tech-



nology and space.

The commanders will also update the Prime Minister about the pace of reforms in the armed forces to make them lean and mean, better utilization of resources and fighting the future conflicts jointly. In that direction, Modi will take stock of the process of formation of theatre commands besides air defence command, officials said.

He will also briefed about the Special Forces Agency, Cyber Security Agency and Space Agency. These newly created organizations have pooled in the resources of the armed forces for better and faster utilization of resources and manpower.

Besides these issues, the Prime Minister will take stock of current situation at the LAC where the first stage of pull back of the armies of India and China is currently on. The

LAC in Ladakh saw a ten-month long stand-off including a bloody brawl in the Galwan valley. Twenty Indian army personnel including the commanding officer were killed in the incident on June 15.

Since then both the sides ramped up their force strength and at present more than one lakh troops of the two armies are facing each other. Moreover, the entire 4,000 km long LAC is now sensitive and the Indian security establishment has made sure China does not spring any surprise. The LAC stretches from Ladakh in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east.

Pakistan continues to violate ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir apart from fomenting terrorism there. The overall security scenario may also be discussed during Modi's interaction with the commanders, sources said.

GOMTI RIVER FRONT PROJECT

CBI files chargesheet against accused engineers for corruption

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday filed a chargesheet before the designated court at Lucknow against the then Executive Engineer, Lucknow Division, Sharda Canal (LDSC), Lucknow and others in connection with a case relating to alleged corruption in the Gomti River Front Project.

Besides the then Executive Engineer, LDSC, Lucknow, Roop Singh Yadav (also the then In-charge Superintending Engineer, XII Circle, Irrigation Works, Lucknow), others named in the chargesheet are the then Junior Assistant, Irrigation Works, Lucknow, Raj Kumar Yadav, Directors of KK Spun Pipe Pvt. Ltd., Himanshu Gupta and Kavish Gupta, Senior Advisor, Brand Eagles Longian JV, Badri Shrestha and the firm KK Spun Pipe Pvt. Ltd.

The case relates to an alleged irregular award of work of Intercepting Trunk Drain in the case related to

The CBI had registered a case on November 30, 2017 on the request of Uttar Pradesh Government and further notification from the Centre and took over the investigation of the case

Gomti River Front Project.

The CBI had registered a case on November 30, 2017 on the request of Uttar Pradesh Government and further notification from the Centre and took over the investigation of the case, earlier registered vide FIR No. 831/2017 at Police Station, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow.

It was alleged that irregularities were committed in implementation of "Gomti River Channelization Project" and "Gomti River Front Development"

by the Irrigation Department, Government of UP.

It was further alleged that the accused awarded the work for Intercepting Trunk Drain to an ineligible private firm and the date of tender was twice extended to accommodate the said firm.

It was also alleged that forged documents of another bidder/private party were also arranged by the accused to complete the quorum of three participants in the tender. The agreement for the work was allegedly executed by the accused without obtaining the approval and allotment of funds. The bank guarantee of the L-2 firm was allegedly prepared from the bank account of the L-1 company, the CBI said.

During investigation, both the public servants were arrested on November 19, 2020 and are presently in judicial custody.

Further investigation is continuing to look into the role of other accused/suspect persons, it added.

Centre allows Kochi Metro to use drones

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After granting conditional permission to Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to use drones for live aerial cinematography of cricket matches till December 31, the Centre has allowed Kochi Metro Rail Ltd to use drones for the Integrated Urban Regeneration & Water Transport System (IURWTS) project, subject to certain conditions. The conditional approval is valid till December 31 this year or until full operationalisation of Digital Sky Platform (Phase-1),



whichever is earlier.

"The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have granted a conditional exemption for Remotely

Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) usage to Kochi Metro Rail Limited, Kerala for IURWTS," the ministry said in a statement.

Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL) should obtain necessary clearances from the local administration, defence ministry, home ministry, Air Force and Airport Authority of India (AAI) as applicable prior to operating a RPAS.

Senselimage Technologies, engaged by KMRL through Techno Vision Survey & Mappings Ltd, would only operate the RPAS, as per the statement.

Photographs and video graphs taken through RPAS should be used by only KMRL, which would also be responsible for safety and security of RPAS and data collected through it.

"The operation of RPAS shall be restricted to day operations (from sunrise to Sunset), within Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) in uncontrolled airspace only..." it said.

Among other conditions, the operator has to intimate the schedule of operation to DGCA well in advance for conducting safety oversight.

NIA chargesheets 11 Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh members in dacoity cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Wednesday said it has filed a chargesheet against 11 alleged terrorists in JMB (Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh) Dacoity Cases, Bengaluru before the NIA Special Court in Bengaluru.

The NIA had registered four cases from RC-15 to 18/2020 here. Those named in the chargesheet are Jahidul Islam, 40 (Jamalpur, Bangladesh), Najir Sheikh alias Patla Anas, 25, Asif Ikbal, 23, Adil Sheikh, 27, Abdul Karim, 21, and Mosaraf Hossain, 22, all from Murshidabad District, West Bengal. These besides, Arif Hussain alias Mota Anas, 24 of Barpeta, Assam, Kador Kazi, 33, Habibur Rahaman Sk, 28, and Mustafizur Rahman, 39 of Birbhum and Md Dilwar Hossain, 28 of Malda have also been named in the chargesheet under various Sections of the Indian Penal Code and provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Enrolment module to aid engineering, planning students launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched an enrolment module for TECHNOGRAHIS - students from IITs, NITs, engineering, planning and architecture colleges, faculty members, academicians. This module will enable them to visit six Light Housing Projects (LHPs) across the country.

The foundation stone of six LHPs was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 1, 2021, at Indore, Rajkot, Chennai, Ranchi, Agartala and Lucknow. LHPs are being built as part of the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India) initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U).

Launching the module,

MoHUA secretary Durga Shankar Mishra said that candidates can register themselves to visit live laboratories at six Light House Project (LHP) sites for learning, consultation, generation of ideas and solutions, experimentation, innovation, and technical awareness. The ministry is promoting six LHPs as live laboratories.

"This will help them in getting a first-hand account of the technologies being used and in turn, they can adapt and adopt them as per their requirements in the construction sector for a 'Make in India' approach", Mishra added.

The LHPs comprise about 1000 houses at each location along with allied infrastructure facilities. These LHPs will demonstrate the merits of the world-class innovative construction technologies. These projects will demon-

strate and deliver ready to live houses at an expedited pace within twelve months, as compared to conventional brick and mortar construction, and will be more economical, sustainable, of high quality and durability. LHPs showcase the best of new-age alternate global technology. This technology revolution is cost-effective, environment-friendly and promotes speedier construction. The initiative will prove to be a major push towards technical transformation in India.

Mishra also launched the first volume of LHP e-newsletter which captures the progress of the projects at each location. Twelve such e-newsletters will be released every month to inform the students, faculty, stakeholders and public about the development works through write-ups and photographs.

Policy to boost Blue Economy soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bestowed with a long coastline of over 7500 km, India will finally soon have its own Blue Economy policy outlining the vision and strategy that the Government plans to adopt to utilise the plethora of oceanic resources available across the coastal States in the country.

The Union Ministry of Earth Sciences has rolled out the draft of the proposed policy inviting suggestions on the plans aiming to achieve holistic growth of the coastal region through "manufacturing, emerging industries, trade, technology, services, and skill development".

"The policy document has been disseminated for public consultation. Stakeholders have been invited to submit inputs and ideas by February 27, 2021," an official statement said here on Wednesday.

The draft has been prepared in line with the Government's Vision of New India by 2030. It highlighted blue economy as one of the ten core dimensions for



national growth, said the statement.

Among the seven thematic areas, which the Ministry has recognised to emphasize in order to achieve holistic growth, is "Manufacturing, emerging industries, trade, technology, services, and skill development".

To catalyze the development of the Blue Economy, the draft report says, it aims to set up research and development hubs in the nine coastal states and promote use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other new technologies in marine sectors such as deep-sea mining, marine logistics and shipping. India's blue economy is

understood as a subset of the national economy comprising an entire ocean resources system and human-made economic infrastructure in marine, maritime, and onshore coastal zones within the country's legal jurisdiction.

The coastal economy sustains over 40 lakh sherofolk and coastal communities. With these vast maritime interests, the blue economy occupies a vital potential position in India's economic growth.

"Today, the Blue Economy holds the promise of being the next multiplier of economic growth and well-being, provided that the strategy places sustainability and socio-economic welfare at the centre stage. Therefore, the proposed roadmap for evolving a Blue Economy Policy would be a crucial step towards unlocking the potential of economic growth and welfare," said the report.

Chola
Esther a better life

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED
Corporate Office: No.2, Dare House, 1st Floor, NSC Bose Road, Chennai - 600 001.
Branch Office: - Plot No.8, 2nd Floor, Main Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110 005.
Mr. GAURAV KUMAR DAHIYA - 9811747507 & Mr. SUDHIR TOMAR - 9818460101

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION CUM SALE
Pursuant to taking possession of the secured asset mentioned hereunder by the Authorized Officer of M/s Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Company Ltd under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 for the recovery of amount due from borrowers, offers are invited by the undersigned in sealed covers for purchase of immovable property, as described hereunder, which is in the symbolic possession, on 'AS IS WHERE IS BASIS', 'AS IS WHAT IS BASIS' and 'WHATSOEVER IS THERE IS BASIS', Particulars of which are given below:-

Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable property	Total Loan Outstanding as on 16.02.2021	Reserve Price	Earnest Money Deposit
(Loan Account Nos. X0HEHDE00000699431 & X0HEELD00001447961 & X0HEELD00001658589) Borrowers:- 1.Mr.Pawan Kumar Aggarwal, G-18/24, Rohini Sector 15, Rohini, New Delhi-110 085. 1A.Mr.Pawan Kumar Aggarwal, G-15/24, Sector 15, Rohini, New Delhi - 110 084. 2.Ms.Vandana Aggarwal, G-18/24, Rohini Sector 15, Rohini, New Delhi-110 085.	20.11.2019 & Rs. 1,22,12,370.71 as on 16.11.2019	Entire Ground Floor without roof rights of built up property bearing No.24, Pocket G - 18, Sector - 15 area admeasuring 90 Sq.mtrs situated at Rohini Residential Scheme Delhi.	Rs. 1,50,34,424.66 as on 16.02.2021 together with further interest, penal interest, costs and charges thereon till the date of payment.	Rs. 79,50,000/-	Rs. 7,95,000/-
(Loan Account No. X0HEHDE00001211890) Borrowers:- 1.KIRTI SAINANI, WZ-3121, SF Mahindra Park, Rani Bagh, Saraswati Vihar, New Delhi-110034. 2.SUNIL KUMAR SAINANI, WZ-3121, SF Mahindra Park, Rani Bagh, Saraswati Vihar, New Delhi-110034.	05.10.2020 & Rs. 67,45,632.97 as on 28.02.2020	Second Floor without roof rights of property bearing No.WZ-3121, Old No.WZ-6E/1-A, area measuring 74.5 Sq.yds., out of rectangle No.28, Killa No.8, situated in the area of Village Shakur Pur now Abadi known as Mahindra Park, Shakur Basti, Delhi - 110034.	Rs. 79,70,567.38 as on 16.02.2021 together with further interest, penal interest, costs and charges thereon till the date of payment.	Rs. 43,00,000/-	Rs. 4,30,000/-

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING AUCTION PROCESS

1. Date of Auction	25.03.2021	3. Date of Inspection of Property	22.03.2021 and 23.03.2021 (In business hours)
2. Place of Submission of Bids and Place of Auction	Plot No.6, 2nd Floor, Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110 005	4. Last date for Submission of Bids	24.03.2021 before 5.00 pm

* A bidder may, on his own choice, avail the facility in the auction by making application in prescribed format which is available along with the offer/tender document on the given office address mentioned hereunder. Sale is strictly subject to terms and conditions incorporated in this advertisement and the prescribed Bid / Tender Document. This notice is also to be treated as a 30 days' notice under Rule 8(5)(c) and 8 (6) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. (Rule 8 and 9)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF AUCTION

- The property is sold on 'As is where is basis' 'As Is What Is Basis' and 'Whatever Is There Is Basis'.
- The Bidder is obliged to exercise full due diligence in all respects, including to inspect each of the details of the property mentioned above on the scheduled date & time.
- Submission of bids to M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited would be construed a deemed acceptance by the bidder that (i) he/she/it has exercised due diligence in all respects; (ii) is satisfied with all details/measurements of property; (iii) Acknowledges full knowledge of terms and conditions that govern the auction and (iv) Waives all his/her/its rights to make any contrary claims against company at any future date.
- The sale is subject to confirmation by the Authorised Officer if the borrower/guarantor pays the entire outstanding amount in full before sale, no sale will be conducted.
- The Bidder shall remit Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) by Banker's Cheque / DD drawn in favour of M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited for the respective Loan A/c, along with the bid form in a Sealed Cover addressed to The Authorised Officer, M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited up to 5.00 P.M on 24.03.2021. Please note that, in reference to successful bidder(s), EMD is adjustable against the sale consideration receivable by M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited. Also, EMD is refundable to the unsuccessful bidder(s).
- The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the bid amount immediately on the sale being knocked down in his/her/its favour and the balance within 15 days by Banker's Cheque / DD drawn in favour of M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited for the respective Loan A/c Number.
- In case the successful bidder fails to deposit 25% of the bid amount immediately on sale being knocked down in his/her/its favour and/or the balance amount, within 15 days the deposit made by the bidder shall be forfeited without any prior intimation.
- The charges / fees payable for conveyance such as stamp duty, registration fee, maintenance charges electricity charges etc., shall be borne by the successful bidder. The Authorised Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, property tax or any other dues to the Government or local body or any other authority in respect of the property under sale.
- The Authorised Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject the bid or adjourn / postpone/cancel the sale/modify any terms and conditions of the sale without any prior notice or assigning any reason therefor.
- The Sale will only be in favour of successful bidder and not his/her nominee.
- This Notice is also to the Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) in particular and the public in general. The borrower has absolute right for the redemption of property till the confirmation of the sale Process.

M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited are not responsible for any liabilities whatsoever pending upon the property as mentioned above. The Property shall be auctioned on 'As Is Where Is Basis', 'As Is What Is Basis' and 'Whatever Is There Is Basis'. For further details, contact the Authorised Officer, at the above mentioned Office address.

Sd/-
AUTHORISED OFFICER
Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited

Place: Delhi
Date : 18.02.2021

Events at border illustrative of confident India: Modi

Mumbai: India is brimming with confidence, and the events on the borders and the Government's decision to liberalise geospatial data are representative of the same, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday.

Modi said in the past, security considerations were the biggest "red light" which prevented the government from undertaking the measure to liberalise map making and access to geospatial data. In the remarks, which came amid a deluge of reports suggesting a disengagement between Indian and Chinese forces in icy heights of Eastern Ladakh, Modi said the confidence is a very big asset.

"Today, India is brimming with confidence. We are seeing it on the borders," he said, without explicitly mentioning the thaw with China after nearly 10 months of a standoff. It can be noted that there was a heavy troop and military hardware buildup in the Himalayan region since last summer, after China moved troops to newer grounds amid the pandemic.

One of the many confrontations turned ugly leading to deaths of soldiers in fist-fights and warning shots were also fired in another instance. The troops continued to be on vigil braving the hostile winter and according to reports, there has been a "disengagement" on

the banks of Pangong Tso and south of it.

Addressing the annual Nasscom Technology and Leadership Forum organised by the IT industry lobby grouping, Modi said the decision to liberalise the geospatial data and map making is not just restricted to the area of technology, nor should it be seen as another administrative reform where the government exits a particular field.

"This decision is illustrative of India's capabilities. India is confident that even after this decision, we can ensure our security and also give an opportunity for the country's young population to excel at the world stage," Modi said. **PTI**

PM: India's startup founders should focus on creating institutions, not just valuations

Mumbai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged India's startup founders to think how to create institutions and not focus on valuations alone. Addressing the NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum here, Modi said that startups should not restrict themselves only to valuations on exit strategies. They should think of creating an institution that can outlive this century by creating world class products that will set the global benchmark of excellence.

The Prime Minister further said the large population of the country is the IT industry's biggest strength as people are eager to adopt newer solutions. IT industry's corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts to develop lateral thinking in rural kids can prove to be a gamechanger for India, Modi noted. The country is not short of ideas, he said, adding that it needs mentors to help turn ideas into reality. **PTI**

India working to reduce energy import dependence, says PM

Chennai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that India is working to meet growing energy demand, while reducing its energy import dependence and also diversifying import sources. In his address after launching oil and gas projects in Tamil Nadu through video conferencing, he said the country was trying to ensure this through capacity building. In 2019-20, India was fourth in world in refining capacity. About 65.2 million tonnes of petroleum products have been exported and this number is expected to rise even further, he said.

The Prime Minister noted a diverse and talented nation like India was more dependent on imports for its energy requirements. During 2019-20, India imported over 85 per cent of oil and 53 per cent of gas to meet its

domestic demand. "I don't want to criticise anyone, but I want to say had we focused on this sector much earlier, our middle class would not have been burdened."

Now it is our collectively duty to work towards clean and green source of energy and reduce energy dependence," he said. Stating that his government is sensitive to the concerns of the middle class, Modi said the country is increasing the focus on ethanol to help farmers and consumers, taking steps to become leader in solar power, encouraging public transport to make people's lives productive and embracing alternative source like LED bulbs to enable huge savings for middle class households. He noted that more Indian cities have metro coverage and solar pumps getting more popular helping farmers greatly. "Our

companies have ventured overseas in acquisition of quality oil and gas assets.

Today Indian oil and gas companies are present in 27 countries with investment worth about Rs 2.70 lakh crore.

We are developing a gas pipeline network to achieve one nation, one grid. We have plan to spend 7.5 lakh crore in creating oil and gas infrastructure over next five years.

A strong emphasis had been laid on expansion of expansion of city gas distribution network by covering 470 districts. The Prime Minister said consumer focus scheme like Pahal and PM Ujjwala Yojna were helping every Indian household access gas, and that 95 per cent of Tamil Nadu's LPG consumers have joined Pahal scheme. **IANS**

LDF Govt snubs award winning actor for his Cong links

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Salim Kumar, the celebrated film artist who had been honoured with the National Award for the Best Actor and a number of national and State honours was snubbed and humiliated by the CPI(M)-led Kerala Government, according to film and theatre artists in the State.

Salim Kumar, who had essayed hundreds of memorable roles in films that include the 2010 movie "Abu, the Son of Adam" (for which he was honoured with the national Award for Best Actor) and Achan Urangatha Veedu (The House where the Father Doesn't Sleep) the 2005 film which earned him the Second Best Actor Award for portraying the role of a helpless father of the victim of a sexually molested girl is known for his links with the Congress Party.

A TV and stage show performer who made spectators laugh and cry with his scintillating performance, Salim Kumar had grad-

uated into the big league of Malayalam film industry only because of his talents. But Mohammed Majeed Kamaludeen, chairman, Kerala State Film Academy, who is the main organiser of the Government sponsored International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK 2021) had other ideas.

"He and other organisers conveniently ignored Salim Kumar while preparing the list of invitees for the Kochi-leg of the IFFK which got going on Wednesday. Due to Covid-19 related issues, the IFFK is being held in two editions. The Thiruvananthapuram leg was between February 9 and 14 while the Kochi edition is during February 17 to 21.

Kamaludeen denied reports that alleged Salim Kumar was not invited for the festival. "Organising Committee decided to give a chance to youngsters and hence we included new generation film personalities among those who would light the lamp on the occasion," Kamaludeen

told reporters. He also said that the festival cannot be held without the presence of Salim Kumar.

But the versatile actor told The Pioneer from Paravoor that he has not yet received any invitation from the organising committee. "I am least bothered whether they include me or not among the VIPs who light the lamp. But a formal invitation would have been sufficient for me. They wanted to keep me out because of political reasons. It is known to all and many persons are afraid to tell it openly," said Salim Kumar.

The incident comes to light within days of Rajasenan, a reputed Malayalam movie maker, who has a string of hits to his credit, charged that Malayalam film industry has been hijacked by Love Jihad elements.

In a no holds barred attack on some quarters, the soft spoken Rajasenan said that movie industry in Kerala has been usurped by a cabal which has vested interests.

Kamaludeen was in the news

recently when the letter he wrote to cultural minister A K Balan asking the latter to regularise the services of Left-leaning casual staff in the Film Academy was released in the Legislative Assembly by Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala. Kamaludeen said that his letter was to ensure film professionals with leanings to Sangh Parivar do not enter the precincts of Malayalam film industry.

Salim Kumar said the Thiruvananthapuram edition of the Film Festival was inaugurated by 76-year-old Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in the presence of 79-year old Adoor Gopalakrishnan.

Politicisation of Malayalam film industry has given rise to many lead artists expressing their solidarity with either the Congress or the BJP. Krishnakumar, the lead TV artist had joined the BJP in presence of party president J P Nadda while Ramesh Pisharady and Dharman Bolghatty declared their support to the Congress in a recent function.

Toolkit case: Bombay HC grants 3-week transit bail to Nikita Jacob

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday granted Mumbai-based activist Nikita Jacob transit bail for three weeks in the Greta Theunberg 'tool-kit' case relating to the farmers' agitation and ruled that in the event of her arrest, she would be released on bail on a personal bond of Rs 25,000 and one surety of like amount.

While granting relief to Jacob, Justice P.D. Naik of the high court ruled: "This protection is granted for a period of three weeks from today to enable the applicant to approach the competent court for seeking appropriate relief."

The high court was hearing Jacob's plea against a non-bailable arrest warrant issued against her and another activist Shantanu Muluk, by the Tis Hazari Court in Delhi.

The high court had reserved its

order on Jacob when the matter was heard here on Tuesday.

In a related development, the Aurangabad bench of Bombay High Court had on Tuesday granted a 10-day transit bail to Muluk, an engineer from Beed, in the same case.

In non-bailable warrants against them, the Delhi Police had on Monday charged Jacob and Muluk, who work for a UK-based NGO Extinction Rebellion, with creating the toolkit tweeted by Thunberg on the farmers' protest.

Jacob has been booked under IPC Sections 124(A) for sedition, 153(A) for promoting enmity between different groups, and 120(B) for criminal conspiracy.

Another accused activist Disha Ravi - who was arrested by Delhi Police on February 13 for alleged involvement with an online 'tool-kit' relating to Greta Theunberg-farmers' agitation -- is currently in

police custody for five days.

On their part, the Delhi Police have claimed that Disha, Jacob and Muluk had created the 'toolkit' relating to the farmers' agitation which was shared with Thunberg.

Ms Jacob had told the high court on Tuesday that there was a Zoom meeting before Republic Day, which was attended by Poetic Justice Foundation founder MO Dhaliwal, and other fellow activists, including Disha.

Jacob's lawyer Mihir Desai had told the court that the "toolkit" was prepared by Extinction Rebellion (XR) India volunteers for presenting the whole picture with a simple breakdown for an international audience. Desai had also argued that Jacob was a young woman, practising law since the past 6 to 7 years and was a responsible environmental activist who was moved by the plight of the agitating farmers.

Maha cops arrest 2 German nationals for growing Ganja at bungalow in Satara

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Police has arrested two German nationals from a private bungalow at Wai town in Satara district of western Maharashtra for allegedly cultivating Cannabis (Ganja) at home.

Acting on a tip-off that about two foreigners staying at bungalow at Nandanvan Park owned by a local resident and conducting themselves in a suspicious manner, the Satara raided the place on Tuesday and found that large quantities of Ganja being grown inside half-a-dozen rooms, on the roof and outside.

The police arrested two German nationals - identified as Sergis Victor Manca (31) and Sebastian Stein Muller (25) - from the bungalow they raided. The two arrested German nationals were later produced before a court, which remanded them in police custody till February 20.

During the raids, the police seized 29 kgs of home-grown Ganja worth around Rs. 3-lakh, all packed in bags.

The police also recovered sophisticated artificial lighting equipment, LED lights, laptops, mobiles, etc from the bungalow.

During the course of the raids, one of the German nationals tried to flee the bungalow only to be caught by the

police personnel present.

The Satara police have, meanwhile, experts with knowledge of Ganja cultivation from Pune to assist them in the investigations.

The preliminary investigations have revealed that both Manca and Muller are history-sheeters who had been arrested in a drugs case by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Goa in 2017.

Subsequently, the Bombay High Court (Goa Bench) had released them on bail on a condition that they would henceforth live in Satara district.

As per the orders issued by the high court in 2017, the two German nationals had deposited their passports with the Goa Police.

As a consequence, they cannot leave the country till the case registered by the NCB is pending against them.

"As part of our investigations, we have asked the Goa Police to give us details of the passports and visas of the two arrested German nationals," Satara's District Police Superintendent Ajaykumar Bansal said.

The Satara police are trying to ascertain if the two arrested German nationals had developed a network of peddlers and customers to sell the Cannabis grown by them during their stay at the bungalow lasting more than 18 months.

IED detected in Rajouri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

An Improvised explosive device (IED) planted inside a pressure cooker was detected by the members of the road opening party of the Indian Army near Manjakote along the Jammu Poonch highway early Wednesday morning.

Four days ago, a nursing student, identified as Suhail from Pulwama was arrested by the Jammu and Kashmir police after an IED weighing 6.5 kgs was recovered from his bag near the bus stand area in Jammu. Handlers belonging to Al-Badr had tasked him to trigger a blast at one of the busy locations in Jammu.

Both these recoveries were made close on the heels of arrest of two top ranking terrorists of Lashkar-e- Mustafa and The Resistance Front in Jammu.

The traffic on the busy road was halted from both the sides and teams of bomb disposal squad of the Indian army from a nearby camp were rushed to the spot to detonate the IED. "This



morning, a road opening patrol (ROP) of the army found a suspicious object along the highway near Manjakote. Soon, traffic was controlled on the highway and a bomb disposal squad was called in," said Rajouri SSP, Chandan Kohli.

The suspected material packed in a fruit packing box was later destroyed through a controlled explosion, he added. Further investigation is going on in the case registered at Manjakote police station under relevant sections of law.

Terrorist arrested from Jammu airport

PNS ■ JAMMU

Sher Ali, an active terrorist from Poonch, was arrested by the Poonch police from Jammu airport on Wednesday.

According to a police spokesman, "Sher Ali is the main coordinator and facilitator of terrorist activities of various terrorist groups involving facilitating infiltration of terrorists, smuggling of arms and ammunition, narcotics from POJK to Indian Territory from Balakote area of Poonch district."

He has been arrested in connection with case FIR No. 292/2020 P/S Mendhar and is also involved in many other cases of district Poonch.

"Sitting aboard, Sher Ali

was involved in sending two Pakistan terrorists from Dabbi area of Balakote Sector on 24/25 of Nov. 2020 at the behest of Pakistani handler @ Sultan. The two terrorists of JK Gazanavi force were later killed in an encounter on 13th of December-2020 in Poshana area of Surankote", the police spokesman added.

Sher Ali also smuggled arms and ammunition which included 3 pistols and 1 IED besides other ammunition through Balakote sector in Mendhar district Poonch. The receiver of these Arms and ammunition namely Mushtaq Ahmed (father of Sher Ali) and Raskeem Akhter (sister of Sher Ali) were arrested by Poonch Police on 11-9-2020 and FIR

was registered at P/S Mendhar in this regard.

So-far 05 OGWs namely Mushtafa R/O Kandi Galuta, Mohd Yaseen R/O Dabbi Balakote, Younis, Irfan and Raskeem have been arrested who were involved in the terror network led by Sher Ali.

Sher Ali was also involved in drug smuggling along with smuggling of arms and ammunitions and 2 Kgs heroine worth approximately Rs 8 crores in the international market were also recovered from this terror network which was meant to be used for terror financing. So-far from this network 05 Pistols, 13 grenades and one live IED has been recovered. Further investigation is in progress.

All India Council for Technical Education, Haryana Granth Akademi to work together

New Delhi: All India Council for Technical Education and Haryana Granth Akademi would work together to promote as a medium of technical education. A formal agreement paving the way to this collaboration between the two government institutions was signed at AICTE Headquarters in New Delhi in the digital presence of Union Education Minister Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' during the launching ceremony of NEET 2.0. Haryana Granth Akademi (HGA) Deputy Chairman & Director Dr. Virender Singh Chauhan and AICTE Member Secretary Prof. Rajiv Kumar signed the agreement and exchanged relevant documents. AICTE Chairman Prof. Anil D. Sahasrabudhe was also present on this occasion.

Outgoing village head in UP shot dead

Jaunpur (Uttar Pradesh): With the Panchayat elections barely a few weeks away, a 50-year-old outgoing village head in Jaunpur district was shot dead by unidentified persons.

The incident led to demonstrations and angry mobs pelted stones and damaged vehicles in protest.

According to reports, the incident took place on Tuesday evening when Raj Kumar Yadav, the head of the Makhmelpur village in Sarai Khwaja, was shot by some motorcycle-borne youths when he was going to Jaunpur city.

Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar said the deceased received five bullet injuries and was rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

Following the incident, locals blocked the Jaunpur-Shahganj road at Kokrideeha. The body has been sent for post mortem and additional forces have been deployed in the area.

Family members said the killing was related to poll rivalry. **IANS**

Controversy erupts in UP over Suheldev's caste

IANS ■ LUCKNOW

Within hours of the foundation laying ceremony of the statue of Maharaja Suheldev by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a controversy has erupted over the legendary warrior king's caste.

BJP MP from Basgaon, Kamlesh Paswan, has written a letter to the President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Yogi Adityanath.

Alleging that some vested interests had suffixed 'Rajbhar' to the name of Suheldev whereas the warrior king belonged to the Pasi community. He further said that the state government should mention his name as 'Maharaja Suheldev Pasi' on the memorial and also on other projects launched by the Prime Minister to mark his contribution.

UP minister Anil Rajbhar, meanwhile, claimed that Maharaja Suheldev belonged to the Rajbhar community while Paswan maintained that the minister's assertion was igniting anger among the Pasi community that had great admiration regard for Maharaja Suheldev.

The BJP MP said that the state government should verify historical documents and add Pasi surname to the memorial and other projects being dedicated to the king.

Om Prakash Rajbhar, former UP minister and president of the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP), claimed that as per the historical texts, including Mirat-i-Masudi written by Abdur Rehman Chishti, Suheldev belonged to the 'Bhar' community which is a sub-caste of Rajbhar.

"My party will oppose any move by the state government to project Suheldev as a Pasi. We are going to organise meetings in Rajbhar-dominated constituencies across the state to make our community aware of his contribution," he said.

BSP leader Ram Achal Rajbhar, on the other hand, stated that it was the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) that had first highlighted the role of Suheldev in upliftment of weaker sections.



Adjutant Stork chicks rest in a nest atop a blooming Flame-of-the-forest tree in Nagaon District on Wednesday **PTI**

3rd phase of panchayat polls begin in Andhra Pradesh

Amaravati: The third phase of four-phased Panchayat elections in Andhra Pradesh kicked off on Wednesday with voting commencing at 6.30 a.m. in 18 revenue divisions.

The revenue divisions in which polls are being held are Srikakulam, Palakonda, Vizianagaram, Paderu, Rampachodavaram, Yetapaka, Jangareddygudem, Kukururu, Machilipatnam, Gurazala, Kandukur, Gudur, Naidupeta, Adoni, Kurnool, Ananthapur, Rajampet, Kadapa and Madanapalle.

As many as 2,639 sarpanch posts are being contested, along with 19,553 wards.

In Kurnool district, elections started off on a peaceful note and district collector Veerapandian reiterated that people should exercise their franchise fearlessly.

He advised people to call control room number 1800-4255180 in case any forces are trying to influence the elections.

Similar to the second phase polls, district officials made arrangements to complete vote counting faster in major panchayats.

Starting 5:30 a.m. on Wednesday, senior officials have been monitoring the election arrangements and polls in the control room set up at the Collectorate.

As many as 14 mandals, comprising 245 panchayats and 2,516 wards are going to the polls at 2,204 polling centres.

Kurnool district administration deployed 2,557 policemen on poll duty. As many as 219 villages are going for the polls in the district.

Out of the 2,204 polling stations, the district identified 605 polling stations as troublesome ones and another 374 as hyper sensitive.

Polling and vote counting officials number is 7,250 in the Rayalaseema district.

Zonal officials, shadow teams, striking force teams, route mobile teams, flying squads, drones and web casting are deployed to monitor the elections.

Police Act 30 and CrPc Section 144 have been imposed in the district, including banning victory rallies, pyrotechnics and other musical celebrations.

"Non-locals, newcomers and people not related to the polls are banned from the villages where polls are occurring," reiterated an official statement.

In Anantapur district, elections are happening in 19 mandalams. Out of 379 panchayats, 23 sarpanches have been elected unanimously, while 936 contestants are competing for the remaining 356 sarpanch posts. **IANS**

Srinagar eatery owner's son shot by terrorists

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Son of a famous local eatery located in the high security zone of Sonwar was shot at from a close range by unidentified terrorists late Wednesday evening in Srinagar.

The daring attack on a civilian took place barely hours after the 24 member delegation of foreign diplomats wined up their day long schedule of meetings aimed at assessing the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Local police identified the injured victim as Aakash Mehra son of a popular Krishna Dhaba owner Ramesh Kumar Mehta. This is the second major attack on a minority businessman in Srinagar in recent times.

Earlier, a jeweller Satpal Nischal from Punjab settled in Srinagar for several years and was killed in cold blood in the first week of January 2021. Police sources claimed Aakash was shot at from a close range. He took the bullets on his chest and was rushed to a nearby SMHS hospital.

Terror group Muslim Janbaaz Force Jammu and Kashmir has claimed responsibility for the attack on Krishna Dhaba in Srinagar outside UN Office.

Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who occasionally visited the eatery in the past condemned the terrorist attack in his tweet. Omar tweeted, "Very sorry to hear about the attack on the Krishna Dhaba in Srinagar, these attacks are unacceptable. I hope the injured person who is himself associated with the dhaba & is undergoing treatment in a city hospital makes a complete & speedy recovery".

Junaid Azim Mattu, Mayor of Srinagar Municipal Corporation in a tweet said, "Deeply anguished to hear about an apparent attack by terrorists at the Krishna Dhaba in Sonwar, Srinagar where a civilian has received injuries. Strongly condemn this act of cowardice and barbarism. My prayers for the speedy and complete recovery of the injured civilian". **IANS**



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Fresh trouble

With more infectious variants of the COVID-19 virus now reaching India, this is no time to drop our guard

A cursory drive through any Indian city or town will make anyone believe that the COVID-19 pandemic is past us. In fact, outside cities like Delhi, even face mask usage levels seem to have dropped. Snatches from the crowds gathered at the recently concluded Test in Chennai were alarming because they showed many fans either not wearing masks at all or wearing them in a wrong fashion, not covering their mouth and nose properly. After a few months of an enforced lockdown and several more months of economic and social inactivity, many Indians seem to have expressed themselves by venturing out. However, it is very likely that the reports of a declining caseload and fewer fatalities from COVID-19 are offering a false sense of security and even inspiring an increasing number of Indians to take it easy. Assertions by some administrators and reports that India might have achieved "herd immunity" are also among the reasons behind the lax attitude currently on display on most Indian streets. Yes, India might have achieved some degree of herd immunity and the oft-repeated mantra of India's high pathogen load contributing to this could well be true, but until more studies are conducted on this subject, it would be wrong to make assumptions. This is particularly true in light of the latest reports emerging that the Brazilian and South African mutations of the COVID-19 virus have been detected in India.

While there is no conclusive evidence so far that these mutations are deadlier, the rapid deterioration of the public health system in the Amazonian city of Manaus, thanks to the new mutation, should be worrying. Especially since officials in Manaus had also believed that the city had achieved a level of "herd immunity" a few months ago. It is also pertinent to remember that evidence released by vaccine manufacturers such as AstraZeneca, who are collaborating with the Serum Institute of India (SII), have shown that the existing vaccines may not provide the high degree of protection against the new mutations that they did against the initial virus. As India rolls out its mass vaccination programme, this should be a reason of worry for Indian administrators. The new cases with the mutated virus have to be contained before they can cause a major outbreak just when India's economy is beginning to recover. And while one expects the authorities — bureaucratic, healthcare and political — to take the right steps to contain the outbreak, it should not take away from the responsibility of the public at large. We should continue to maintain an appropriate degree of social distancing, keep safe and hygienic conditions and, most important, continue to wear face masks as much as possible. We cannot afford another outbreak, especially a more virulent one. Medical science has worked at double speed to ensure effective vaccines but we, the people, cannot abdicate our responsibility towards ourselves, our families and the society at large.

PICTALK



An interior view of a COVID-19 vaccination centre in Berlin

AP

Fallacious claim?

Kumaraswamy's attempt to discredit Ram temple fundraisers sets a dangerous precedent

It is the responsibility of every Indian to protect the secular credentials of our democracy. This duty becomes more significant if one holds a powerful position or is a public figure. No one should be allowed to erase the fine line separating religion from politics for the sake of vote bank or vested interest. Ironically, former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy appears to be least concerned about the consequences of demolishing this fragile boundary. In a brazen statement, he drew parallels between the Right-wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the erstwhile Nazi Party of Germany, alleging that the donation collectors for the construction of Ram Mandir had been marking the houses of those who didn't pay them money. He underlined that the act was similar to what the Nazis did during Adolf Hitler's regime when lakhs of Jews were executed. Now, even if the volunteers are marking houses "illegally", it is for the Government and the courts to decide. Of course, the Opposition has the right to raise an objection but it should be well-founded and justifiable, not like the one the former CM has raised. His claim reeks of petty politics which might rip apart the social fabric and potentially even plunge the society into a spate of communal violence.

At a time when the nation is still battling COVID-19, unemployment and economic slowdown, the politicians of all hues should exercise caution and avoid making statements that might lead to disturbance of any kind. The JD(S) leader's utterances are a surefire recipe to fan unrest. The donation drive for the new temple facade is being undertaken across the nation, with fundraisers from the RSS, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and other Sangh affiliates going door to door. In their quest, they are reaching out to people even in pockets where the saffron brigade doesn't enjoy significant support. It's not hard to imagine how quickly matters can get out of hand if the residents of such localities turn up against these volunteers. It's really awful that a seasoned politician like Kumaraswamy didn't think twice before issuing such a foolhardy statement. With the fundraising drive slated to end on February 27, we can only hope that the state of affairs remains peaceful. However, with five key electoral battles ahead, including the one in politically sensitive West Bengal, there seems to be hardly anything "secular" in the statement made by the Janata Dal (Secular) leader.

Learning to create a world of peace

Those in control of power at every level must be honest to themselves and perform their duties with integrity to create a better tomorrow



JS RAJPUT

The first two decades of the 21st century are over. We are saddled with wars and violence all around, distrust and apprehensions can be smelled across international borders, and terrorism and fundamentalism have wracked the backbone of several nations, leaving them in greater poverty and insecurity. Imagine the plight of those who are forced to migrate to unfamiliar lands. This happens despite the fact that a considerable number of nations has moved ahead economically and achieved some semblance of social and cultural uplift, besides the equality of opportunity in access and success. Looking around, one would find global deliberations getting centred around markets, GDP growth, economic policies; of course issues like global warming, climate change and environmental degradation do come up regularly, but without much commitment. The greatest promise of the 20th century was inclusion, equality of opportunity, and that meant human dignity to all those who had been deprived of it by vested interests, suffering subhuman practices like racism, apartheid, caste considerations, gender subjugation and a lot more. The biggest decision of the 20th century was to respect diversity and cut down on exclusion.

Numerous initiatives at the national and international level may be cited in support of an emerging climate that would permit every human to savour the scent of fresh breeze in an environment of liberty, equality and fraternity! By implication, it would mean eradication of ignorance, poverty, poor health and universal access to human rights. People in such a society must know their rights and be committed to performing their duties. When the UNO (now the UN) was established on October 24, 1945, it was expected that the world would henceforth move towards global peace, harmony and brotherhood. The same year, Unesco was also born with a preamble to its constitution that generated huge hopes all around: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds



of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." The untold sufferings of the World Wars and the cruelty on Hiroshima and Nagasaki left people with no option but to strive hard to avoid wars in future, and sincerely move towards a world of peace. To augment their faith, there were luminaries like Albert Einstein and Mahatma Gandhi. They motivated many more, prominent mentions being Martin Luther King, Jr, and Nelson Mandela. Yes, there was an alternative available which preached global brotherhood through mutual trust and faith in truth and nonviolence. Unfortunately, it has not clicked effectively so far.

The how and why of the dichotomy of the expectations of the 20th century, and where we stand in the 21st at this stage, deserves an incisive scrutiny. The fundamentals were not beyond the comprehension of the luminaries who had an awareness of factors that could lead to serious distortions of the core values necessary for a vibrant democracy. When Gandhi responded to Julian Huxley, the then Director General of Unesco, on the draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



IN THE LONG TERM, SCHOOLTEACHERS COULD BE ROPED IN TO REALISE HOW THEY ARE THE PRIME MOVERS IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATIONS. IN FACT, THEY ARE AT THE TOP OF THE WORKFORCE PYRAMID THAT CREATES NATIONAL FUTURE

Charter, he put on record an eternal guiding principle which is the lifeline of sustaining humanity on earth: "If everyone does his duty, everyone else would get his right." Men and women devoted to the cause of human rights the world over would not find even a treatise on the subject that could say more. This principle is to be implemented at the grassroots, and should extend to the top level. There are only two ways to achieve the transformation: Those in control of power and authority at every level are convinced that to create a better tomorrow for the generations ahead — including their own kith and kin — they must be honest to themselves and perform their duties with integrity. Without this, they would be totally unfair to their progeny. This could be a national campaign. In the long term, schoolteachers could be roped in to realise how they are the prime movers in the process of preparing the next generations. In fact, they are at the top of the workforce pyramid that creates national future.

They are the *acharyas*; people are supposed to follow their conduct, character and composure. They are the original icons. If a teacher is pun-

tual, sincere, dexterous and empathetic, he would never have to tell children about values and human qualities. These would silently be absorbed by his wards. A national plan on these lines shall need no financial investment. It is the initial schooling that could — without burdening the textbooks — let children learn that nature could offer sufficient resources to meet the need of everyone but not the greed of anyone. A generation could be prepared in about a decade that would sincerely realise its primary role in maintaining the sensitive man-nature relationship and be ready to accept its responsibility to maintain and sustain it.

Human beings have the gift to envision, both individually and collectively. As humans we have not applied our minds, and often human indiscretion and greed have triggered disasters that were already anticipated. The latest tragedy in Uttarakhand could be one more eye opener. Too many hydel power plants, cutting of trees and indiscreet mining were known to cause disasters. Let this warning from Mother Nature not go unheeded.

(The author works in education and social cohesion. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

KIRAN BEDI ACTED AT BJP'S BEHEST

Sir—The removal of Kiran Bedi as Puducherry's Lieutenant Governor (L-G) must be a great relief not only for Chief Minister V Narayanasamy but also for a large section of people of the Union Territory who were fed up with the manner in which Bedi obstructed the functioning of the Government and halted the development of the UT and welfare of its people.

She exhibited only confrontational attitude and animosity towards the elected Government and did everything that goes against the dignity of the post of L-G, and behaved as if she is subservient only to the interests of the BJP. Bedi actively promoted the interests of the saffron party. However, her autocratic and arrogant moves have done more damage to the BJP than benefiting the party and it will definitely reflect in the Assembly election results. It is unfortunate that the NDA Government at the Centre has decided to remove her only after allowing her to continue with her unconstitutional agenda for so long.

If the party was really interested in the welfare of the people of the UT, it should have sacked her long back. Further, she should not be posted as L-G or Governor in any other non-BJP ruled State as doing so will only bring disgrace to the office of President which makes these appointments. She has manifested very clearly during her stay in the Raj Nivas that she definitely doesn't deserve to hold any constitutional post.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

DON'T BLAME THE PITCH AT ALL

Sir—This refers to the editorial 'Dust bowl politics' (February 17). The Indian cricket team has always been at the receiving end when it comes to the preparation of pitches, especially for a Test series at home. During the India-England second Test at Chepauk in Chennai, Stuart Broad liked a tweet by ex-Australian batsman Mark Waugh, who called the pitch "unacceptable", while Ben Stokes liked a tweet by

Little steps will make big difference



Climate change has led to erratic weather patterns like increased snowfall, heavy rainfall, warm winters and fast-melting glaciers. The loss of glaciers at an increased pace is dangerous for human survival. We all have seen how nature played havoc in the form of a deluge in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district recently. It was possibly triggered due to a glacial break

in the higher reaches.

The cause of concern is that mankind, in its quest for development, has exploited nature and its resources mindlessly. Activities like deforestation, mining, rampant and unscientific construction, blasting, poaching, hunting and suchlike have inflicted irreversible damage to nature. Further, greenhouse gas emission and release of chlorofluorocarbons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere have depleted the ozone layer and added to the increase in global temperatures. It's not only on the part of the Government and big industrialists to protect the environment but all of us must fulfill our duty towards Mother Nature. We must do whatever we can to save energy, like switching off lights when not working, car pooling, using public transport, avoiding celebratory firing and using firecrackers and so on. We must remember that these little steps on our part will add up making a big difference.

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

Matt Prior who suggested "the pitch is not for a five-day match". But England's loss can't be entirely blamed on the pitch.

The ground reality is that batting was surely difficult but Rohit, Rahane and Kohli proved in the first innings that it was far from being unplayable. Ashwin's heroics with the bat and bowl were a message for English cricketers that it had little to do with the pitch and more with intent, skills and experimenting with new techniques under tough conditions. The pitches of England, Australia and South Africa have seaming conditions when India or any sub-continent team visits there. India's win was in outplaying England in a just and skilful manner. Nobody should underestimate or downplay it. Our team is one of the best teams in the world and the players have proved it time and again.

Nischai Vats | Sultanpur

ENSURE TRAFFIC RULE COMPLIANCE

Sir—Accidents have become common in India. Every now and then we hear about

some tragic road accident in which people die for no fault of theirs. The condition of our roads, including highways, is pathetic. Those who survive are just plain lucky.

The condition of State Highways is very poor as compared to National Highways. There are still many roads which are not one-way. Further, private buses and vehicles, which follow no traffic rules, continue to operate with impunity under the patronage of corrupt transport department officials and policemen. These corrupt officials do not take action against the errant vehicles or their owners and extort money from them. Even many school buses don't undergo regular checkup that includes checking the efficacy of their brakes and checking tail lights. It endangers the life of children who go to school in these buses.

MR Jayanthi | Mumbai

SOUND BITE

The Budget Session will begin on March 24. Its duration has not been decided yet and the business advisory committee of the Assembly will take a decision soon.



GOA CM
—Pramod Savant

The first shipment of Chinese vaccines against COVID-19 is scheduled to arrive in Thailand on February 24, followed by a second batch next month.

Thailand Deputy PM
—Anutin Charnvirakul

Government, we want the COVID vaccine! Why is so much being sent abroad when so many Indians in India await their turn.

Actor
—Suchitra Krishnamoorthi

The Indian cricket board is contemplating allowing fans in stadiums for the upcoming season of the IPL.

BCCI president
—Sourav Ganguly

The Indian market is very vibrant. To leverage this market further, organisations will have to have robust digital infrastructure that presents an opportunity for us.

IBM CEO
—Arvind Krishna

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

NPOs SHOULD LEVERAGE TECH

Non-profits should adopt technology in order to improve their functioning and transparency



SUBHAJEET MUKHERJEE

The world stands at the cusp of robust digital consumption, establishing the significance of technological expansion as never before. Irrespective of the industry, technology these days is at the core of the evolution of a company, be it a profit or a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO). Technology and innovation help consumer brands reach stakeholders and build a long-lasting relationship. NPOs require to create awareness and leverage technology to engage with possible contributors. And like any other industry, achieve operational efficiency and effectiveness. While businesses driven by profit exploit technology to obtain optimum results, NPOs stay at the receiving end as they are not well-versed at harnessing the benefits of technology, owing to various constraints like lack of funds, shortage of manpower and the lack of technological know-how and so on. According to a survey conducted among 725 philanthropic professionals across the US, Canada, the UK, France, Germany and the Netherlands, it was reported that about 93 per cent of professionals lacked the expertise required to adopt new technologies.



As the Novel Coronavirus raged last year, its devastating shocks were felt by the business sector and even NPOs could not escape the clutches of the economic downturn induced by the pandemic. A lot of NPOs collapsed last year, along with their dreams. The COVID-19 menace compounded the challenge for philanthropic organisations who were already struggling to keep pace with technology. The Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy, Ashoka University conducted a survey among 50 leaders from various NPOs located across India and, a majority of them admitted that they had been procrastinating on digital technology adoption in their operations and the sudden lockdown caught them by surprise as they were completely unprepared to handle the crisis.

It would be in the best interest of NPOs to mutate their DNA and adapt a professional mindset when it comes to the integration of technology. As charitable organisations are at more of a disadvantage than profit making businesses, adopting technology can make their operations more efficient and cost-effective as technological intervention promotes smart work. It prioritises work according to the time, budget, the workforce and schedule. With the help of automation, work gets organised efficiently, thus reducing the unnecessary manual process, saving time, labour and operational costs and eventually increasing productivity.

NPOs working on a trust model, must adopt technology to ensure transparency in their functioning. This will play a significant role in establishing and maintaining the faith of stakeholders, volunteers, partners and employees. Here, automation plays an instrumental role in improving transparency. Further, to attract donors charitable entities need to increase their visibility or presence and, this is where technology comes to their rescue, helping them expand their reach. However, intense digital penetration draws attention to another area of growing concern — cybersecurity. In day-to-day working, personal and business-related information collides with other data sets, thus imposing an obligation on these organisations to protect their data. NPOs need a digital policy road map. They need to know how to protect sensitive data from theft and breach and secure it. It is also essential for NPOs to safeguard their assets with the help of technology that frees them from any unwarranted legal liability. While investigating cyber attacks, administration and Information Technology leaders must have extensive knowledge of related laws and full understanding of the obligations associated with it, before employing software or the technique. The NPOs need to recruit technically-competent volunteers and staff. They also need to bridge the gap between technical and non-technical employees. In a nutshell, technology plays the role of a scorer increasing an NPO's efficacy and transparency.

(The writer is founder and president of a non-profit, The Programming Foundation. The views expressed are personal.)

Embrace agroforestry to end agrarian crisis

Despite the ongoing farmers' stir, one seldom finds any debate highlighting the crunch and its linkage with deteriorating natural resources, which is the main factor behind this crisis



BKP SINHA

Nature's laws are immutable. Where forests are removed indiscriminately, drought, pestilence, famine and flash floods rear their ugly heads. When the green revolution came to India in the early 50s, a whopping 1,973.4 million hectare (Ha) of forest land either went under the plough or was destroyed for various development purposes and this process is still going on. Water, soil health and climate change play a major role in making or breaking the agrarian economy. In the context of the above, the role of trees in enhancing and sustaining productivity of the soil, water and biodiversity assumes great significance. Hence, the need for agroforestry research and extension is required in various kinds of marginal land. For instance, in Kenya and in other countries real progress has been made in sustainable agriculture with the introduction of appropriate trees.

The International Council for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) has stated that its central aim is to foster research on the place of woody perennials in combination with crops or animals to solve the problem of small farmers. This approach won over Chinese peasants to forestry. Chinese farmers included timber trees with woody perennials for all purposes like orchards, bamboo, groves and so on, while Chinese foresters encouraged and demonstrated intercropping. It is an irony that despite the ongoing farmers' agitation and the persistent agrarian crisis in the country, one seldom finds any debate highlighting the crunch and its linkage with the deteriorating health of natural resources, which apparently is the main factor behind this messy situation.

There cannot be any denial of the fact that the health of the ecosystem in India has come to a stage where its carrying capacity has already been stretched to the limit and it seems to be on the brink of a precipice. While India's overall food production has grown, declining productivity is evident for oilseeds and pulses. In the rainfed areas, yields are declining and rapid land degradation is evident. Even in the irrigated, high-yield crop areas, stagnation is apparent and their sustainability is also a matter of doubt.

The environmental impact of the green revolution that is based on high input and output, is well-documented but the cost of maintaining it necessitates various limits and the economic inequality resulting from this development is apparent now. Two kinds of fertiliser fertility problems are commonly encountered in the country: Low and declining soil fertility. Tackling a decline in fertility is linked to working with nature and assisting the restoration of the natural processes. It may also require external inputs like fertilisers and water along with trees. The result of five years of work of the Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute (IGFRI) Jhansi has revealed a significant reduction in soil nutrient losses and improvement in soil fertility. In a recently-published article in a national daily, Atul Thakur revealed how productive quality and prices are key factors that have combined to keep the Indian farmers poor. Based on quantitative data he observed that returns per Ha from kharif crops as a per cent of inputs and labour cost are steeply declining. He summarised: "Farm returns were falling and low to begin with. Divided over four months of the kharif season the average paddy farmers' monthly returns were



ANYONE WHO IS CONVERSANT WITH SOIL, WATER AND TREES SHOULD BE CONVINCED ABOUT THE LIMITATION OF INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE AND THE POTENTIAL OF AGROFORESTRY IN THE COUNTRY. HOWEVER, FOR LARGE-SCALE ADOPTION OF AGROFORESTRY, ITS CONSTRAINTS MUST BE REMOVED FIRST. IN SUCH A SITUATION, TREE PLANTATION CAN PLAY A COMPLEMENTARY ROLE TO AGRICULTURE AND HELP RESTORE THE HEALTH OF THE LAND

The writer is a former IFS officer. The views expressed are personal.



₹4,903 in 2013-14. That declined to ₹4,620 by 2017-18."

"Furthermore, for other crops, the returns have stagnated. There has been no significant increase in the last five years. This means the Government's target of doubling farmers' incomes by 2022 will remain a pipe dream," he says.

Thakur further observes that India's yield when compared to other countries, is the lowest per Ha for most crops and uses more land and labour to produce lower yields. Indian agriculture adds 16 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but provides 41 per cent jobs whereas China adds 71 per cent to the GDP with 25 per cent labour and Brazil adds 4.4 per cent with nine per cent labour. Further, due to high inputs Indian farmers cannot compete in the international market because of their high prices.

In India, industrial agriculture was powered by the Haber-Bosch Process that was invented by Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch which produces ammonia for chemical fertilisers. This process makes nature's fertilisation via sunlight, macrobiotic soils and crop rotation very marginal. Ammonia production now consumes two per cent of the energy supply globally and produces 1.5-1.6 trillion CO₂ emissions per year. Nitrogenous fertilisers derived from the Haber-Bosch Process currently provide roughly half of all the nitrogen required for world crops. Organic recycling, manure, crop residues and atmospheric deposition

provide another half. In India this ratio must be much higher.

Duke University's Subhrendu Pattanayak concludes that industrial agriculture is a leading cause of deforestation as it accounted for 80 per cent of it between 2000 and 2010. Soya and palm oil cultivation caused over 30 per cent deforestation across Asia and 70 per cent in Latin America.

Industrial monocropping exhausts soil nutrients, pollutes water channels, destroys habitats and biodiversity. Industrial agriculture costs the world over \$3 trillion per annum. Sustainable agriculture with agroforestry reduces soil damage, chemical use, diversifies agriculture and protects habitat for biodiversity.

Sir Albert Howard in his treatise, 'Soil and Health', observes: "Forest is an effective agent in the prevention of soil erosion... The trees and undergrowth break up the rainfall into fine spray and the litter on the ground further protects the soil from the impact of descending water streams. The roots and residues of the trees and animal life in all woodlands are converted into humus, which is then absorbed by the soil underneath, increasing its porosity and water-holding power. The trees not only prevent soil erosion but store large volumes of water and sequester atmospheric carbon. Mechanical measures to arrest soil erosion like terracing are secondary matters.

Excessive use of irrigation

required for industrial agriculture gradually destroys the binding power of organic matter which keeps the soil particles together. It displaces the soil air, which is vital for the respiratory function of the roots. The main strategy of industrial farming is oriented for rice or wheat at huge indirect and direct cost but keeps farmers away from growing fruits, nuts, vegetables and pulses. Intensive industrial monoculture deserves to be debated throughout the country.

The big question remains that despite all the obvious advantages of agroforestry why has it remained confined so far to a few places, where forest-based industries have pushed it for clonal plantation of eucalyptus or poplar trees? There is no dispute over the capacity of clonal plantations combined with crops in industrial plantations to create jobs through forward and backward economic linkage. The growth of Yamunanagar is a shining example of how the produce of agroforestry acted as the catalyst to change a small township into a vibrant industrial complex.

Anyone who is conversant with soil, water and tree should be convinced about the limitation of industrial agriculture and the potential of agroforestry in the country. However, for large-scale adoption of agroforestry its constraints must be removed first. In such a situation tree plantation can play a complementary role to agriculture and help restore the health of the land.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

KAPIL MISHRA IS OPENLY INCITING HINDUS AGAINST MUSLIMS, SIKHS AND CHRISTIANS. DELHI POLICE IS BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF THIS TOOLKIT.
—CONGRESS LEADER DIGVIJAYA SINGH



HE IS THE SAME MAN WHO CLAIMED THAT THE 26/11 MUMBAI ATTACK WAS A CONSPIRACY OF THE RSS.
—BJP LEADER KAPIL MISHRA

Challenges faced by India in counting Coronavirus deaths

CRS data must be seen as a priority among the authorities for its complete and timely utilisation by health officers, particularly during an emergency

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the biggest global health emergency in living memory. A whopping 24,31,445 Coronavirus-related deaths were recorded around the world from the time the contagion spread in 2019.

India, the second-most populated country in the world, faced an unprecedented health crisis due to the outbreak. However, the Government took all the steps necessary to flatten the curve and now, over ten months after the first lockdown was announced in the country there seems to be a ray of hope. As many as 1,06,44,858 people have recovered from the disease so far and the national recovery rate stands at 97.33 per cent. India on Wednesday recorded just 11,610 new COVID-19 cases, taking the total tally of infections to 1,09,37,320, according to data



NAYAN GANDHI

KRISHNA KUMAR

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from the Union Health Ministry. With 10 more fatalities in the last 24 hours, the death toll has reached 1,55,913.

There has been a lot of speculation and debates over alleged under-reporting of COVID-19 deaths in India. However, no robust evidence has been provided by registration offices located at crematoriums or burial places, hospitals and other registration offices. Therefore, it is counter-intuitive to assume that hundreds of thousands of deaths have not been reported in the country.

Further, accurate and continuous recording of deaths is pertinent for designing immediate health interventions in this unprecedented healthcare crisis. Hence, the role of the Civil Registration System (CRS) in the complete and reliable recording of COVID-19 related fatalities cannot be

stressed enough.

Mortality data obtained from the CRS is based on real-time and continuous recording. Besides, it is verified by the civil authority, therefore, it is highly reliable for decision-making. The CRS provides an annual report on birth and death statistics with baseline characteristics such as age, gender and place of residence. It is an important data source for the causes of death statistics.

Accurate and reliable information on mortality has many utilities for policymakers and health officers. Complete death statistics are pertinent for health experts to know the age and gender-specific death rate, distribution and cause of mortality.

Plus, CRS is the only data source that provides death statistics at the lower administrative level. Adequate and time-



ly information on casualties and causes of death at the district or block level is essential for health officers for initiating immediate healthcare interventions. Besides, CRS may provide an accurate baseline for assessing excess mortality due to COVID-19. Data on fatalities for the last three or five years could be compared with current statistics to observe the sudden increase or

decrease in the number of casualties and its causes.

Although the CRS is permanent, systematic and functional across India's length and breadth, it suffers from many challenges. Lack of staff, logistics, irregular training and no regular supervision are some highlighted performance barriers. Apart from this, a delayed and incomplete publication of the annual report has decreased the utility of this vital data. Hence, CRS data is not the topmost priority among policymakers and health officers, even though it is taken into consideration.

According to the latest Office of the Registrar-General and Census Commissioner (ORGI) report for 2020, nearly 14 per cent of deaths were not recorded in 2018. Besides, the level of registration of mortalities is widely varied across the country. Many big-

ger States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Madhya Pradesh, recorded fewer than 50 per cent of the deaths.

Further, information on causes of fatalities is limited and not reliable in most cases. As per the latest 'Medical Certification of Cause of Death' report only 21 per cent of fatalities are medically certified.

Looking at the CRS' systematic and broader network, complete vital statistics based on CRS must be published on time. Also, a monthly report may provide critical factors for decision-making and initiating preventive measures at the time of a health emergency.

Timely information on excess of deaths at the local administrative level may alert health officials for adequate healthcare intervention. Moreover, comparing the trends and patterns of mortal-

ities will give accurate estimates of excess deaths due to the virus. It is not practical to expect medical certification for all deaths due to lack of qualified staff and resource constraints, but verbal autopsy may identify COVID-19 related deaths. Further, CRS staff must be provided with Personal Protective Equipment and other resources to continue their duty safely and adequately.

Places where facilities for online death registration are available, must record casualties on time and share data with the State headquarters for timely compilation and generation of a monthly report.

CRS data must be seen as a priority among the authorities and stakeholders for its complete and timely utilisation by health officers, particularly during a health emergency, such as the current pandemic.

Mass protests in Myanmar as UN warns of violence



BRITISH QUEEN'S HUSBAND ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL
London: Britain's 93-year-old Prince Philip has been admitted to a London hospital after feeling unwell, Buckingham Palace said on Wednesday. The palace said the husband of Queen Elizabeth II was admitted to the private King Edward VII Hospital on Tuesday evening.

BOY IN SWITZERLAND DIES AFTER IGLOO COLLAPSES
Bern: A 7-year-old boy has died in eastern Switzerland after a homemade igloo collapsed on him and his father, police said on Wednesday. The accident happened Tuesday in Tarasp in southeastern Switzerland. Police in Graubunden canton said the collapse buried the boy and his father under snow.

PAK: 2 CHRISTIANS BOOKED ON BLASPHEMY CHARGES
Lahore: Two Christian youths have been booked on blasphemy charges in Pakistan's Punjab province, police said on Wednesday. "Model Town Police (in Lahore) have registered an FIR against two Christian youths under sections 295-A, 295-B and 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC)," Superintendent of Police Asim Iftikhar told reporters here.

UN RELEASES \$15M TO FIGHT EBOLA IN GUINEA
United Nations: The United Nations announced on Tuesday it is releasing \$15 million from its emergency relief fund to help Guinea and Congo combat new outbreaks of Ebola. UN Humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock made the announcement, and UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the funding will help both countries respond to outbreak and support neighboring countries.



Demonstrators gather in an intersection close to Sule Pagoda to protest against the military coup in Yangon, Myanmar on Wednesday

AP ■ YANGON
Thousands of demonstrators flooded the streets of Myanmar's biggest city Wednesday, in one of the largest protests yet of a coup, despite warnings from a UN human rights expert that recent troop movements could indicate the military was planning a violent crackdown.

In Yangon, protesters marched carrying signs calling for ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi to be released from detention, while others feigned car trouble, strategically abandoning their vehicles — and leaving the hoods up — to prevent security forces from easily accessing the demonstrations. Large rallies were also held in the country's second-biggest city, Mandalay, and the capital of Naypyitaw, in defiance of an order banning gatherings of five or more people.

One motorist, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared being targeted, explained tongue-in-cheek that his car had broken

down "due to the suffering that our people are undergoing now. We just stopped the cars here on the road to show that we do not want the military

regime." The demonstrations came a day after UN rapporteur Tom Andrews expressed alarm at reports of soldiers being

transported into Yangon, noting that such movements had previously preceded killings, disappearances and mass arrests.

"I am terrified that given the confluence of these two developments — planned mass protests and troops converging — we could be on the precipice of the military committing even greater crimes against the people of Myanmar," he said in a statement issued by the UN Human Rights office in Geneva.

By Wednesday evening, there had been no reports of major violence. The military seized power on February 1, the day newly elected parliamentarians were supposed to take their seats — a shocking backslide for a country that had been taking tentative steps toward democracy.

The junta said the takeover was necessary because Suu Kyi's government had failed to investigate fraud claims in elections her party won in a landslide; the election commission has dismissed those claims.

The high protest turnout came a day after junta leaders had declared that the demonstrations were dying down —

and Kyi Pyar, a former lawmaker from Suu Kyi's party, said that dismissal only served to spur on the resistance.

"This upset the people," she said. "We are not weak, we will never step back in the fight against the military regime. So we are back on the street again."

In Naypyitaw, thousands of people, including private bank employees and engineers, marched down the city's wide boulevards, chanting for the release of Suu Kyi and President Win Myint.

Protesters also poured into the streets of Mandalay, where earlier in the week security forces pointed guns at demonstrators and attacked them with slingshots and sticks. Local media reported that several people were injured.

The marches have been organised as part of a civil disobedience movement, spearheaded by medical workers and supported by many civil servants. Police filed a new charge against Suu Kyi, her lawyer said Tuesday, a move likely to keep her under house

arrest and further fuel public anger. It was the second charge against Suu Kyi — the first for illegally possessing walkie-talkies, the second for an alleged violation of coronavirus restrictions — both apparent attempts to provide a legal veneer for her detention.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson issued a strong denunciation of the legal maneuver.

"New charges against Aung San Suu Kyi fabricated by the Myanmar military are a clear violation of her human rights," he tweeted.

"We stand with the people of Myanmar and will ensure those responsible for this coup are held to account."

On Tuesday night, the military for a third day in a row ordered an internet blackout — almost entirely blocking online access from 1 am to 9 am.

While the military did not say why the internet was being blocked, there is widespread speculation that the government is installing a firewall system to allow it to monitor or block online activity.

Joe Biden describes life at the White House: 'A gilded cage'

AP ■ WASHINGTON
Four weeks into his presidency, Joe Biden says he's still getting used to the trappings of the office.

Biden offered a frank description of what it's like to live at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. During his CNN town hall Tuesday night, referencing past presidents who have spoken of the building as "a little like a gilded cage."

"I get up in the morning and look at Jill and say, 'Where the hell are we?'" Biden joked, adding that he wasn't used to household staff waiting on him.

"I find myself extremely self-conscious," Biden added, saying he was unaccustomed to someone "handing me my suit-coat."

Biden's working-class upbringing in Scranton, Pennsylvania, has long been a central part of his political brand. He most recently lived



President Joe Biden walks to the Oval Office after traveling to Georgetown University to receive ashes for Ash Wednesday on Wednesday

in a large house in the Wilmington, Delaware, suburbs.

The White House features a spacious lawn that has an unimpeded view of the Washington and Lincoln Monuments, but is otherwise surrounded by high fencing and a small army of guards. Biden said it's "totally different" from the vice president's residence, set on 80 acres and

offering ample room to swim, explore and exercise in greater privacy.

The former vice president said he'd been in the Oval Office 100 times or more over the years, but had never been to the residential areas of the White House.

Even if the residence still feels new, Biden suggested he's already settled deeply into the work of the presidency.

Trump attacks 'dour' Republican Senator McConnell

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump has launched a scathing personal attack on Mitch McConnell, calling him a "dour, sullen and unsmiling political hack," days after the top Republican Senator and former close ally voted to acquit the ex-US president in his second impeachment trial.

McConnell, who led the Senate for years, voted to acquit Trump in his impeachment trial last week. But the 78-year-old Senator from Kentucky then attacked Trump as "morally responsible" for the deadly US Capitol riot on January 6.

Trump and McConnell — the two most powerful men in the Republican Party — have been estranged in recent months after working closely during the former president's four years in office. But things

changed after Trump lost the November 3 election to his Democratic rival, Joe Biden.

"Mitch is a dour, sullen, and unsmiling political hack, and if Republican Senators are going to stay with him, they will not win again," Trump said in the terse statement on Tuesday against the Senate Minority Leader.

"He will never do what needs to be done, or what is right for our country. Where necessary and appropriate, I will back primary rivals who espouse Making America Great Again and our policy of America First. We want brilliant, strong, thoughtful, and compassionate leadership," the 74-year-old former president said.

Trump asserted that McConnell's shortcomings had contributed to the Republican Party's loss of the Senate

China steps up online controls with new rule for bloggers

Taipei: Ma Xiaolin frequently wrote about current affairs on one of China's leading microblogging sites, where he has 2 million followers. But recently, he said in a post, the Weibo site called and asked him not to post original content on

topics ranging from politics to economic and military issues.

"As an international affairs researcher, it looks like I can only go the route of entertainment, food and beverage now," the international relations professor wrote on Jan. 31. **AP**

UN rights body to 'raise' missing Dubai princess with UAE

AP ■ LONDON

The United Nations' human rights body said Wednesday it will seek information from the United Arab Emirates about a daughter of Dubai's powerful ruler after she said in video messages that she was being imprisoned in a heavily guarded villa.

Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed Al Maktoum tried to flee the wealthy Gulf state in 2018 but was detained by commandos in a boat off India. She had not been heard from until Tuesday, when the BBC's "Panorama" investigative programme broadcast video messages from the sheikha.

In the videos, which appear to have been recorded covertly, the 35-year-old princess says she is "worried about my safety and my life."

"I don't really know if I'm going to survive this situation," she says in one of the videos. The BBC said they were recorded over months on a phone she secretly received about a year after her capture.

SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Additional Special Trains as per the schedule given below:-

09307/09308 INDORE - CHANDIGARH - INDORE SPECIAL EXPRESS TRAIN (WEEKLY)					
Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.
09307	---	05:30	INDORE	15:10	---
09308	---	05:05	CHANDIGARH	---	16:30

DAYS OF RUN: 09307 from Indore on every Thursday from 25.02.2021 till further advice & 09308 from Chandigarh on every Friday from 26.02.2021 till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Dewas, Ujjain Jn, Maksi, Shajapur, Pachor Road, Biyavra Raigarh, Ruthiyai, Guna, Shivpuri, Gwalior Jn, Morena, Agra Cantt, Mathura Jn, Faridabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Meerut City, Saharanpur, Yamunanagar Jagadhri & Ambala Cant Jn Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09241/09242 INDORE - UDHAMPUR - INDORE SUPERFAST SPECIAL EXPRES TRAIN (WEEKLY)					
Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.
09241	---	23:30	INDORE	11:15	---
09242	---	22:50	UDHAMPUR	---	11:10

DAYS OF RUN: 09241 from Indore on every Monday from 22.02.2021 till further advice & 09242 from Udhampur on every Wednesday from 24.02.2021 till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Dewas, Ujjain Jn, Nagda Jn, Bhawani Mandi, Kota Jn, Sawai Madhopur, Mathura Jn, Delhi Sadarjng, Shakurbasti, Rohtak Jn, Jind Jn, Jakhaj Jn, Dhuri Jn, Ludhiana Jn, Jalandhar Cant, Pathankot Cantt & Jammu Tawi Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09337/09338 INDORE - DELHI SARAI ROHILLA - INDORE SUPERFAST SPECIAL EXPRES TRAIN (WEEKLY)					
Train No.:	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.
09337	---	19:20	INDORE	08:30	---
09338	---	12:05	DELHI SARAI ROHILLA	---	15:00

DAYS OF RUN: 09337 from Indore on every Sunday from 28.02.2021 till further advice & 09338 from Delhi Sarai Rohilla on every Monday from 01.03.2021 till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Fatehabad Chandrawatigan Jn, Ratlam Jn, Mandasor, Nimach, Chittaurgarh, Bhillwara, Ajmer, Jaipur, Dausa, Alwar Jn. & Rewari Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Note: The above Special Trains will have the reserved accommodation only.

For any other information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139 • Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in & download Railmadad app.

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E-Procurement Tender Notice No. 14/20-21 Date : 17.02.2021

Principal CMM, Metro Railway, Kolkata, 33/1, J.L. Nehru Road, Kolkata-700071 on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tender for following items already uploaded in website www.ireps.gov.in Tenderers may visit website www.ireps.gov.in for full details/description/drawing/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online.

Tender No.	Brief Description	Quantity	Tender Closing date & time
02211386	220V, 250AH Plante Lead Acid Battery.	8 Sets	22.02.2021 14.00 hrs.

Principal CMM, Metro Railway, Kolkata
FASTER • SAFER • SMOOTHER • CLEANER

Pakistan unlikely to exit 'grey' list of global terror funding watchdog until June

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is unlikely to exit the Financial Action Task Force's "grey" list until June, despite its efforts to garner support from the member nations ahead of the plenary meeting of the global terror financing and money laundering watchdog

next week, according to a media report on Wednesday.

The FATF's Plenary and Working Group meetings, scheduled to be held from February 21 to 26 in Paris, is all set to decide on Pakistan's grey list status.

Pakistan was placed on the FATF "grey" list in June

2018 and given a timeline to address global concerns by implementing 27 action points.

The FATF, during its virtual plenary in October last year, concluded that Pakistan will continue in its 'grey' list till February 2021 as it has failed to fulfil six key obligations of the global money laundering.

Executioners sanitised accounts of deaths in federal cases

AP ■ CHICAGO

Executioners who put 13 inmates to death in the last months of the Trump administration likened the process of dying by lethal injection to falling asleep and called guard-nets "beds" and final breaths "snores."

But those tranquil accounts are at odds with reports by The Associated Press and other



File photo shows the interior of the execution chamber in the US Penitentiary in Terre Haute

media witnesses of how prisoners' stomachs rolled, shook and shuddered as the pentobarbital took effect inside the US penitentiary death chamber in Terre Haute, Indiana. The AP witnessed every execution.

SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one man (depicted in the photo), **Named:** Satish Aggarwal, **S/o:** Sh. Shiv Kumar, **R/o:** H.No. SRS-168, Peera Garhi, Delhi **Aged:** 25 years, has been missing/kidnapped from the area of P.S. Paschim Vihar West, Delhi since 29.08.2018. In this regard a case vide DD No. 65-A, Dated 26.12.2020, has been registered at P.S. Paschim Vihar West, Delhi. His physical description is as under:



Satish Aggarwal

Height: 5'6" Feet, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Clothing:** Blue Colour T-Shirt, Blue Colour Jeans and Chapple in feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing man, may inform SHO, Paschim Vihar West, Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641

S.H.O
P.S. Paschim Vihar, West, Delhi.
Ph. : 011-25268394, 25280980

DP/636/OD/2021.

SEARCH OF MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one lady, (depicted in the photo), **Named:** Sunhari, **W/o:** Daya Chand, **R/o:** H.No. 23, Road 6, Andrews Ganj, New Delhi, **Age:** 73 years, has been missing from Gate No. 6, Dr. RML Hospital, New Delhi since 16.07.2019. She is mentally challenged. In this regard a case vide DD No. 11A, Dated 16.07.2019, has been registered at P.S. North Avenue, New Delhi. Her physical description is as under:



Sunhari

Height: 5'5" Feet, **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Oval, **Physique/Build:** Thin, **Hair:** Long and White, **Clothing:** Red Colour Chunnii, Pink Colour Suit, Black Colour Pajama and Red Colour Slippers in feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing lady, may inform SHO, North Avenue, New Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641

SHO
P.S. North Avenue, New Delhi
Ph. No. 011-23093040, 23093294

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that a female namedly **Anita W/o** Sh. Harish Babu **R/o** CN No. 78, Vivekanand Camp, Chanakya Puri, New Delhi has been missing since 14.01.2021 from Sanjay Camp, Chanakya Puri, New Delhi. In this regard **DD No. 38-A**, dated 17.01.2021 has been registered at PS, Chanakya Puri, New Delhi and information uploaded on ZIPNET No. : MNN21CHP03. The description of missing female is as under :

Name: Anita, **Husband's Name :** Sh. Harish Babu, **Age :** 37 year, **Height :** 5'4", **Built :** Strong, **Face :** Oval, **Complexion :** Fair, **Hair :** Long, **Clothing :** Red and Black Colour Suit and Red Pajami, **Black Colour Sleeper** in feet. **ID Mark:** Mole Mark Right Lips
If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
e-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax : 011-24368639
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641
SHO
P.S., Chanakya Puri,
New Delhi
Ph. : 011-23012003, 8750870523
DP/203/NDD/2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Manoj Kumar Rastogi "Mortgagor" who are in the process to avail the loan against the property bearing Ward No. 13, Area Measuring 60.94 Sq. Yds, waka within the limit of MC Lai Dogra of Pataudi, Tehsil Pataudi, Distt. Gurugram, Haryana owned by Radha Devi vide Sale Deed dated 3/4/2013 in favour of Sushila Devi in lieu of that she has also lodged an FIR on dated 17/2/21. All person/s having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan for purchase of the said Property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pk1-E, CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, 9810063351

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	6 NO. WORKS ANGANWARI CENTRES 2 NO. WORKS COMPLETION OF CHUPHAL AND TWO NO. OTHER WORKS	15.02.2021 23.02.2021	130.38 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0184-2262916 preveeng.kri@hry.nic.in
2	FOREST DEPARTMENT PINJORE	ESTABLISHMENT, REHABILITATION AND MAINTENANCE OF RESEARCH AREAS AND OTHER FORESTRY WORKS INCLUDING P.T.S WORK RESEARCH RANGE SOHNA	12.02.2021 26.02.2021	70 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01733230518 dforesearch.pinjore@gmail.com
3	FOREST DEPARTMENT PINJORE	ESTABLISHMENT, REHABILITATION AND MAINTENANCE OF RESEARCH AREAS AND OTHER FORESTRY ACTIVITIES INCLUDING P.T.S WORK UNDER RESEARCH RANGE HISAR	12.02.2021 26.02.2021	70 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01733230518 dforesearch.pinjore@gmail.com
4	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA KARNAL	BRINGING TO DESIGN SECTION OF RIVER YAMUNA EMBANKMENT FROM RD. 275000-285000 + 1 OTHER WORK	17.02.2021 03.03.2021	61.77 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01733230518 dforesearch.pinjore@gmail.com
5	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA AMBALA	MAKING OF WOODEN CUPBOARD ALMIRAH FRAME WITH PARTITION IN C-BRANCH OF SYL WS DIVISION AMBALA + 4 WORKS	CLOSING DATE 22.02.2021	12.02 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01712973270 xensyambala@gmail.com
6	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA DELHI	LAYING OF D.I. 450MM I/D (K-7 GRADE) PIPE LINES FOR DISPOSAL OF TREATED EFFLUENT OF CEPT, KUNDLI AND 1400MM I/D RCC (NP-3) PIPELINE FOR DISPOSAL OF STORM WATER FROM KUNDLI TO ABANDONED DRAIN NO. 6 (RD 21675 TO RD 29400 OF DD NO. 8)	CLOSING DATE 08.03.2021	543 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9958527609 xen-wsdel.irr@gov.in
7	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA NUH	REPLACING AND MAKING TEMPORARY PIPE CULVERT AT RD. 8400 OF LEADING CHANNEL OF LANDOHA NALLAH.	CLOSING DATE 25.02.2021	1.02 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01267-271271 xen-wsnuh.irr@gov.in
8	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA, CHARKHI DADR	RECLAMATION OF LAND AND DEVELOPING RESERVOIR FOR STORING CANAL WATER NEARBY AT RD 36350 RD OF LOHARU CANAL + 7 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 09.03.2021	297.76 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01255027003 xen-hwsdrr.irr@gov.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in
RO No. 1836

India to be among fastest growing emerging economies in FY22

RATING HINGES ON DEFICIT, DEBT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

S&P Global Ratings on Wednesday said India will be one of the fastest growing emerging market economies with a 10 per cent growth in the next fiscal, and future sovereign rating action would hinge on lowering fiscal deficit and sustaining debt burden.

S&P Director, Sovereign & International Public Finance Ratings, Andrew Wood said the forecast for India in 2021 is on stronger side and shows that a lot of economic activity,

which was frozen last year, is coming back on line to normalisation thereby brightening the growth prospects, as well as structural strengths of Indian economy coming back to the fore.

"India will be one of the fastest-growing economy in the EM (emerging market) space. India's contraction this year was steep and may be deeper than global average, but bounce back of 10% that we are expecting next fiscal year will be putting India amongst the fastest growers in 2021 and more importantly we see Indian economy growing at 6% over medium term, may be slightly higher, and that compares very well to EM all

around the world," Wood said in a webinar on India outlook for 2021.

S&P said India's economy has stabilised over recent months, with progressively better manufacturing, services, labour market, and revenue data. The hard part will be converting these trends into a sustained recovery over the next few years.

India has exceeded its fiscal deficit target of 3.5 per cent in the current fiscal by a wide margin due to higher spendings to stimulate economy amid the pandemic.

The fiscal deficit - the excess of government expenditure over its revenues - has been pegged at 9.5 per cent of

the gross domestic product (GDP) in the current fiscal ending March 31, as per the revised estimate.

For the next 2021-22 fiscal, the deficit has been put at 6.8 per cent of the GDP, which will be further lowered to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26 fiscal ending March 31, 2026.

"Vast economic growth is crucial and critical for maintaining those deficits at those rates financing them and keeping debt stocks from rising even further.

If that were the case if the economy were to recover at a much lower pace than expected we would have additional concerns regarding the sustainability of those fiscal

accounts," Wood added.

S&P currently has a 'BBB-' rating on India, with a stable outlook.

To a query on what could put downside pressure on ratings, Wood said, "If we have a much lower than expected recovery, slower nominal GDP growth, that would be a concern."

If economy is not growing quickly then fiscal deficit would be lot higher and debt stock could be rising rather than stabilising. That would entail high government deficit and higher general government debt stock which could cause us to question the sustainability of India's public finances."

Oxford Economics ups India growth forecast to 10.2 per cent for 2021

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Global forecasting firm Oxford Economics on Wednesday revised India's economic growth projection for 2021 to 10.2 per cent, citing earlier 8.8 per cent, citing receding Covid-19 risks and the shift in the monetary policy outlook.

It further said the Budget 2021-22 will create positive

externalities for the private sector, and forecast slower fiscal consolidation in FY22 than the government projections.

"Alongside the planned government spending boost in Q1 and receding Covid-19 risks, the shift in the monetary policy outlook supports our 2021 growth upgrade to 10.2 per cent from 8.8 per cent earlier," Oxford Economics said.

Finance Minister addresses Sebi board

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday addressed the board of markets regulator Sebi for the first time after the presentation of the Union Budget earlier this month. After the presentation of the Budget every year, it is customary for the finance minister to address the boards of Sebi and RBI. In a tweet, the finance ministry said Sitharaman addressed the board of Sebi (Securities and Exchange Board of India) in the national capital on Wednesday. The ministry also tweeted photos of the meeting.

Petrol at ₹100: PM blames previous Governments for not cutting import dependence

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

On a day when petrol crossed the Rs 100 mark, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the middle-class would not have been burdened if the previous governments had focussed on reducing India's energy import dependence. Without referring to the relentless increase in retail fuel prices, which are linked to international rates, he said India imported over 85 per cent of its oil needs in the 2019-20 financial year and 53 per cent of its gas requirement.

"Can a diverse and talented nation like ours be so energy import dependent?" he asked, addressing an online event to inaugurate oil and gas projects in poll-bound Tamil Nadu.

"I do not want to criticise

anyone but I want to say (that) had we focused on this subject much earlier, our middle-class would not be burdened," he said. Price of petrol crossed the Rs 100 per litre mark in Rajasthan after fuel rates were hiked for the ninth day in a row. Since India imports the majority of its oil needs, retail rates are benchmarked to international prices, which have spiralled in recent weeks.

Opposition parties including Congress have criticised the price hikes, blaming it on the Modi government raising taxes to scoop out the benefit that arose from international oil rates plunging to a two-decade low in April/May last year. While global rates have rebounded with pick up in demand, the government has not restored the taxes, which are at a record high.

Govt approves over ₹12,000 cr manufacturing push for telecom equipment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Wednesday approved a 12,195 crore production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for telecom gear manufacturing in India which is expected to encourage production of equipment worth Rs 2.44 lakh crore and create direct and indirect employment for about 40,000 people, Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said.

The PLI scheme for telecom gear manufacturing will be operational from April 1, 2021.

"In the coming five years we hope to have incremental production of Rs 2,44,200 crore, export worth Rs 1,95,360 crore, direct and indirect employment to 40,000 people and tax revenue of approximately Rs 17,000 crore to the country," telecom minister Ravi

Shankar Prasad said after the Cabinet meeting. According to an official statement, the scheme is expected to bring investment of over Rs 3,000 crore and generate huge direct and indirect employment and taxes both. Addressing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Prasad said that the government is positioning India as a global powerhouse for manufacturing, and has created a conducive environment for ease of doing business.

"Cabinet has approved PLI for telecom sector... To ensure further progress of Make-in-India in telecom equipment space... 5G equipment will also come... So it was important to give incentives. We held wide-spread consultation with stakeholders," Prasad said adding that the scheme also aims to promote MSMEs in "Aatmanirbhar Bharat."

Sensex extends losses amid global weakness; HDFC twins drag

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices buckled under selling pressure for the second straight session on Wednesday as risk appetite remained subdued amid a bearish trend overseas.

Profit-booking was seen in finance, IT and FMCG counters, while a depreciating rupee also weighed on investor sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 400.34 points or 0.77 per cent to close at 51,703.83. The broader NSE Nifty tumbled 104.55 points or 0.68 per

cent to 15,208.90.

Nestle India was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.80 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints, HDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank, Maruti, Dr Reddy's and HDFC. HDFC twins accounted for over half of the benchmark's losses. On the other hand, SBI, PowerGrid, NTPC, Reliance Industries and Bajaj Auto were among the gainers, climbing up to 2.39 per cent. Global markets were on the backfoot amid rising US Treasury yields and concerns over frothy valuations.

Rupee falls by 5 paise to 72.74 on strong dollar amid rising US yields

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated by 5 paise to close at 72.74 against the US dollar on Wednesday tracking losses in the domestic equity markets and strengthening American currency in the global markets.

US bond yields rising to one-year high due to strong recovery prospects also hit the rupee sentiment, analysts said.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 72.90 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 72.72 and a low of 72.92.

Airtel to buy back 20% stake in Bharti Telemedia from Warburg Pincus

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel on Wednesday said it will acquire 20 per cent stake in its DTH arm Bharti Telemedia from an affiliate of Warburg Pincus for about Rs 3,126 crore.

The Warburg Pincus affiliate had acquired 20 per cent equity stake in Bharti Telemedia in 2018 after the announcement of the deal in December 2017. The transaction will be discharged primarily via issuance of about 3.64 crore equity shares of Airtel at a price of Rs 600 per share and up to Rs 1,037.8 crore in cash, Bharti Airtel said in a statement.

Google to give ₹109 crore to support SMBs in India

New Delhi: Google on Wednesday said it would give \$15 million (nearly Rs 109 crore) to support small and micro enterprises in India in the face of Covid-19 pandemic.

The investment is part of

the \$75 million commitment from Google to help small businesses outside of the US.

"In India, we will invest \$15 million to support small and micro enterprises across the country and are in discussions with local partners," the company said in a statement.

The company is working with non-government partners who have a long track record of providing resources to businesses that are generally overlooked by traditional lenders.

IAN S

Healthy business performance puts ITC stock recovery on track

New Delhi: Three top brokerage firms - CLSA, Credit Suisse and Axis Capital - have assigned "Buy" or "Outperform" rating to the ITC stock. Credit Suisse increased the target price to ₹265 from ₹255 on roll forward while maintaining an outperform rating. Comparable FMCG growth in Q3 was 11% year-on-year, which remains very healthy. "We remain positive on ITC as we see strong cigarette recovery as consumer mobility recovers... and increasing value of FMCG business with strong EBITDA performance," the brokerage said.

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (EAST)-II
E-BLOCK PREET VIHAR : DELHI-110092
"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"
PRESS NIT NO. 34 E-II (2020-21)

S. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to Tender	Tender Processing Fee	Earnest Money	Tender ID No. & Date of Release of tender in E-Procurement Solution	Last Date/Time of receipt of tender E-Procurement Solution
1.	Improvement of water pressure in Gazipur Village by P/L 150 mm dia water line from 300 mm dia water line along NH-24 in ward no 19E, AC- 59 in East-II.	36,15,406.00	500.00	EMD Exempted	2021_DJB_200232_1 17-Feb-2021 01:00 PM	27-Feb-21 02:00 PM
2.	Improvement of water supply by providing laying 300 mm DI water line from Railway lineside near H.No. 258A, routed through Mukesh Nagar upto Church Road Chowk, Jwala Nagar under Ward no. 30E Shahdara in AC-62 East-II.	33,12,511.00	500.00	EMD Exempted	2021_DJB_200232_2 17-Feb-2021 01:00 PM	27-Feb-21 02:00 PM

Further detail in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
 Advt. No. J.S.V. 415 (2020-21)

Sd/-
 VIJAY SAGAR
 EX. ENGINEER (EAST)-II

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank limited, SP-24, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai- 600058

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET
 [See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets

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

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	M/S AXL Lighting Limited Flat No- 603, 6th Floor Kanchenjunga Building 18, Barakhamba Road New Delhi Delhi- 110001 (Borrower) SH.B. Lakshmi Narayan Malviya, Mr. Sadanand Madhu Sudhan Sahasra Bhudhe Mr. S Barathan (Guarantor) Loan A/c No.135905000309	(As Described In The Loan Document/ Property Document Covering Property Address- 2- Site No-357, Sf No-563, 564, 565, 567 & 570, Raj Vijay Nagar, Off Pollachi Main Road, Eechanari, Seera palyam Village Panchayath, Coimbatore South Taluk & District Coimbatore Tamilnadu. Admeasuring Area 4117.50 Sq Ft. Bounded By:- East:- Site No-346 West:- Road North:- Park South:- Site No- 356.	Rs. 2,36,37,195/- (as on October 31, 2020	Rs. 36,00,000/- To Rs.3,60,000/-	March 02, 2021 From 11:00 AM To 01:00 PM	March 16, 2021 from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link- <https://disposalhub.com>) of our auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. The Mortgagees' noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **March 15, 2021 before 05:00 PM** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank limited, SP-24, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai-600058** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **March 15, 2021 before 05:00 PM** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank limited, SP-24, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai-600058** on or before **March 15, 2021 before 05:00 PM**. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Chennai.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 7550214251/ 9004474395** or M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on **9810029926/ 01244233933**

Please note that Marketing agencies 1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augco Asset Management Pvt Ltd have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: February 18, 2021
 Place: Delhi/NCR

Authorized Officer
 ICICI Bank Limited

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
ई-निविदा आमन्त्रण सूचना
 मुख्य कारखाना प्रबंधक कार्यालय, उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे, जोधपुर द्वारा भारत के राष्ट्रपति के लिये एवं उनकी ओर से ई-निविदा के माध्यम से प्रचलित नियमों के अन्तर्गत निर्धारित प्रयोजन में निविदा निम्न कार्यों के लिए क्रमानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है :- ई-निविदा सूचना सं. 2020-21 : WS-10-0f-2020-21 कार्य का नाम व स्थान : Special Repairs/Replacement of Whole Drainage System of Work Shop including provision of rain water harvesting system in Carriage Work Shop Jodhpur. अनुमानित लागत रुपये : Rs. 93.55,594.03 बयाने की राशि रुपये : Rs. 0.00 निविदा सूचना संख्या WS-10-0f-2020-21 तक निविदा प्रस्तुत करने की तिथि 08.03.2021 को 15:00 बजे तक है। वेबसाइट का दिवरण जहाँ पर ई-निविदा देखी व भरी जा सकती है - www.reps.gov.in 64-DH/21
 Please join us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NWRRailways) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/NWRRailways) [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/NWRRailways)

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one girl **Namely: Shanta, D/o: Jai Bahadur, R/o: H. No. B-535, Pandav Nagar, Delhi** has been missing /kidnapped since **04.02.2021** at 05:00 pm. from her house and in the area of P. S. Ranjit Nagar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 30/21 U/s 363 IPC dated **04.02.2021** has been registered at P.S. Ranjit Nagar, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under: **Age: 17 years, Height: 5'4", Face: Long, Complexion: Fair, Built: Normal, Wearing: Yellow colour suit-salwar and black colour slipper in her feet.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: cbi.nic.in
 E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in
 Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
 Fax No. 011-24368639
 DP/643/CD/2021

SHO P.S. Ranjit Nagar, Delhi
 Tel.No. 011-25704008, 8750870436

EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED
 (A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works & Services are available on i) Website of Coal India Limited: www.coalindia.in, ii) Website of ECL: www.easterncoal.nic.in, iii) CIL e-Procurement Portal: <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in>, iv) Central Public Procurement Portal: <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeMPortal: <https://gem.gov.in>".

(By Order)
ECL

Please visit our website : www.easterncoal.nic.in

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a person namely **Nand Kishor, S/o Sh. Ghanshyam Dass, R/o H. No. 6487/3, 2nd floor, Block No. 7, Dev Nagar, Karol Bagh, Delhi, Age: 52 years, Built: Medium, Height: 5'4", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Wearing: Cream Colour Shirt and Grey Colour Pant, Red and Check Colour Maffar and Red Colour Bata Chappal** in his feet has been missing from the area of P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi since **13.01.2021**. In this regard a **DD No.63A** dated **29.01.2021** has been logged at **P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi**.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. if any one having any information about this person please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in **SHO**
 Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 **P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi**
 Fax : 011-24368639 **Ph: 011- 25725652/25721048/ DP/658/CD/2021**
8750870432

IN BRIEF

TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY SECTORS HIT HARDEST BY COVID-19: REPORT
New Delhi: The tourism, travel and hospitality industries have been hit the hardest by the Covid-19 pandemic, a report by Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) said. Accordingly, the survey report results reflect an across-the-board decline in revenue, with very large companies most likely to have experienced a considerable decline in revenue.

SCOPE REITERATES NEED FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN THE 'NEW NORMAL'
New Delhi: Forum of Women in Public Sector (WIPS) under the aegis of SCOPE (Standing Conference of Public Enterprises) organised its 31st National Meet 2021 virtually on the theme 'New Normal: Opportunities and Risks' for Public Sector women employees. Rakesh Kumar, CMD, NLCIL & Chairman, SCOPE; Atul Sobti, DG, SCOPE and Atishi Marlena addressed the participants during the inaugural session. Soma Mondal, Chairperson, SAIL and H.K. Joshi, CMD, SCI addressed the subsequent sessions in the presence of Kirti Tiwari and Sanchita Banerjee, President Apex, WIPS and other WIPS members. The program was attended by around 1000 participants located across the country.

UTKARSH SMALL FINANCE BANK TIES UP WITH MASTERCARD
New Delhi: Utkarsh Small Finance Bank (USFB) Ltd has announced the launch of a debit card with Mastercard to offer international benefits to its customers. The facilities include lounge access, insurance coverage, cash-back offers, concierge offers, and merchant offers. "Through this tie up, USFB's debit card will bring significant benefits to our customers. True to our commitment we will continue to enhance and deepen our engagement with our valuable customers," said Govind Singh, MD & CEO, of USFB.

NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF TENDER
 No. RMSA/ICT/237/1306/2020/4456 Date : 17.02.2021

The e-tender invited vide No. RMSA/ICT/237/1306/2020/158 Dated 11.01.2021 for Integrated Virtual Classroom with Broadcasting Software and Content Sharing Portal for ICT@school is hereby cancelled due to non-adequate technical proposal.

Sd/-Executive Director,
 SSA, Assam
 Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog /CF/5052/20

UNITED TEXTILES LIMITED
 Registered Office 7th K.M. Stone, Barvala Road, Hisar
 CIN: L17115HR1993PLC032092

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTH ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

(Rs. In Lakhs, except per Share data)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended			Nine Months ended (Year ended)		
		31.12.2020	30.9.2020	31.12.2019	31.12.2020	31.12.2019	31.3.2020
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
I	Revenue from operations	328.01	271.83	322.99	724.82	684.90	892.73
II	Other income	2.43	0.39	0.73	3.20	1.45	2.59
III	Total Revenue (I+II)	330.44	272.22	323.72	728.02	686.35	895.31
IV	Expenses						
(a)	Cost of materials consumed	246.69	168.31	241.80	439.49	468.27	683.04
(b)	Changes in inventories of finished goods, work-in-progress and stock-in-trade	(21.25)	28.21	19.76	68.84	14.10	(67.86)
(c)	Work-in-progress and stock-in-trade	5.90	7.68	7.25	17.42	20.24	29.32
(d)	Finance Costs	13.65	5.55	6.01	23.92	19.82	29.91
(e)	Depreciation and amortization expense	11.83	11.39	6.88	35.81	18.43	25.20
(f)	Other expenses	71.53	48.89	40.57	138.10	139.36	193.53
	Total Expenses (IV)	328.35	270.04	322.27	723.58	680.22	893.94
V	Profit/(Loss) before exceptional items and tax (III-V)	2.10	2.18	1.45	4.45	6.13	1.37
VI	Exceptional items	-	-	-	-	-	-
VII	Profit/(Loss) after exceptional items but before tax (V+VI)	2.10	2.18	1.45	4.45	6.13	1.37
VIII	Tax expense						
(1) Current Tax	0.97	0.78	1.37	2.54	2.38	-	
(2) Deferred Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Tax expense	0.97	0.78	1.37	2.54	2.38	-	
IX	Profit/(Loss) for the period from continuing operations (VII-VIII)	1.13	1.40	1.91	1.91	3.75	1.37
X	Discontinued operations:						
Profit/(Loss) from discontinued operations	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Tax expense from discontinued operations	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Profit/(Loss) from discontinued operations (after tax)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
XI	Other comprehensive income (OCI):	1.13	1.40	0.08	1.91	3.75	1.37
XII	A. Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:						
(i) Re-measurement gain (losses) on defined benefit plans	0.86	0.85	0.29	2.56	0.51	3.41	
Income tax effect on above	-	-	(0.07)	(0.13)	-	-	
(ii) Equity Instruments through Other Comprehensive Income (Gain on Fair Valuation of Long Term Investment)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Income tax effect on above	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total other comprehensive income (XII)	0.86	0.85	0.22	2.56	0.38	3.41	
XIII	Total Comprehensive income (Comprising Profit/(Loss) and other comprehensive income for the period) (IX+XII)	1.99	2.25	0.30	4.46	4.13	4.78
XIV	Profit/(Loss) for the period attributable to Non-controlling interest	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the year attributable to Owners of the Parent	1.99	2.25	0.30	4.46	4.13	4.78	
(i) Non-controlling interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	
(ii) Controlling interest	1.99	2.25	0.30	4.46	4.13	4.78	
XV	Per share data:						
(1) Profit/(Loss) per share (Rs.)	0.03	0.050	0.01	0.06	0.14	0.05	
(2) Dividend	0.03	0.050	0.01	0.06	0.14</		



CHALLENGE YOUR LIMITS

Actor MALAIKA ARORA shares her fitness mantra, diet and what keeps her going. By SAKSHI SHARMA

The world is a beautiful place with many challenges. And on our journeys, we change! One thing that remains constant is the fact that it needs power. My mantra has always been — we learn to bend so that we may seldom break. I push my limits every single day," reads one of the captions on actor Malaika Arora's Instagram account. Well, these lines quite evidently reflect the actor's approach and perspective towards life and its challenges.

Though the fitness enthusiast is not too often seen on the big screen, she has been giving us some major fashion and fitness goals. Here she shares a few health tips. Excerpts

How do you choose to associate with any brand?

To attach myself to a brand, I need to strongly believe in its ethos. It should add relevance to my life.

For instance, I have been a strong standing partner with Reebok because I love its products and the brand has helped me grow within my fitness journey.

What has been your fitness mantra?

I start my day with yoga and meditation in the morning, followed by a walk. I then come back and eat a nutritious meal. I look forward to each day with positive energy and enthusiasm which keeps me mentally healthy too.

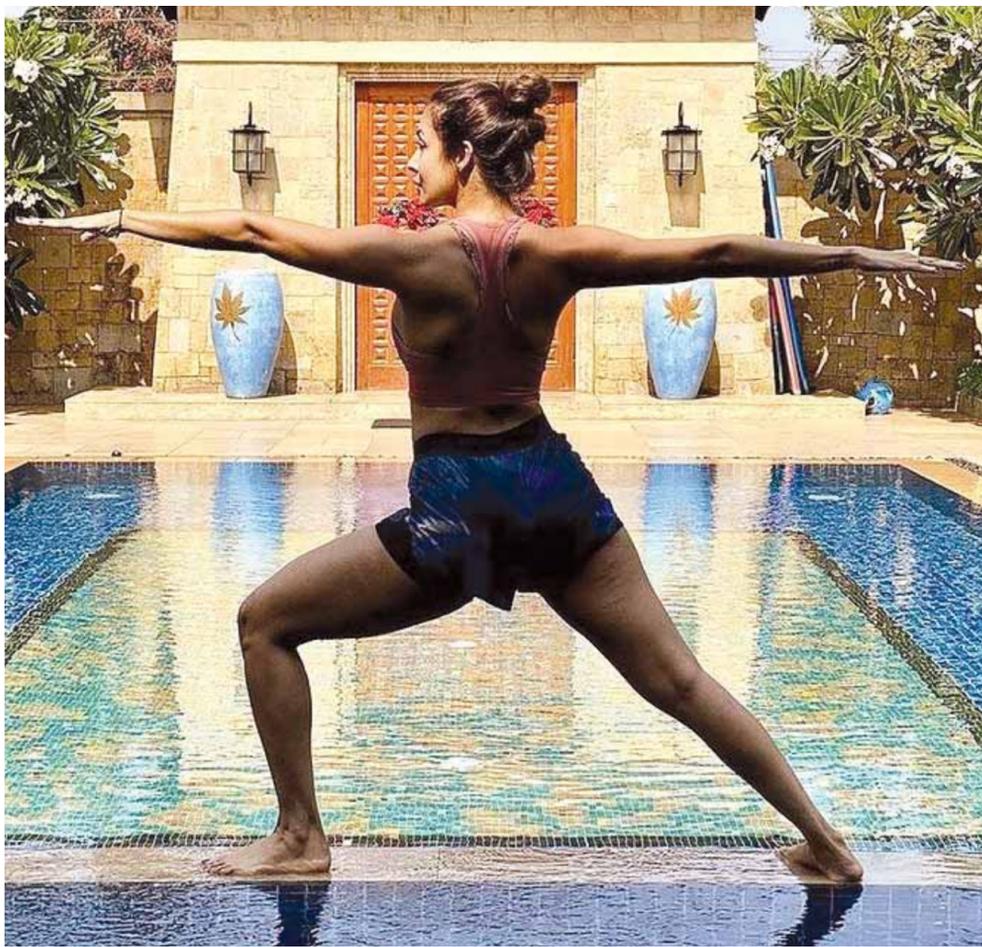
Can you give us a breakdown of the diet you follow to stay in shape?

I usually don't follow any particular diet. I try to eat everything that my body demands but of course in moderation — be it avocados or biryani.

You have been giving us some major 'yoga goals' through your Instagram account. Can you give us a deeper insight into your fitness journey?

I discovered yoga when I had a leg injury. It didn't just give me the mental strength to recover from my injury but also helped me heal from inside out. It was then I realised that I need to include this as a part of my routine.

A lot of people take supplements nowadays. How essen-



are they to our health?

As long as you are aware of using the right supplements that won't have any side effects on your body, it is okay to use them since it provides a boost to your body which helps you achieve your goals. I strongly urge everyone to consult a dietician and a physical trainer before taking any supplement.

During the lockdown, most of us were working out from home, with the help of online fitness apps. What would you say about their increasing popularity?

I feel the lockdown period has helped to raise awareness about how fitness is an essential part of our lives. People took the time out to research how to make themselves more efficient and how fitness can help accentuate their daily performance. Fitness apps fit in well here since gyms or parks weren't open for exercise.

Please share a few fitness tips that you'd want your audience to follow.

A few fitness tips that people can follow are:

- ◆ Choose the right gear (clothes and shoes) that makes you feel comfortable.
- ◆ Create a routine that works for you.
- ◆ Set reasonable expectations to keep yourself motivated throughout.
- ◆ For beginners, take up walking as an exercise as it has multiple benefits for your body and mind. With Reebok introducing its new walking category with shoes like Reebok Ever Road DMX, Austin, Druhan, Ease Slip On, Fusion Lux, Motionpulse, this is the best time to grab a pair and begin your fitness journey.



Nushratt launches first music video

Nushratt Bharuccha recently launched her first ever music video with Honey Singh. Featuring in *Saiyaan Ji* has been a special journey for the actor, here's why.

She says, "It is extremely close to my heart as its my first ever with Honey Sir. This is our fourth song together, after *Dil Chori*, *Care Ni Karda* and *Chote Chote Peg*. With the song now crossing 100 million views, we have maintained our winning streak. I'm overwhelmed with all the love coming my way from the audiences. The fact that the song has become such a massive hit, is such an amazing hype for us."

"The song is also special to me, as I shot it right after the lockdown was lifted. That time, I was promoting *Chhalaang*, and was running between one activity to another, but somehow we fixed up the dates and worked it out — even if it meant shooting for 18 hours a day. I'm really glad that it bore a fruitful outcome," the actress added.

Next in her pipeline is *Hurdang* opposite Vijay Varma, *Janhit Mein Jaari* and *Chhorii* for which she was recently seen shooting.

Here are a few ideas you must explore to add a spark to your room

Writing on the walls

Whenever we think of decorating our homes, walls fall last into the list or might not even get a chance. They often remain neglected as we focus on furnishings, furniture and accessories to add a spark.

Sushhmita Siingh, the Principle designer at Sushmita Singh Design shares a few ideas that one can explore to make your walls speak. Let these ideas be an inspiration in making your walls your canvas of self-expression.

HANG PICTURES AND PHOTOS

The paint colour of your wall is relevant when you make a collage of memories on your wall. The images you choose to display should have a contrast of light and dark monochrome ones. The frame that you choose need to balance the size of the wall and the room. We often see a huge painting with really broad frames when the room size is 12ft x12ft, which is totally out of context. A sense of balance is extremely important. Often people tend to overlook such minor but very important details, which can add or destroy the look. Family portraits, paintings, posters (digitally printed, hand painted ones) add emotions to the wall.



It becomes a great conversation starter and lends your walls a novel persona.

GREENERY INDOORS

Instead of having plants that sit comfortably on your floor, hang them on the wall if space and cleaning is a constraint.

Fix wall hanging pots and fancy holders that make your greens look attractive. Greenery can be seasonal colourful flowers and coloured leaf plants that add colour to an otherwise plain wall. You can also decorate an entire wall full of crawlers covering the wall in



beautiful patterns, formed naturally. Nowadays availability of good quality artificial plants come in handy when maintaining real plants is an issue. They have size variants, which is helpful. Digital wallpapers, block printed fabric wall papers also are a great add-ons to your walls, which can be both formal and informal.

DIY IDEAS

If you are a creative person or like to use your free time in creating things, you can dedicate a wall for your creative space. Hang your paintings, your origami objects and crafts on the wall. Use the walls to support your creations. If you sculpt then use it to keep it against a wall, it has a dedicate space. Make selves on the wall to display your DIY projects and stay motivated on your creative journey.

BOOKSHELVES

Dedicate a wall to your books. Books lend character to any room. If you don't own too many, you may fill the space with memoirs and display articles from your latest collection. Pillows and decorative ceramics make for great space filler on a shelf as well. You may also use bookshelves as storage spaces. Also photo frames and small lamps to highlight the accessories can be displayed.

WANDERLUST

Decorate your wall with a large size map of the world. Scratch out maps is also in trend. You can also display your purchases on your journey across the globe. If you have not travelled much you can always use this space to make a mood board and manifest your travel dreams.

LIGHTS

Fancy LED lights on walls create a pattern which adds to the ambience as well as contributes to the illumination of the room, thus a multifunctional element and also value for money.

When you style a wall, you must know that it is a place you will be looking at often. So have something that will inspire you.

The perfect match

Producer EKTA KAPOOR was waiting for a platform like OTT to make *The Married Woman*

Producer Ekta Kapoor is all set to release new web series, *The Married Woman*, and she says she waited to make the intense drama show on a digital platform because it wouldn't be possible to do justice to its content on television or film.

The web series is based on Manju Kapur's book of the same name, and stars Ridhi Dogra and Monica Dogra in lead roles.

Asked why she decided to make the show based on the book, Ekta said, "I read the book and I liked it, so I wanted to make a show out of it. When I met Manju (Kapur) ji, I thought it's a great book but there was no way I could do it on television or film. So, I waited for a medium that gave birth to individual viewing. This was probably the show that was waiting to be made and I thought the digital medium would be a perfect platform for it."

The trailer of the show delves into the characters of Astha (Ridhi) and Peeplika (Monica). Set in the nineties, the story revolves around Astha, a dutiful wife and a doting mother, who sets out on a journey of self-discovery after she meets an unconventional artist, Peeplika.

Asked how responsible she feels to bring varied stories to the audience through the digital platform, Ekta said, "I cater to every kind of audience and I have no problem when I cater to the masses. I make really aspirational and, at times, escapist programming for people who want to enjoy themselves. At times I make relatable, heartwarming and really touching stories because for me it is therapeutic as I get the opportunity to tell different kinds of stories."

"When you do one show for television, it goes on for 20 years or sometimes 5,000



episodes. So, at one point you get tired of it. In films, it's all actor-driven. I enjoy telling a variety of stories and the language in the show is different from a lot of other shows," she added.

The series also stars Imaad Shah, Ayesha Raza, Rahul Vohra, Divya Seth Shah, Nadira Babbar and Suhaas Ahuja in key roles. (The series will stream on ALTBalaji and Zee5 from March 8.)

TRENDBLAZER



DEEPIKA SHARES HER ALTER EGOS

Actress DEEPIKA PADUKONE has captured her many moods at dance in a new video she posted on social media for fans.

In the Instagram video, Deepika is dressed in a powder pink pantys, nude crop top and a lime coloured shrug. The video has edits of Deepika's many versions as she dances.

"Me...And all my alter egos!," she wrote along with the quirky video. The actress has a busy year ahead. She will be seen in Shakun Batra's forthcoming yet-untitled film that also stars Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ananya Panday.

fairtalk AYUSHMANN KHURRANA



"My film *Anek* is giving me the opportunity to explore India and marvel at its beauty like never before. After *Assam*, I'm now at Shillong. I have incidentally been here before but I couldn't explore it the way I wanted to. I'm shooting a film at this picturesque place for the first time and I have to admit that I been blown away with how picture perfect it is."

dailytalk HRITHIK ROSHAN



"*Jodhaa Akbar* was difficult. I was scared when Ashutosh Gowariker offered it to me. I couldn't understand how he could see someone like me commanding 10,000 soldiers. But then that's what a director does. He envisions what you can't. And that's the reason I did the film and learnt that you don't need to be strong in the beginning."

I'M A CONTROL FREAK: BUTLER

Hollywood star GERARD BUTLER admits being a control freak. Butler was serving as a producer for the film, *Greenland*, when he enjoyed the chance to have a more hands-on role in the project.

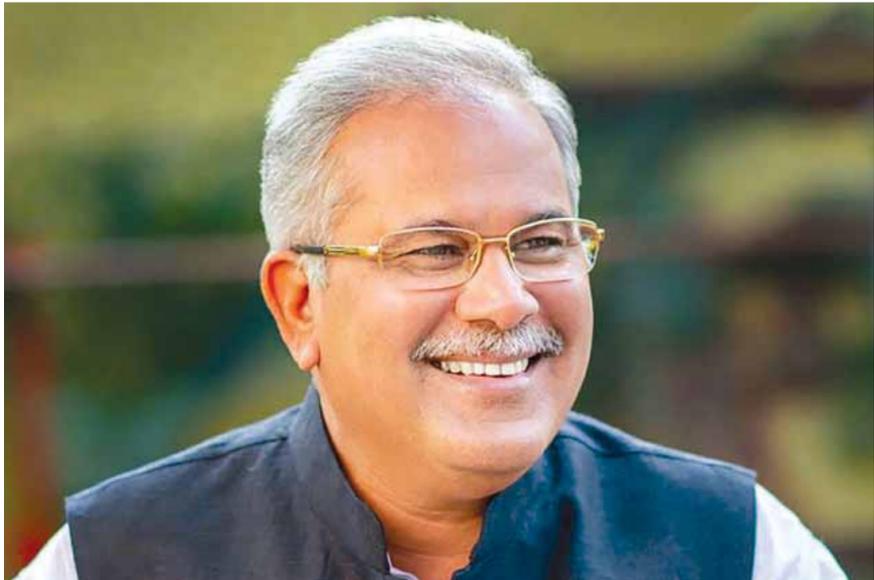
"I'm a control freak and I love being involved," says the actor.



INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

DMF lightens up the life of the mining-affected residents in Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh holds a special place in the country in terms of mineral resources. While the production of minerals leads to development of the area through mineral-based industries, new employment opportunities are also generated. However, the other side of the coin is the problem faced by people living in the area. In such a situation, it becomes the responsibility of the government to take special care of the interests and welfare of the local people from the mining affected area. The recent efforts, in this regard, are highly commendable, and what is more commendable is that these responsibilities are being discharged with seriousness.



The government is ensuring participation of mining lease holders for the interests and welfare of the people living in the area affected by mining operations. For this, the provision of the formation of the District Mineral Institute Trust in the Mineral Act was made in the previous government. However, many shortcomings were being felt in this provision by the experts as the participation of public representatives was not being ensured. Moreover, the participation of local people was also minimal. Apart from this, proper utilisation of funds was not being done for the welfare of the directly affected people. In simple words, those in need were not getting benefitted from the allotted funds. Several other similar shortcomings were also observed in the preceding provision.

help of DMF. Moreover, it has been used in improving the health infrastructure and providing relief to the people during Coronavirus crisis. The changes can be felt in almost all the districts of state, however, the notable examples are mentioned below.

ment of at least 10 members of the Gram Sabha, residents of the directly affected area in the council compared to the earlier provision of nominating only two sarpanchs.

New sectors have been included in the works edited by the trust fund for sustainable livelihood, public transport, preserving cultural values and promoting youth activities. It is being implemented in Dantewada, Jashpur, Surguja and Kanker districts. Many important efforts are being made in the field of drinking water, health and education under the leadership of the CM, the trust funds are being fully utilised in the state. Solar energy-based project in drinking water, health care facilities in government hospitals, providing educational fees/hostel fees in government institutions for higher education to family members of directly affected areas in education as well as all competitive examinations. Provision has been made for coaching and residential training. Sankalp coaching in Jashpur district is an excellent example of this.

In order to overcome these shortcomings and to provide proper benefits to the affected local people in the fields of health, education, environment and sanitation, the state government has made several important reforms in the old provision to provide benefits directly to the affected people.

Representation of public representatives ensured

The state government further makes necessary changes in the preceding provision to make the amount received in the trust directly to the needy. As per the amendments, 50 per cent of the amount received in the trust will be used for the welfare of the directly affected area/persons. This has resulted in economic and social development of the residents. It is to be noted that in the previous provision, the entire district was considered affected and the amount was spent at will and only a part of the profit reached the needy.

Apart from this, storage and processing units of agricultural products are being encouraged along with food processing, minor forest produce and forest processing. Additionally, organic farming is also being promoted and employment opportunities are being provided to women. Through this manure is being prepared for agriculture. Cleanliness of drains and intensive plantation works are being encouraged. Whereas previously, the description of only agricultural

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN ALL DISTRICTS OF CHHATTISGARH THROUGH DMF

The primary step taken by the government is to ensure representation of public representatives in the trust. For which, the minister in charge of the district has been appointed as ex-officio chairman of the governing council. Along with this, all the MLAs of the district have been appointed as its ex-officio members. Previously, according to the old provision, the collector of the district used to be the chairman of the governing council.

Benefit directly to the needy

DMF is helping to free Mungeli district from malnutrition. About 2,400 children of the district are being benefited from this scheme.

The Chhattisgarh government has utilised the DMF fund significantly for development in the state. All sector including education, health, infrastructure development, electricity, water, sanitation, etc have been developed with the help of DMF fund in all districts of Chhattisgarh. The fund is also used in building Atmanand Government English-medium schools in various districts of state. The cases of malnutrition have also dipped with the

Increased representation of locals The other significant change in the provision made by the Bhupesh Baghel's government is the increased participation of local residents of the affected area. It is worth mentioning that in the previous provision, only those affected by mining were specially not given enough space in the council. As per the amendment, the state government has decided to make provision for the appoint-

Five-year vision document under incubation

There are various examples in the state that strongly establishes that the amount of DMF is being used better now than earlier.

Increased representation of locals

The other significant change in the provision made by the Bhupesh Baghel's government is the increased participation of local residents of the affected area. It is worth mentioning that in the previous provision, only those affected by mining were specially not given enough space in the council. As per the amendment, the state government has decided to make provision for the appoint-

New sectors included

restricted due to non-availability of power supply onboard.

NTPC releases compensation



NTPC Limited has started releasing compensation to the families of Tapovan workers, who have lost their lives in the Uttarakhand natural disaster that hit the state on February 7.

Devi on Monday. While Tapovan team has accelerated completion of all modalities to fast-track distribution of compensation, the company has decided to hand over compensation from its end to the families of its deceased workers as per ex-gratia list released by the state government.

While dedicated teams from NTPC are managing the entire rescue operation behind the scene by assisting the rescue teams, the company airlifted machineries including high-end submersible slush removal pumps to fast-track the operation.

NRWWO dedicates new physiotherapy unit

The president of Northern Railway Women's Welfare Organisation (NRWWO), Shikha Gangal, inaugurated the Physiotherapy Unit in the presence of GM Northern Railway, Ashutosh Gangal, Additional General Manager of Northern Railway (NR), Naveen Gulati, PCMD/NR, NK Yadav and other PHODs of Northern Railway also graced the occasion.

North Delhi Mayor inspects Hindu Rao hospital

North Delhi Mayor inspected Hindu Rao hospital in view of COVID-19 vaccination to sanitation workers. During the inspection, Standing Committee chairman, Chhail Bihari Goswami, Medical Superintendent of the hospital, Dr Anu Kapoor and other senior officials were also present.

Mayor Jai Prakash said that vaccination campaign of frontline warriors is going on in North DMC hospitals. He said, "Sanitation workers are a part of the frontline warriors. Everyone is actively participating in this vaccination drive. Our sanitation workers had contributed significantly in keeping the city clean during the pandemic.

Fire hits Greatship Rohini

An OSV, Greatship Rohini with 18 crew members onboard reported fire on February 13 while the ship was 92 Nautical Miles North-West off Mumbai, near the NQO Platform of Mumbai High. One crew reported fire injury and was evacuated and disembarked ashore by ONGC helicopter for medical treatment. Three others were missing and trapped in the engine room. On receipt of the information, Coast Guard Operation Centre Mumbai, diverted Offshore Patrol Vessel Samarth to the scene of action. Simultaneously, CG Dornier aircraft was launched for assessment of the situation. CG Ship Samarth reached the area at 1335 hours and took over as On Scene Coordinator. Initially, MV Albatross-5 operating in vicinity, tied up a hawser from forecastle of Greatship Rohini and pulled her out to safe location from NQO platform rig.



ICGS Samarth, with its advance External Fire Fighting system in coordination with OSV Priya 27, established

boundary cooling for controlling the spread of fire. The Boarding Team from ICG Ship Samarth boarded the vessel for carrying out situation assessment. However, the efforts of the team were impinged due to heat and heavy smoke gushing out of engine room. Fire fighting efforts were

restricted due to non-availability of power supply onboard. Meanwhile, Pollution Control Vessel Samudra Praheri was sailed out to reach the scene of incident. Fourteen crew of the distressed vessel were safely evacuated to ICGS Samudra Praheri. The fire-



The 8-week long Udyog Manthan is a series of webinars organised as a way to enhance productivity and quality in major sectors of the Indian industry. Organised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, in association with Quality Council of India, National Productivity Council, Bureau of Indian Standards & Industry Chambers, the two-month long marathon of focussed sector-specific webinars will run till March 2. The webinars are being organised to realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of an Aatmanirbhar Bharat driven by the 'Vocal for Local' sentiment. Till date, more than 30 webinars on various important sectors including toys, leather, furniture chemicals, tourism, drones have been organised.

DTC celebrates National Road Safety Month

As per the instructions issued by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, DTC observed National Road Safety Month from January 18 to February 17. During this month, DTC undertook various activities on safer road mobility to spread the cause of safer roads amongst the stakeholders.

DTC celebrates National Road Safety Month

During the Road Safety month, DTC also arranged a seminar on Accessible and Safer Public Transport, chaired by Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, MD, DTC.

DTC celebrates National Road Safety Month

DTC operates over 3,719 buses in Delhi and its adjoining areas and is holding the largest CNG propelled fleet. Keeping in view the safety of women and special people while travelling through public transport, DTC has deployed Bus Marshals special enforcement teams with 20 Eco

DTC celebrates National Road Safety Month

Vans throughout Delhi. These vans remain mobile in the concerned regional areas under the supervision of Regional Managers and regular checks are being carried out at terminals and bus queue shelters.



DANICS Officers' Association has been representing the service-related administrative grievances of its officers responsible for the diverse administrative functions of the NCT of Delhi and the Union Territories. The association, recently, organised a programme for welcoming 16 officers of DANICS 2020 batch at Delhi Secretariat.

Stefanos becomes only the third player to beat Nadal from two sets to love down

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas recovered from two sets down to stun Rafael Nadal in the Australian Open quarter-finals on Wednesday, ending the Spaniard's bid for a record 21st Grand Slam title.

Second seed Nadal was on course for a comfortable victory before the 22-year-old Tsitsipas turned the match around to prevail 3-6, 2-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4, 7-5.

It was just the second time Nadal had lost when two sets up in a Grand Slam, having previously fallen to Fabio Fognini in the third round of the 2015 US Open, and the third time in his career after a 2005 match against Roger Federer.

Fifth seed Tsitsipas will now attempt to reach his first Grand Slam final when he plays the in-form Daniil Medvedev in the semi-final.

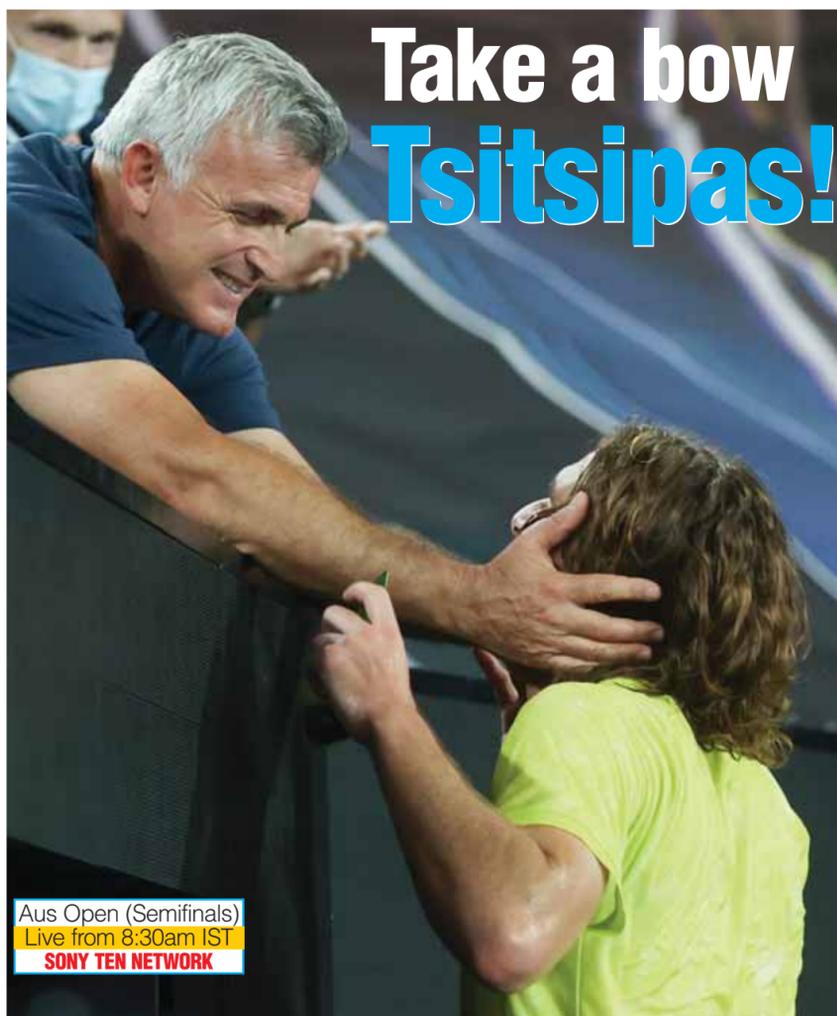
"I don't know what happened after the third set — I fly like little bird, everything was working for me," said Tsitsipas, who hit 49 winners and 17 aces. It was just his second win over Nadal in eight matches.

"The emotions at the end were indescribable, they were something else."

The 22-year-old credited a composed temperament for his turnaround.

"I was able to be consistent with my mood and be calm in the crucial moments," he said. "I've been trying to keep everything to myself and I'm happy with my attitude I showed on the court."

Nadal, sweating profusely in the muggy conditions, was in vin-



Aus Open (Semifinals)
Live from 8:30am IST
SONY TEN NETWORK

Stefanos Tsitsipas is embraced by his father Apostolos, left, after he defeated Rafael Nadal in their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open

tage form until a nerveless Tsitsipas turned the match on its head after snatching the tiebreak in the third set of the fixture.

The momentum shifted towards

Tsitsipas in the fourth set and he finally cracked Nadal's serve to force a deciding set.

Both players served well under pressure in a tense fifth set before

Tsitsipas gained the pivotal break in the 11th game and then clinched his memorable victory with a backhand winner down the line.

That drama had appeared

Take a bow Tsitsipas!

unlikely when an aggressive Nadal cruised through the opening two sets, toying with Tsitsipas and moving him around the court.

Tsitsipas, however, hung in there to force a third set tiebreak, where Nadal's loose play ultimately proved fatal.

Another tough challenge awaits him in the semi-final as he has 1-5 record against the Russian Medvedev.

"He's playing very well and is in good shape. I know he is going to give me a difficult time on the court. I need to recover and do a nice ice bath."

WINS HEAT & RUBLEV

Earlier in all-Russian battle Daniil Medvedev came out on top of a brutal clash against Andrey Rublev to move into his first Australian Open semi-final and inch closer to a first Grand Slam title.

The fourth seed had more firepower than his younger, seventh-seeded rival in scorching conditions on Rod Laver Arena, grinding him down 7-5, 6-3, 6-2 to extend his win-streak to 19 matches.

"I would say the three last points when I was getting ready for the serve I could not really move my left leg," he said, with both players cramping in the "super-tough" conditions.

"But I've known him a long time and I know how to neutralise his big shots. That's definitely one of the best matches I've played lately, not even just here but last year," Medvedev added.

"It was unbelievable, because he was playing really good and I managed to beat him in three sets."

Medvedev is now riding a 19-match run dating back to November, taking in titles at the Paris 1000, the ATP Finals in London and the ATP Cup with Russia in the lead-up to the opening Grand Slam of the year.

He is into his first semi at Melbourne Park as he continues to knock on the door of Grand Slam success, having reached the 2019 US Open final and the last four in New York in 2020.



Ash Barty wipes sweat from racket during her last 8 match against Karolina Muchova

Brady wins, Barty loses

Muchova shatters World No 1 dreams with comeback win to reach semi-finals

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Karolina Muchova staged a stunning comeback on Thursday to upset Ashleigh Barty and storm into the Australian Open semi-finals, rallying from a set down to shatter the world number one's dreams.

The Czech 25th seed looked on her way out after Barty raced through the opening set, but after a medical timeout Muchova returned a different player to win 1-6, 6-3, 6-2 on Rod Laver Arena as the Australian crumbled.

She will now face Jennifer Brady for a place in the final after the big-serving American staged a comeback three-set victory over fellow countrymate Jessica Pegula in a 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 win.

"I started feeling a bit lost by the end of the first set. She played almost like no mistakes," said Muchova, whose best previous

Grand Slam run was to the last eight at Wimbledon in 2019.

"It was very tough and I was a bit lost on the court and my head was spinning so I took a break. It helped me. I tried to get back, played a bit faster rallies so we don't play the long ones as in the first set and it worked well."

Her come-from-behind win ended top seed Barty's hopes of becoming the first home winner at the Australian Open in 43 years after Chris O'Neil's breakthrough in 1978.

Barty, the 2019 French Open champion, had made a flying start to her year, winning the warm-up Yarra Valley Classic and had not lost a set before meeting Muchova.

"It's heartbreaking, of course," Barty said. "But the sun will come up tomorrow. You're either winning or you're learning, and today is a massive learning curve for me."

Umesh replaces Shardul for Motera Tests

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The selectors on Wednesday retained 17 of the 18 members in the Indian squad for the final two Tests against England while senior pacer Umesh Yadav's inclusion would depend on his fitness assessment ahead of the Day/Night game in Ahmedabad.

Shardul Thakur is the only player who has not been kept as he will be released to compete in the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

The anticipation was around senior pacer Mohammed Shami's fitness and it has been learnt that he is still not 100 percent fit for the rigours of five-day games.

"Umesh Yadav will join the team in Ahmedabad and after his fitness assessment will replace Shardul Thakur, who will be released for Vijay Hazare Trophy," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a press release.

Predictably, left-arm spinner Shabbaz Nadeem has been dropped from stand-by list after his poor show in the first Test. Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar and keeper-batsman Kona Srikr Bharat are stand-by players.

Priyank Panchal and Abhimanyu Easwaran have also been released to play Vijay Hazare Trophy.

The five net bowlers, who were in Chennai will also join the team in Ahmedabad. They are Ankit Rajpoot, Avesh Khan, Sandeep Warrier, Krishnappa Gowtham and Saurabh Kumar.

IPL Auction: All eyes on Malan, Maxi & Moeen

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Flamboyant Australian Glenn Maxwell is expected to be a favourite, despite his underwhelming record, along with England's spin bowling all-rounder Moeen Ali during a condensed IPL players auction slated here on Thursday.

A total of 292 players have been enlisted for the shortened auctions — 164 of them Indian and 125 overseas. There will also be three associate players in the auction.

With 61 slots across eight franchises up for grabs, Royal Challengers Bangalore has the maximum, 11 vacancies, to fill with a purse of ₹35.4 crore while Sunrisers Hyderabad has only three slots available with ₹10.75 crore in its kitty.

The highest purse available is with Anil Kumble coached Punjab Kings, formerly Kings XI Punjab, which has ₹53.20 crore available for spending on nine spots.

With the IPL back in India after being held in the UAE last year, focus will be on big-hitters as well as slow bowlers and Maxwell and Moeen fit the category of the T.

However, Maxwell averages 22 in the tournament, having played 82 matches for his 1505 runs. He last played for Punjab.

Moeen, on the other hand, was seen in action for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the previous season.

While Maxwell and his former skipper Steve Smith are



both in the highest bidding category of ₹2 crore, one name that will surely attract attention is world's No 1 ranked T20 batsman Dawid Malan.

A strike-rate of nearly 150 in 19 T20Is has catapulted Malan into limelight and a few teams may like to raise their bids for the 33-year-old with a base price of ₹1.5 crore.

One of the most keenly watched teams going into the auction will be Chennai Super Kings after a nightmarish 2020 season when they failed to qualify for the IPL play-offs for

the first time in tournament's history.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni and head coach Stephen Fleming have always valued experience more than exuberance of youth in their team.

So, with ₹19.90 crore to spend and six vacancies to fill, Dhoni will look at some potential big hitters to help him, Suresh Raina and Faf du Plessis in the middle.

Since the IPL will be held in India, Maxwell despite his under-achieving stats could be picked for his skills as a tight

off-break bowler on slower tracks.

In case of Malan, Kings XI Punjab could walk away with him considering their purse and lack of consistent firepower at the top of the order.

The only part that is debatable about Malan is how good he is when it comes to playing slow bowlers in Indian conditions.

Among Indian players, the three notable capped names are Kedar Jadhav, veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh and fast bowler Umesh Yadav.

The auction dynamics, when it comes to Indian players, have been very different compared to foreign players due to the limited available slots (8) in each squad.

That's the reason Sunrisers Hyderabad or a Rajasthan Royals won't mind having an Umesh on board because of his experience at the highest level.

Similarly, Kedar and Harbhajan, with high-end base prices may go unsold during the first lot. But they are likely to be picked up in the final hour after franchises have settled squads.

Ditto for Steve Smith, among those with the highest base price but having a strike-rate which is not the greatest for a top-order batsman, might not find too many bidders unless any franchise is looking for a suitable captaincy candidate.

As usual, there would be some eye-popping bids for the uncapped domestic players like Kerala's Mohammed Azharuddeen (Junior), Tamil Nadu's handsome hulk Shah Rukh Khan, all-rounder R Sonu Yadav, Baroda's Vishnu Solanki and Bengal's Akash Deep. They could invite mini-bidding wars with their lowest base price bracket of ₹20 lakh.

Sachin Tendulkar's son Arjun, a left arm fast bowler who made his senior Mumbai team debut this year, is bracketed in the ₹20 lakh category and the kind of traction that the young kid brings along could mean that some bidders will be there for him.

No more Tests for Du Plessis



Johannesburg: Former South Africa captain Faf du Plessis on Wednesday announced his retirement from Test cricket to focus on the shorter formats with T20 being his priority.

The 36-year-old made the announcement through a statement on his Instagram page.

"It has been a year of refinement in the fire for us all. Uncertain were the times but they brought clarity for me in many aspects. My heart is clear and time is right to walk into a new chapter," du Plessis posted.

"It has been an honour to play for my country in all formats of the game but the time has come for me to retire from Test cricket."

Du Plessis said his focus now shifts to T20 cricket but ODIs will also remain a part of his plans.

"The next two years are ICC T20 World Cup years. Because of this my focus is shifting to this format and I want to play as much of it as possible around the world so that I can be the best player I can possibly be."

"I strongly believe I have a lot to offer to the Proteas in this format. This does mean that ODI cricket is no longer in the plans, I am just making T20 cricket priority in the short-term," he said.

Du Plessis played 69 Tests, scoring 4163 runs at an average of 40.02 including 10 hundreds and 21 fifties.

He stepped down as South Africa's Test and T20 captain last year after taking over from the charismatic AB de Villiers back in 2016. He captained the team in 36 Tests, winning 18 of them.

KING Mbappe

Kylian shreds Messi's Barca with hat-trick at Camp Nou to put PSG in sight of Champions League quarters

AP ■ BARCELONA

Kylian Mbappé outplayed Lionel Messi as Paris Saint-Germain put Barcelona up against the ropes in the Champions League again.

And with Mbappé in that kind of form, it's hard to see Barcelona staging another epic comeback this time.

After Messi put Barcelona ahead from the penalty spot, Mbappé netted a hat-trick at the Camp Nou on Tuesday to give PSG a 4-1 win in the first leg of their round-of-16 match.

It was the team's first meeting since Barcelona erased a 4-0 deficit by winning the second leg 6-1 at the same stage of the competition four years ago. But Ronald

Koeman's team was thoroughly outplayed at home, even with PSG missing Brazil star Neymar, and now has to attempt a comeback in Paris instead.

"It was a very important match for us," Mbappé said. "We wanted to come here and win. We did that in style. Tonight was magnificent, but we haven't won anything yet."

Mbappé scored five minutes after Messi's opener and added two second-half goals to become the first player to score an away hat-trick at the Camp Nou in the Champions League since Andriy Shevchenko for



Dynamo Kyiv in a 4-0 win in 1997.

His dominance was epitomized by the image of Gerard Pique — making his return from a long-term injury layoff — pulling at Mbappé's shirt in an unsuccessful attempt at slowing down the France star as he rushed forward in attack.

"There's no doubt that Kylian is one of the best players in the world, despite his young age," said PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino, who was in charge of his first Champions League game with the French club, having led Tottenham to the final two years ago.

"He's already done extraordinary things. But we have to stay humble."

Moise Kean also scored in the second half for PSG, last season's finalist which looked far more dangerous than the hosts throughout the match at the empty Camp Nou.

The second leg will be on March 10 in Paris.

"I'm not going to lie, it's very difficult to come back from a 4-1 first-leg loss at home," Koeman said.

Liverpool take advantage of errors

Salah, Mane strike as English champions find form to beat Leipzig away

AFP ■ BUDAPEST

Liverpool rediscovered lost form and seized the initiative against RB Leipzig in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 clash by cruising to a 2-0 win in a chilly Budapest on Tuesday.

Clinical early second-half strikes from Salah and Mane, both courtesy of dreadful defensive errors, proved decisive and left the German side facing a formidable task in the return leg on March 10.

The win moves Jurgen Klopp's men to the brink of the Champions League quarter-finals and also ends a run of three straight defeats that has left the English champions 13 points behind leaders Manchester City in the Premier League.

"It was a game we wanted it was a game we needed tonight," Klopp told BT Sport afterwards. "Leipzig can be a real monster. The way they play in the Bundesliga they overrun teams, they can be really physical in every-



thing and tonight we controlled them in an exceptional way.

"They had their moments because of the quality they have but we controlled the game so tonight I think we got the result we deserved," he said.

"We made two huge mistakes

which would be punished at any level," Nagelsmann told DAZN. "Mistakes happen, we didn't play badly and we have to live with the result, we have to score twice just to take the game (return leg) to extra time, but we will try to do our best," he said.