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DEHRADUN, SATURDAY APRIL 1, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹2



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DELHI TO FACE
LUCKNOW IN
IPL 2023 TODAY
12 SPORT

Ram Navami clashes go on unabated

6 States hit; cops hurt in Bengal, Sec 144 clamped; Shah reviews situation

PNS ■ HOWRAH/MUMBAI/
NEW DELHI/VADODARA/PATNA

A day after communal clashes broke out over Ram Navami celebrations in West Bengal, Maharashtra and Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar, fresh incidents of violence were reported from Bengal and Bihar, while situation remained tense in all the affected States on Friday.

Another spell of stone pelting were witnessed in Howrah's Kazipara on Friday, a day after violence and arson broke out in this industrial suburb. At least three policemen were injured in stone pelting. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC have been clamped in Kazipara. Altogether 45 people were arrested in connection with the violence since Thursday.

A huge team of Rapid Action Force (RAF) from Kolkata Police was brought into the area on Friday afternoon. The personnel started a route march following the stone-throwing incidents.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Governor CV Ananda Bose reviewed the situation and prohibitory orders were imposed. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also dialled the West Bengal Governor to enquire about the security situation in the town situated across the Hooghly river opposite Kolkata.



Police cordon off an area after clashes broke out between two groups during a 'Ram Navami' procession on Thursday at Kajipara, in Howrah district on Friday

PTI

A press statement from Raj Bhavan said Governor Bose asked the State Government to "ensure fool proof arrangements to maintain law and order effectively" besides action to be taken "against miscreants."

In Bihar's Biharsharif of Nalanda district, vehicles, thatched houses and shops were torched and several people injured in communal flare-ups reported over Ram Navami processions on Friday. On Thursday, Sasaram had seen

communal clashes over Ram Navami procession.

A minor child also sustained gunshot injuries. Four other persons also sustained injuries. They were admitted in Sadar hospital and they are said to be out of danger. The violence was triggered during the Ram Navami Shobha Yatra started from Labour Welfare Centre on Friday evening. When it reached Kanta area, some persons pelted stones from the rooftops, and this led to stampede-like situation and

then, clashes.

A clash broke out between two groups following a spat during a Ram Navami Shobha Yatra near Shahi Masjid in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow.

In Gujarat, police have detained 24 persons for allegedly hurling stones at two Ram Navami processions in communally-sensitive areas in Vadodara city, a top official said on Friday. The incidents had occurred on Thursday when Ram Navami was celebrated.

Stones were hurled at two separate Ram Navami processions when they were passing through the city's communally-sensitive areas of Fatehpura and nearby Kumbharwada. At least two persons were injured in stone-pelting by a mob at Kumbharwada, the police said. Local BJP MLA Manisha Vakil was part of the procession which came under attack at Kumbharwada. In some videos of the incident aired by new channels, people can be seen running for shelter during

stone pelting, while a chariot that was carrying a statue of Lord Ram, was also pulled away to a safer place by the devotees to save it from stones.

In Maharashtra, violence erupted in Aurangabad, Malad and Jalgaon. As many as 21 persons have been arrested so far in connection with the stone pelting at a Ram Navami procession in suburban Malad (West), police said on Friday. The tensions on Thursday night began following disputes over the loud DJ music being played in the procession as it was passing through the vicinity of mosques in Malvani area, a police official said. An FIR has been registered against nearly 300 identified and unidentified persons at the Malvani police station, he said.

As the volume of music was not lowered, there was some slogan-shouting and one of the men who had objected to loud music allegedly hurled a stone at the procession and it hit a participant, he added. Police personnel deputised for security along the route immediately took the man who had thrown the stone into custody, he said.

As per the FIR, when the procession was near the Ali Hazrat mosque around 8.45 pm, a mob of 200 to 250 persons began to pelt stones. As police tried to bring the situation under control, some people in the mob hurled stones at them and manhandled some police personnel, the FIR said.

Guj HC quashes Kejriwal's plea for Modi degree info

Imposes ₹25,000 cost on Delhi CM
PTI ■ AHMEDABAD



The Gujarat High Court on Friday set aside the seven-year-old order of the Central Information Commission (CIC), asking the Gujarat University to provide information on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's degree to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Allowing the Gujarat University's appeal against the CIC order, Justice Biren Vaishnav also imposed a cost of ₹25,000 on Kejriwal and asked him to deposit the amount within four weeks to the Gujarat State Legal Services Authority (GSLSA).

"Accordingly, the petition is allowed and the impugned order (of CIC), dated April 29, 2016, is quashed and set aside" said Justice Vaishnav in his order. Justice Vaishnav also refused to stay his order as requested by Kejriwal's lawyer Percy Kavina.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said it would appeal against the order in the the division bench.

"With this judgement, citizens have lost their right to seek information about the PM's degrees. The cost

imposed on Kejriwal, who was a respondent in this case, also came as a surprise for us. Since we are not satisfied with this judgement, we will soon approach a division bench against this order," said AAP Gujarat's legal cell president Pranav Thakkar.

In April 2016, the then CIC M Sridhar Acharyulu had directed the Delhi University and the Gujarat University to provide information to Kejriwal on the degrees that Modi received.

Three months later, the Gujarat High Court stayed the CIC order after the varsity approached it against that order.

The CIC order came a day after Kejriwal wrote to Acharyulu, saying he has no objection to government records about him being made public and wondered why the commission wanted to "hide" information on Modi's educational qualifications.

Based on the letter, Acharyulu directed the Gujarat University to give records of Modi's educational qualifications to Kejriwal.

Trump indicted for hush money to porn star, to be arraigned on Tue

First US ex-Prez to face criminal charge, Trump cries political conspiracy

PTI ■ NEW YORK



Former President Donald Trump speaks with reporters while in flight on his plane after a campaign rally at Waco Regional Airport, in Waco, Texas on Saturday

AP

The grand jury on Thursday voted to indict 76-year-old Trump, a Republican, for his role in paying money to porn star Stormy Daniels in an attempt to buy her silence over an alleged affair. He will be arraigned on Tuesday.

The indictment remains under seal and it is not clear what crimes and how many criminal counts Trump has been charged with. CNN reported that the former president has been charged with

more than 30 counts.

The office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, who has been pursuing the investigation for years, confirmed that it had contacted Trump's lawyers on Thursday evening to "coordinate his surrender" on unspecified charges.

"This evening we contacted Mr Trump's attorney to coordinate his surrender to the Manhattan DA's office for

arraignment on a Supreme Court indictment, which remains under seal. Guidance will be provided when the arraignment date is selected," a spokesperson for District Attorney Bragg said.

The New York Times termed Trump's indictment "a historic development that will shake up the 2024 presidential race and forever mark him as the nation's first former president to face criminal charges."

India on road to \$2 trillion exports in 2030

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal on Friday exuded confidence that India's merchandise and services exports will cross USD 2 trillion by 2030 from the current level of USD 765 billion, as he unveiled a "dynamic and responsive" foreign trade policy.

He said that goods exports have witnessed good growth considering the current global scenario while services exports may see a quantum jump in the current fiscal.

"We have to meet our exports targets going forward,"



Union Minister for Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles Piyush Goyal addresses at the release of 'Foreign Trade Policy 2023' in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

said the minister, adding that "we will need to work a bit harder" on goods exports.

Detailed report on P10

Kid among 6 die of suffocation as mosquito coil falls on bed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Six people, including a woman and a child died due to suffocation while two others were injured after a fire broke out in a house at Mazar Wala Road, Machhi Market, Shastri Park, police said on Friday. A Delhi Police team rushed to the spot and found that the injured had been taken to Jag Praveesh Chandra Hospital.

According to the police, a preliminary probe revealed that a burning mosquito coil fell on a mattress in the house during the night. The toxic fumes caused the victims to lose consciousness and later they died due to suffocation.

Of the 11 people affected by the fire, two are receiving treatment and three were discharged after first aid. The deceased include four men, a woman and a toddler.

Eyewitnesses said four bodies were found on the stairs and the toddler was found inside the room on the first floor.

The residents had gone to sleep after Sehri, which is consumed before day-break

during Ramzan and the fire broke out after that, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast), Joy Tirkey, said they received information about the incident at around 9 AM. "After reaching the spot we found that nine people had been taken to the Jag Praveesh Chandra Hospital," the DCP said.

Delhi Fire Service chief Atul Garg said they received a call and three fire tenders were rushed to the site to douse the fire. "Though the

fire was small, the occupants died due to inhalation of smoke," he added.

The deceased have been identified as Hamza, Pashirul, Zahiuddin, Dinesh, his wife Nisha and Fazlu Choudhary. Zahirul and Soni are being treated for burn injuries at hospital, while Mat-ur-Rehman, Taju Das and Ajmat Ali have been discharged, police said.

Akbar Ali, the owner of the house, said four of the deceased had come to stay on rent there this week.

CAPSULE

'FISCAL DEFICIT TOUCHES 82.8% OF YEAR-TARGET'
New Delhi: The Central Government's fiscal deficit touched 82.8 per cent of the full-year target at the end of February, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) on Friday. **P10**

'PEOPLE IN PAK BELIEVE PARTITION WAS MISTAKE'
Bhopal: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday said people of Pakistan were not happy after more than seven decades of Independence and they now believe the partition of India was a mistake.

FOUR KILLED IN GAS CYLINDER BLAST IN UP
Bulandshahr: Four people died in a suspected gas cylinder blast in a house here on Friday, police said. The house where the explosion took place was destroyed, police said.

Interest rates on most small savings schemes hiked up to 0.7%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Friday raised interest rates on most post office savings schemes by up to 0.7 per cent for the April-June 2023 quarter in line with the firming of interest rates in the economy.

While the interest rates for popular PPF and savings deposits have been retained at 7.1 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively, there has been an increase between 0.1 per cent and 0.7 per cent in other saving schemes, a finance ministry statement said. The highest increase was in the interest rate of the National Savings Certificate, which will now attract 7.5 per cent for the April 1-June 30, 2023 period. **Detailed report on P10**

IPL begins with glittering ceremony

FIANS ■ AHMEDABAD

A dazzling opening ceremony headlined by performances from singer Arijit Singh, actors Tamannaah Bhatia and Rashmika Mandanna set the stage for a tantalising IPL 2023 opener between defending champions Gujarat Titans and four-time winners Chennai Super Kings here on Friday.

As the IPL returns to the home-and-away format after four years, the Narendra Modi Stadium was jam-packed and for a moment, one would have been mistaken for the gathering to be the one from Chepauk in Chennai.

During the broadcast, despite the blue of Gujarat Titans being largely visible, it was thoroughly outsmarted by the yellow of Chennai Super Kings, with the decibel level going high whenever MS



Actress Rashmika Mandanna performs during the IPL 2023 opening ceremony at in Ahmedabad on Friday

PTI

Dhoni's picture appeared on the giant screen, sending the crowd into a frenzy.

As Mandira Bedi gave the opening address, just like she did at the WPL last month, the giant IPL logo was shining brightly in the middle. Around it were the logos of all ten teams, giving it the resemblance of the solar system.

The stadium suddenly began to give the feel of a live music concert with Arijit taking centre stage and the vociferous crowd joining him to sing along to his sensational chartbusters. Arijit began with simple yet melodious vocals and then hit the high notes, followed by taking a round of the ground in a buggy.

Gujarat skipper Hardik Pandya was glued to Arijit's soulful performance while Chennai skipper MS Dhoni, who got the loudest cheers from the capacity crowd, was

calmly seated in the dugout, listening to the trending tracks.

Tamannaah got their energy levels up through her graceful moves. But the Chennai fans, outnumbering Gujarat supporters, had another moment when Rashmika's "Vanakkam Chennai Super Kings" got louder cheers than "Kem cho Gujarat Titans?", followed by her dancing to some popular songs, including the chartbuster Naatu Naatu from the movie RRR.

When the performers as well as dignitaries from the BCCI were called upon the stage to conclude the opening ceremony, Dhoni and Pandya arrived on grand chariots.

Despite Pandya being the home captain, the cheers, the crowd, upwards of 1,00,000, erupted in joy with chants of 'Dhoni, Dhoni, Dhoni', something which will be heard more during Friday's match.

PM Modi to virtually attend MLA training workshop

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually attend a training camp for MLAs to be organised by the Bharatiya Janata Party in the State. He agreed to attend the event in response to an invitation by the BJP State president Mahendra Bhatt who met the PM on Friday. Bhatt also informed him about the development schemes being implemented in the State.

According to Bhatt, during the meeting PM Modi sought detailed information about the works being done under the Vibrant Village programme in border villages and the tours of Union ministers to these locations. He also sought information about the land subsidence disaster in Joshimath. Bhatt informed Modi that the scheme will

benefit the Char Dham Yatra by further increasing the number of pilgrims out of whom many will also be interested in visiting the border villages. In addition to State government projects and development works being done with assistance from the Centre, Modi also sought detailed information about the political and organisational issues in the State. He was also informed in detail about preparations for the Char Dham Yatra and the progress in the execution of the Badrinath master plan and Kedarnath reconstruction project. During the meeting which



lasted about 40 minutes, the PM was also informed about the relief and rehabilitation works done for the land subsidence affected people in Joshimath while also thanking the PM for the central assistance and approval to the rehabilitation package sought by the State.

Rains lash State, more expected today

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Moderate to heavy rain was experienced in various parts of the State which brought down the level of mercury on Friday. The rainy weather is expected to continue on Saturday with the State meteorological centre forecast light to moderate rain/thunderstorm/snowfall likely to occur at many places in the mountainous regions and at a few places in the plains of Uttarakhand today. Further, snowfall is likely to occur at places situated at altitudes of 3,000 metres and above. The meteorological centre has also issued a warning regarding the possibility of thunderstorms accompanied with lightning/hail likely to occur at isolated places in the districts on Saturday. The provisional State capital Dehradun is forecast to experience partly to generally cloudy skies with one or two spells of light rain/thunderstorms likely to occur. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 23 degrees Celsius and 15 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun on Saturday. Meanwhile, the rain on Friday brought down the mercury level considerably in Dehradun with a difference of less than four degrees Celsius between the maximum and minimum temperatures. Waterlogging was also witnessed briefly in some parts of the city. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in various places on Friday were 18.3 degrees Celsius and 15.6 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 27.6 degrees Celsius and 17 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 9.2 degrees Celsius and five degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 9.4 degrees Celsius and 8.6 degrees Celsius respectively in New Tehri. There was 102 millimetre rainfall in Ramnagar, 100 millimetre in Kashipur, 63.5 millimetre in Lansdowne, 50.5 millimetre in Kotli, 48 millimetre in Nainital, 39.5 millimetre in Dhanaulti, 38.1 millimetre in Mussoorie and 18.5 millimetre in Dehradun.

Passengers unhurt after bus overturns in seasonal nullah

PNS ■ RAMNAGAR

Passengers had a lucky escape when the bus they were travelling in was swept off its wheels to its side by the torrent in a seasonal nullah in Ramnagar on Friday. All the passengers were safely rescued from the bus. The accident happened on a day when Ramnagar received heavy rains measuring 102 millimetre. A bus with about 27 passengers was swept off balance near the Teda village

in Ramnagar area while navigating a seasonal nullah in the afternoon. The Fire Service personnel reached the site on being informed and were able to safely rescue all the passengers. A long queue of vehicles was formed at the site. The Tehsildar B.C Pant said that all the passengers were safe and unhurt. The accident had been caused due to heavy rain, he added.

Take back power tariff hike immediately: Maikhuri

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State secretary of CPI (ML) Indresh Maikhuri has criticised the Uttarakhand government for increasing the charges of electricity in the State. He said that it is an irony that the villages and towns of Uttarakhand have to lose their very existence to pave the way for setting up power projects and the affected people are not even getting cheap electricity.

Maikhuri said that even the consumers falling under the Below Poverty Line (BPL) have been loaded with the burden of increase in tariff of power. He said that it is an irony that the villages and towns of Uttarakhand have to lose their very existence to pave the way for setting up power projects and the affected people are not even getting cheap electricity.

Boxing up of first unit of 1000 MW Tehri PSP achieved by THDCIL

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

THDC India Limited achieved another milestone with the boxing up of the first unit of 1000 MW Tehri Pump Storage Project (PSP) on Friday. Executive director of the Tehri complex I.P Joshi congratulated the entire team of PSP for putting their sincere and concerted efforts towards the achievement of this milestone. He expressed his gratitude to all the persons connected directly or indirectly with the execution of this project. Project director (consortium)

Ajai Shukla, AGMs AR Gairola, AN Tripathy, Mallikarjuna K, SK Sahoo and other senior officials of THDCIL and GEPII were also present on the occasion. It is pertinent to mention here that THDCIL had also successfully completed the erection of runner of second unit of 250 MW Tehri PSP on March 28. These achievements have brought THDCIL one step closer to the commissioning of the nation's first Variable Speed Pump Storage Project (1000 MW).

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. DME/O&F/MB acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender (re-tender) against Tender No. M-1-OT-Rt-Box-NBD-22, closing date & time 24.04.2023 up to 15:00 hrs and will be opened on the same day at 15:30 hrs on www.ireps.gov.in. Information regarding this tender is available on website www.ireps.gov.in & can be seen/downloaded.

Name of work	"Round the clock transportation of Driver and Guard's khana/line boxes, from Train Engines/Brake vans of Mail Express, Passenger and Goods trains from the various Platforms and yards to Box Room/Running Room and vice-versa at Najibabad station for a period of 02 years"		
Tender Type	Open	Bidding system	Single Packet System
Closing Date & Time	24.04.2023 15:00 hrs	Tendering Section	O&F
Advertised Value	Rs. 8,69,787.66 (Inclusive of all taxes and charges including GST@18%)		
Earnest Money	Rs.17,400/-	Validity of Offer	60 days
Tender Doc. Cost	Rs. 2000.00	Period of Completion	02 years
Bidding start date	10.04.2023	Contract Type	Service
No. M-1-OT-Rt-Box-NBD-22 Date: 29.03.2023		990/2023	

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

No. M-1-OT-Rt-Box-LRJ-22 Dated : 29.03.2023
Sr. DME/O&F/MB acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender (re-tender) against Tender No. M-1-OT-Rt-Box-LRJ-22, closing date & time 24.04.2023 up to 15:00 hrs and will be opened on the same day at 15:30 hrs. on www.ireps.gov.in. Information regarding this tender is available on website www.ireps.gov.in & can be seen/downloaded.

Name of Work	"Round the clock transportation of Driver and Guard's khana/ line boxes, from Train Engines/Brake vans of Mail Express, Passenger and Goods trains from the various Platforms and yards to Box Room/Running Room and vice-versa at Laksar station for a period of 02 years"		
Tender Type	Open	Bidding System	Single Packet System
Closing Date & Time	24.04.2023 15:00 hrs.	Tendering Section	O&F
Advertised Value	Rs. 13,04,681.49 (Inclusive of all taxes and charges including GST@18%)		
Earnest Money	Rs. 26,100/-	Validity of offer	60 days
Tender Doc. Cost	Rs. 2000.00	Period of Completion	02 Years
Bidding Start Date	10.04.2023	Contract Type	Service

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 989/23

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr.DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against following tender. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money **only through online payment modes** available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender No.	350-DRM-MB-22-23	351-DRM-MB-22-23	301-DRM-MB-22-23
Date	DATE :- 30.03.2023	DATE :- 30.03.2023	DATE :- 31.03.2023
Name of work	Soft Upgradation/Improvement of SPN Station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) with Improvement of Circulating Area, Facade, toilets, Waiting Halls, horticulture etc. & Other Misc. Works at Shahjahanpur Station under ADEN/SPN	Soft Upgradation of RMU Station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) with Improvement of Circulating Area, Facade, toilets, Waiting Halls, Horticulture & Other Misc. Works at Rampur Station under ADEN/BE.	Heavy repair of DTTC School at SPN in the section of SSEW/SPN Under ADEN/SPN
Tender Closing Date Time	27.04.2023 16:00	27.04.2023 16:00	25.04.2023 16:00
Advertised Value (Rs.)	2,80,57,795.58	4,79,83,944.31	60,97,117.73
Earnest Money (Rs.)	2,90,300.00	3,89,900.00	1,22,000.00
Bidding Start Date	13.04.2023	13.04.2023	11.04.2023
Validity of Offer (Days)	60 Days	60 Days	60 Days
Period of Completion	6 Months	06 Months	06 Months
No. 75-W/2/3/WA/Publication DATED : 31.03.2023		980/2023	

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

IDFC First Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.
Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

**APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For immovable property)**

Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer of the IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank limited) under the securitization and reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand notice dated 11.08.2021/calling upon the borrower, co-borrowers and guarantors 1. M/S S P Enterprises Prop. Shivendra Prakash Yadav, 2.Shivendra Prakash Yadav, 3. Raj Kumari, 4. Banwari Lal Yadav, 5. Asha Yadav, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.68,65,540.26/- (Rupees Sixty Eight Lac Sixty Five Thousand Five Hundred Forty and Twenty Six Paise Only) as on 10.08.2021,within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Demand notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub - section (4) of section 13 of act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules, 2002 on this 28th day of March 2023.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **IDFC FIRST bank limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) for an amount of Rs.68,65,540.26/- (Rupees Sixty Eight Lac Sixty Five Thousand Five Hundred Forty and Twenty Six Paise Only) and interest thereon.**

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub - Section (8) Of Section 13 of the act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable properties.

Property. 1 All That Piece And Parcel Of House On ¼ Part Plot No 42, Having Land Measuring East & West 15 Ft. North & South 40 Ft, Total Area Of Admesuring 600 Sq Ft. In Kharsa No 124 Situated At Jwalapur, Tehsil & District Haridwar, Uttaranchal 249407 And Is Bounded As: East: Plot No. 43, West:Rod 20 Ft Wide, North:Part Of Plot No. 42, South:Plot No. 45
Property. 2 All That Piece And Parcel Of The Bhumi Khund Kharsa No 1605, Situated At Mohalla Pandewala, Jwalapur, Pargana: Jwalapur Tehsil & Distt: Haridwar, State: Uttaranchal, Measuring In East & Wet 25 Ft & North & South 40 Ft, Totally Admesuring 92.93 Sq. Meters. And Bounded By: East:Way 16 Feet Wide, West:Land Of Smt. Anju Sharma North:Land Of Seller , South:Plot Of Shri Satender

Date:28th March 2023
Place:Uttaranchal.
Loan Account No.:10959810, 10960552,12230309.

Authorised officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank limited)

IDFC First Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.
Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

Notice under Section 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

The following borrowers and co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Ltd) The loans of the below-mentioned borrowers and co- borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loan were classified as NPA as per the RBI guidelines. Amounts due by them to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Ltd) are mentioned as per respective notices issued more particularly described in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be applicable and the same will be charged as per contractual rate with effect from their respective dates.

Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Name of borrowers and co-borrowers	Section 13 (2) Notice Date	Outstanding amount as per Section 13 (2) Notice	Property Address
1	14452975, 27467644 & 32694069	LOAN AGAINST PROPERTY	1. M/S SAJAL SAREE EMPORIUM PROPRIETOR RAM BABU 2. MEENU BANSAL ALIAS MEENU SOHANLAL TAYAL 3. RAM BABU	01.03.2023	1,91,76,850.26/-	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PLOT MEASURING 1400 SQ. FT. (1/2 OR HALF PORTION OF PLOT NO. 24), PART OF KHARSA NO. 2499 MIN., KHEVAT NO. 01, SITUATED AT NEW HARIDWAR COLONY, GRAM: AHMADPUR KARACH, PARGANA: JWALAPUR, TEHSIL & DISTRICT: HARIDWAR, AND BOUNDED AS: EAST: ROAD 30 FT. WIDE, WEST: GALI 12 FT. WIDE, NORTH: PLOT OF SUMAN BANSAL & SUBHASHCHANDAR BANSAL SOUTH: HOUSE OF SATISH BADGOTI

You are hereby called upon to pay the amounts to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC FIRST Bank Ltd) as per the details shown in the above table with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to initiate proceedings, under Section 13 (4) and section 14 of the SARFAESI Act, against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereinabove to realize the amount due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Ltd). Further you are prohibited under Section 13 (13) of the said Act from transferring the said secured assets either by way of sale/lease or otherwise. Sd/-
Authorized Officer IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited)

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE

Sr. DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against following tender bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards earnest money **only through online payment modes** available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender No. / Date	352-DRM-MB-22-23 Date: 30.03.2023
Name of work	Soft Upgradation of Hardoi station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme by improving circulating area, facade, entrance Porch, Roads, horticulture & landscaping, renovation/retrofitting/ replacement of old existing buildings, interior, waiting hall, toilet utility shifting etc.
Tender Closing Date/Time	27.04.2023
Advertised Value(₹)	₹7,17,85,496.87
Earnest Money(₹)	₹5,08,900.00
Bidding Start Date	13.04.2023
Validity of offer	60 Days
Period of Completion	09 Months
No. 74-W/2/3/WA/Publication Dated: 31.03.2023 983/2023	

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E-Tender Notice

NND invites Request for Proposal (RFP) for Supply of Garbage Compactor Bins for Nagar Nigam Dehradun. E-tenders are invited under two bid systems i.e. Technical Bid and Financial Bid. Interested agencies/Prospective bidders are advised to submit their bids by visiting the Govt. of Uttarakhand e- procurement portal <http://www.uktender.gov.in>. Bids will be accepted as e-tender. Interested bidders can also go through the details of RFP/Tender document in our official website www.nagarigandehradun.com and www.uktenders.gov.in. Pre-bid meeting is scheduled at 2:30 pm on 06.04.2023. Any Addendum/Corrigendum including date of extension will be uploaded only on www.uktenders.gov.in. The Municipal Commissioner have right to cancel tender at any stage without giving any reason. The last date for submission of bids on 17.04.2023 at 2:00PM.

Advt No. 2555 (H)
Date : 31/03/2023

Municipal Commissioner,
Nagar Nigam Dehradun

TATA CAPITAL HOUSING FINANCE LTD
Regd. Office: 11th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013. CIN No. U67190MH2008PLC187552

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13 (2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("Act") read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Rules").

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited (TCHFL) under the Act and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Rules already issued detailed Demand Notices dated below under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) (all singularly or together referred to "Obligors")/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) listed hereunder, to pay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notices/s, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notice/s, as per details given below. Copies of the said Notices are served by Registered Post A.D. and are available with the undersigned, and the said Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s), may, if they so desire, collect the respective copy from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours. In connection with the above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Obligor(s) /Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) to pay to TCHFL, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notices/s, the amounts indicated herein below against their respective names, together with further interest as detailed below from the respective dates mentioned below in column (d) till the date of payment and / or realisation, read with the loan agreement and other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Obligor(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset(s) have been mortgaged to TCHFL by the said Obligor(s) respectively.

Contract No.	Name of Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s)	Total Outstanding Dues (Rs.) as on below date*	Date of Demand Notice Date of NPA
10245 393 & 10520 755	Mr. Sovan Singh Rana Alias Sovan Singh (Borrower) and Mrs. Ramprati Devi & Mr. Ravindra Singh Rana (Co-Borrower)	As on 22/03/2023, an amount of Rs. 5,36,742/- (Rupees Five Lakh Thirty Six Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Two Only) is due and payable by you under the loan account no 10245393 and an amount of Rs. 50,747/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Seven Only) is due and payable under the loan account no 10520755by you, totalling to Rs. 5,87,489/- (Rupees Five Lakh Eighty Seven Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Nine Only)	23-03-2023 09-03-2023
TCHH 0718 00010 01313 61 & TCHI 00718 00010 01313 62	Mr. Manish Kumar Tiwari (Borrower) & Mrs. Meera Devi (Co-Borrower)	As on 21/03/2023, an amount of Rs. 7,77,097/- (Rupees Seven Lakh Seventy Seven Thousand Ninety Seven Only) is due and payable by you under the loan agreement TCHH0718000100131361 and an amount of Rs. 49,647/- (Rupees Forty Nine Thousand Six Hundred Forty Seven Only) is due and payable under the loan agreement TCHIN0718000100135182 by you, totalling to Rs. 8,26,744/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Twenty Six Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Seven Only)	23-03-2023 05-03-2023

Description of the Secured Assets/Immovable Properties/ Mortgaged Properties :
"All piece & parcels of Residential Plot, Admeasuring 41.82 Sq. Mtrs., Comprised in Khata No. 1566, Kharsa No. 1164, As per Fasli year 1416 to 1421, Situated at Maja Ajabpur Khurd, Pargana Pachwadon, District Dehradun (Uttarakhand), with all common amenities mentioned in Sale Deed. Bounded as: East - Property of Sh. Bisht Side measuring 28 Ft., West - 14 Ft. Wide Road, Side measuring 30.3 Ft., North - Land of Sh. Rajendra Prasad, Side measuring 11.9 Ft., South - Land of Sh. Rajendra Prasad, Side measuring 19Ft."

Description of the Secured Assets/Immovable Properties/ Mortgaged Properties :
"All that Piece & Parcel of Residential Property being Open Plot (Part of Plot Private No. 16 and Private Plot No. 17, Admeasuring 55.76 Sq. Mtrs. (20'x30'), Comprised in Khata No. 01612, Khet No. 79/4 Min, Situated at Village Lalpur, Tehsil Rudarpur, District Udham Singh Nagar (Uttarakhand), with all common amenities mentioned in Sale Deed. Bounded as: East - 6.09 Mtrs. Wide Rasta, West - Land of Others, North: Private Plot No. 18, South - Part of Private Plot No. 16."

Description of the Secured Assets/Immovable Properties/ Mortgaged Properties :
"All that Piece and Parcel of Residential Property being Plot No. 66, Admeasuring 1200 Sq. Ft. i.e. 111.52 Sq. Mts (40'x30'), Comprised in Kharsa No. 1580, Situated at Village Salempur Mehdood 2, Pargana Roorkee, Outside M.C. Limits, Tehsil or District Haridwar (Uttarakhand), with all common amenities under sale deed. Boundaries: East: Plot No. 67 of Sandhya Bhat W/o Deepak Bhat, West: Plot No. 65 of Seller, North: Ashok Kumar Chauhan, South: Road 22" Wide."

*with further interest, additional Interest : at the rate as more particularly stated in respective Demand Notice dated mentioned above, incidental expenses, costs, charges etc incurred till the date of payment and/or realization. If the said Obligor(s) shall fail to make payment to TCHFL as aforesaid, then TCHFL shall proceed against the above Secured Asset(s)/Immovable Property(ies) under Section 13(4) of the said Act and the applicable Rules entirely at the risk of the said Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) as to the costs and consequences.

The said Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) are prohibited under the said Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset(s)/Immovable Property, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of TCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the Act or Rules made thereunder shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date: 01/04/2023
Place: Dehradun

Sd/-Authorised Officer,
For Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited

MARKETS
SENSEX 58,991.52 (+1031.43)
NIFTY 17,359.75 (+279.05)
GOLD 59,528.00 (+212.00)
SILVER 72,485.00 (+711.00)

WEATHER
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The general public is informed that I have changed my name from Gangasagar Sikholia to SAGAR SIKHOLA and in future I should be known as Sagar Sikholia s/o Lalit Kumar Sikholia Address: Moh Ramchandran Lakharhan Jwalapur Haridwar UK.

The general public is informed that I have changed my name from Megha Bisht to MEGHA LUTHRA and in future I should be known as Megha Luthra w/o Bhanu Pratap Singh Address: Ward No 04 Rudraprayag Chamoli UK.

The general public is informed that I have changed my name from Nuransh Jain to NURANSH KUMAR JAIN and in future I should be known as Nuransh Kumar Jain s/o Ajay Jain address: Lata Kunj 285 Niranjani Akhara Road Sharvan Nath Nagar Haridwar UK.

My High School Certificate Roll No. 0925723 Board of Secondary Education Uttar Pradesh Prayagraj is of the year 2008 which is actually lost somewhere, Bhavya Pathak s/o Mr. Naveen Pathak resident 34/41 Akhara Mohalla, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

I, RASIKA W/o Army No.2808708H, NK.HARAK ANIL SADASHIV, At-Shivde,Post-Shivde, TEH.-Sinnar,Dist.-Nasik, Maharashtra-422502. I have changed my name RASIKA to RASIKA ANIL HARAK inclusion of middle and last name as per my adhaar no.541968755445 vide affidavit sworn before notary and advocate Sanjeev Kumar dated 31.03.23. UK GOI.

I, MANISHA W/o Army No.2811999Y, NK.VAIRAGAR DNYANESHWAR BALIRAM, At-Tadpangri,Post-Singapur, TEH.-Parbhani, Dist.- Parbhani, Maharashtra-431401. I have changed my name MANISHA to MANISHA DNYANESHWAR VAIRAGAR inclusion of middle and last name as per my adhaar no.634783346435 vide affidavit sworn before notary and advocate Sanjeev Kumar dated 01.04.23. UK GOI.

I, ARCHANA W/o Army No.2812042M, NK.TEJANKAR DNYANESHWAR BALIRAM, At-Andhera,Post-Andhera, TEH.-Deulgaon Raja,Dist.-Buldana, Maharashtra-443201. I have changed my name ARCHANA to ARCHANA DNYANESHWAR TEJANKAR inclusion of middle and last name as per my adhaar no.863506048625 vide affidavit sworn before notary and advocate Sanjeev Kumar dated 01.04.23. UK GOI.

I, MANISHA W/o Army No.2807397N,HAV.SONAWAN E YOGESH NANASHEB, At-Hiswal B.K,Post-Hiswal B.K, TEH.-Nandgaon,Dist.-Nasik, Maharashtra-423106. I have changed my name MANISHA to M A N I S H A Y O G E S H SONAWANE inclusion of middle and last name as per my adhaar no.273132528779 vide affidavit sworn before notary and advocate Sanjeev Kumar dated 01.03.23. UK GOI.

I Sukamini parida wife of Pramod Kumar Parida army no 2799967F Address: P.K.Parida, Village Adal, Sarangadharpur, Sarangadharpur, Nayagarh, Odisha 752026 I have change my name from Sukamini to Sukamini parida

I Sukamini Parida wife of Pramod Kumar Parida army no 2799967F address: P.K.Parida, village Adal, Sarangadharpur, Sarangadharpur, Nayagarh, Odisha 752026 I have change my DoB from 07.02.1981 to 16.07.1981

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Mandaviya lays foundation stones of Rs 182 crore projects in health sector

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Union Health minister Mansukh Mandaviya laid the foundation stones of four projects of Rs 182 crore on Friday. These projects include setting up of a 500 bedded hospital in Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) Dehradun and three 50 bedded critical care blocks each at Rudraprayag, Nainital and Srinagar Pauri. A programme was organised at the residence of the chief minister on the day for the foundation laying ceremony in which the Union Health minister participated virtually from Joshimath. Speaking on the occasion he said that the work of upgradation and strengthening of medical infrastructure under Prime Minister Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) is in steady progress.

Appreciating the commitment of the Uttarakhand government for improving the health sector, the Union Health minister said that a total of 14 critical care blocks are being constructed in the state. "Through these initiatives, better health facilities for emergency care will be easily available to the general public living in remote areas of the mountainous region", he said. Mandaviya informed that the

500 bedded facility in Doon Medical College will be expanded with an amount of Rs 120 Crores to upgrade and strengthen the medical infrastructure in the state. With this initiative, patients coming from remote areas will also be able to get better treatment facilities in the state capital.

The chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed gratitude to the Union government for helping in strengthening the health infrastructure in the state. He said that the State government is working with the Union government to further improve the quality of healthcare in the state by spreading awareness about diseases, bringing quality and affordable healthcare services, increasing the quality and quantity of healthcare professionals in the state and by working on a mission-mode to bring in transformation in healthcare infrastructure and



other schemes. The State's Health minister Dhan Singh Rawat highlighted the progress achieved by Uttarakhand in the health sector. "Uttarakhand has achieved the highest number of blood donations in the country with more than 80,000 people already registered in the e-Raktkosh blood donation portal," he said. Rawat claimed over 50 lakh digital health IDs have been issued to people of State and more than seven lakh people have availed free treatment out of them. "In the fight against TB, Uttarakhand has become the first state in India to cover 100 per cent of TB patients under the Ni-kshay Mitra initiative", he stated.

Cabinet minister Ganesh Joshi, Rajya Sabha MPs Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah, Naresh Bansal, Health secretary R Rajesh Kumar, joint secretary of the Union Health ministry Vishal Chauhan and others were present on the occasion.

Earlier on Thursday the Union Health minister visited the Malari village in Chamoli district to review the 'Vibrant Village Programme and other development projects. Before heading for Malari, he also inspected the Jan Aushadhi Kendra (JAK) in Dehradun and interacted with health workers and beneficiaries there.

CBI raids AIIMS Rishikesh regarding irregularities in recruitment and purchases

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A seven-member team of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted a raid at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rishikesh on Friday in connection with alleged irregularities in recruitments and purchases made during the tenure of former director Ravi Kant. The CBI officials reportedly questioned various medical officers and scrutinised documents and hospital records, as per the

documents and sought additional documents related to the alleged irregularities in AIIMS which were provided to the team by the administration.

The CBI had also conducted similar raids at AIIMS, Rishikesh in February last year as well and registered two separate cases against five people, former AIIMS employees, in April, 2022. According to the officials, five of the then AIIMS officials al-



official sources. The officials said that the search was conducted by a CBI team led by deputy superintendent of police Rajeev Chandola. They said that the CBI analysed several

legedly favoured a bidder during the tender process of a compact road sweeping machine that caused a loss of about Rs two crore to the institute.

U'khand Cong to register police complaints against 'foulmouthed' BJP leaders

Party plans a month long programme to protest Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand Congress unveiled a plan for registering its protest against disqualification of former president of Congress Rahul Gandhi from Lok Sabha in a series of Press conferences held in all the district headquarters on Friday. As per the plan all the frontal organisations, different cells and departments of State Congress would undertake a massive postcard campaign till April 15. In the campaign postcards would be sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighting the problems of the people and atrocities on the women and unemployed in Uttarakhand.

Addressing the media persons at the headquarters of State Congress, the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara said that on April 8, written complaints would be lodged against those leaders of BJP who have used indecent language for the Congress leaders and those indulging in hate speeches. The PCC pres-

ident added that a mega rally would be organised by the State Congress between April 25 to 30. The objective of the rally is to save the democracy in the country, Mahara said. He averred that the democracy is being murdered in the country and a conspiracy is being hatched against those who are opposing the ruling party.

Mahara said that major portions of the speech of Rahul Gandhi given in parliament were removed from the proceedings of the house. Rahul had said that when the leaders of opposition speak, the mikes in the house get switched off. Mahara added that Rahul Gandhi met the speaker and also wrote a letter to him requesting that he should be allowed to speak but his request was denied. It proves that the BJP government is afraid of Rahul. Mahara said that when Rahul Gandhi asked questions about the relationship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and industrialist Gautam Adani in

Lok Sabha, an old case was revived against Rahul Gandhi. A maximum sentence of two years is given in a defamation case and this sentence was given to Rahul Gandhi so that his membership from the Lok Sabha gets terminated. The PCC president also raised questions over the haste in which Rahul was asked to vacate his official residence.

He said that a campaign to malign Rahul Gandhi is being undertaken in the country by the BJP. Mahara said that BJP leaders have made offensive remarks on first PM Jawahar Lal Nehru, Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and other leaders.

Launching an attack on the BJP leaders of Uttarakhand Mahara said that they are silent over the VIP involved in murder of Ankita Bhandari. He said that the Joshimath incident shows that those doing politics in the name of Ram are unable to save Adi Shankaracharya's place.

MCD makes record breaking property tax collection of over Rs 52 crore

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) on Friday made history with the record breaking property tax collection of over Rs 52

transactions. He said that the tax section remained open even during some public holidays to ensure people can submit the tax at their con-



crore in the financial year 2022-23. Despite heavy rain on Friday, the corporation collected Rs 3.30 crore on the last day of the financial year.

The mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' also appreciated the municipal tax superintendents Dharmesh Painuly and Poonam Rawat and the whole tax section team for this record breaking collection. He said that the corporation made several changes like making the website user-friendly for tax submission and introducing digital mode of payments in MCD premises to ensure easy and safe

venience. Talking about tax collection, tax superintendent Dharmesh Painuly said that nearly 1.15 lakh properties are registered in the MCD at present and 65,000 people paid property tax this financial year which was below 60,000 last time. Many big non-residential establishments like Forest Research Institute (FRI) and buildings of the police department also deposited tax this year which was due for years.

This is the first time in the past three years that tax submission was not severely affected due to Covid-19. He

Pilgrims expected to undertake safe journey through Joshimath: Mandaviya

PNS ■ JOSHIMATH

Union Health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Friday that the Central and State governments had done good work following land subsidence in Joshimath. He said that the condition is improving and added that it is hoped that pilgrims on the Char Dham Yatra will have a safe journey through this area.

directed officials to bring about necessary improvements in health facilities. Earlier in the morning, Mandaviya reached the Narsinh Mandir where he paid obeisance to the lord. Earlier on the first day of his two-day State visit, Mandaviya visited Malari village where he interacted with the villagers in the Vibrant Village scheme and also discussed various governmental schemes with them. The minister said that the road, network connectivity, electricity and water supply along with health facilities in the border region are better than before.



The Union minister also inspected community health centres on the Yatra route and

Ambulance with fake patient caught smuggling liquor in Dehradun

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Dehradun police nabbed four people including a woman in the wee hours of Friday who were using an ambulance to smuggle liquor. The illegal liquor was allegedly being smuggled to Rishikesh and the gang used

wala area on Friday around 12:35 AM noticed that an ambulance was passing through a route with a loud siren when there was nobody on the road.

He said that this made the police team on duty there sus-



an ambulance to avoid police checking on various routes. The Dehradun senior superintendent of police Daleep Singh Kunwar said in a Press conference here on Friday that a police team in the Doi-

picious of the ambulance and they stopped it to check with the driver. The police observed that a woman was lying inside the ambulance and two men were also pres-

ent there besides the driver. Kunwar said, "When the police asked the reason for the loud siren despite the road being empty, the driver panicked and failed to respond properly. The police immediately checked the ambulance and found out that the ambulance had several cardboard boxes. The woman was also lying down over the cardboard boxes. When the police checked, they found 20 cardboard boxes of 960 bottles of country liquor." He said that the police charged all four accused under Section 60/72 of the Excise Act for illegal transportation of liquor and arrested them. The police have identified the accused as Raveena Bhatnagar (36), Sunny (31), Prince Singh (24) and Abhishek (21) and all are residents of Rishikesh. Many cases of smuggling of alcohol and drugs are registered against Raveena Bhatnagar under various sections in Rishikesh police station, as per the SSP.

Vikram operators can't pick up passengers midway on routes: RTO

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Transport department from Monday will take action against those Vikram operators who pick up passengers from anywhere on their respective routes in Dehradun except the starting point and the destination. The department has taken this decision after the High Court's recent stay on the proposal of the Dehradun Regional Transport Office to convert more than 10 years old auto rickshaws and Vikram into clean fuel vehicles like CNG fuelled or electric hybrid vehicles.

The regional transport officer (enforcement) Shailesh Tiwari said that Vikram operators hold contract carriage permits as per which they can go from one fixed stop to another on booking rather than picking up passengers anywhere from their routes. Besides being illegal

deadline for three-wheeler vehicles less than 10 years old was fixed as December 31, 2023.

The order stated that old vehicles would not be allowed to operate after the said dates as they cause heavy air pollution. The RTO had also stated that it would issue stage carriage permits to new applicants for 18 routes to Vikram operators, unlike their current contract carriage permit. The unions Vikram Jan Kalyan Samiti and Doon Auto Rickshaw Union filed a petition against the order in the high court. Pankaj Arora from the autorickshaw union said that according to section 59 of the MV Act, the age of any vehicle is fixed by the Central government through notification and the RTO does not have the authority to do it. He said that the date of the next hearing



under the Motor Vehicles Act, this practice also causes traffic issues considering which, the enforcement team will start checking and taking action against Vikram operators, said Tiwari. The RTO issued an order on November 1 last year that auto rickshaws and Vikrams older than 10 years must be converted to clean fuel vehicles by March 31, 2023. The

is on April 28. He said that since RTO was planning to implement the same order in the whole division, unions from Rishikesh, Haridwar and Roorkee had also filed similar petitions and the HC order will be applicable there as well. The unions said that they would adhere to all rules and approach the court again if RTO would go against the order.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank

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

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Abraar Ahmad, Anwarul Islam, 168 171 Khasra No. Raipur, Industrial Area Bhagwanpur, Roorkee, Roorkee, Dehradun, A/c No. LBMRT00004610993	Plot No.4/772, Sector 4, Secheme No.10, Madhavpuram Colony, Delhi Road, Uttar Pradesh Meerut- 250001	14/02/2023 Rs. 26,47,535/-	03/11/2022
2.	Chander Prakash, Anupama Manchanda, C/o Gurdial Vadwa, House No.69 Gali No.2, Ramnagar, Roorkee, Uttaranchal, A/c No.LBROK00001387271	House No.221, Abadi Mohalla, Hadud Nagarpalika, Pargana & Tehsil Roorkee District Haridwar, Uttaranchal	03/02/2023 Rs. 2,60,285/-	11/10/2022
3.	Munish Kumar Sharma, Sunita Sharma, 433 Race Course, Valley Race, Dehradun, Dehradun, A/c No. LBHWR000003875253	Unit No.406, 4th Floor, Time Square Mall, Sahasradhara Road Dehradun Built on Khasra No.308, 309 GA, 309 Kha, 310 of Village Adhola, Pargana Centraldoon Dehradun Without Roof Right Dehradun- 248001	12/01/2023 Rs. 19,16,294/-	03/10/2022
4.	Rajat Kumar Singh, Vinita Singh, Rishi Pal Singh, S/o Rishipal Singh Rishikunj Gali No.25 Krishna Nagar, Roorkee Radha Krishna Temple Roorkee Haridwar, Roorkee 247667, Gadarpur, Roorkee, Uttarakhand, A/c No.LBROK00005428931	Part of Khasra No.1836, 1837, 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843/1, 1847, Situated at Mohalla- Krishna Nagar, Gali No. 25, Village- Salempur Rajputan, Pargana- Bhagwanpur, Tehsil Roorkee Haridwar 247667	14/02/2023 Rs. 9,33,445/-	21/11/2022
5.	Shiv Kumar, Banshi Lal, Model Colony, Rudrapur, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand, A/c No.LBRUD00004874903	Khet No.74/2 Gram Rampura, Model Colony Tehsil Distt Udham Singh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh Rudrapur- 263153	14/02/2023 Rs. 19,69,694/-	03/11/2022
6.	Shiv Kumar, Banshi Lal, Model Colony, Rudrapur, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand, A/c No.LBRUD00005429333	Khet No.74/2 Gram Rampura, Model Colony Tehsil Distt Udham Singh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh Rudrapur- 263153	14/02/2023 Rs. 3,54,952/-	03/11/2022

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : April 01, 2023
Place : Dehradun

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

नगर पालिका परिषद, मुनिकीरेती-ढालवाला टिहरी गढ़वाल

पत्रांक 1402 / जल संचयन निविदा सूचना / 2022-23

दिनांक 29.03.2023

निविदा सूचना

एतत् द्वारा सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि नगर पालिका परिषद मुनिकीरेती ढालवाला द्वारा निकाय निधि / राज्य वित्त आयोग / 15 वां वित्त आयोग जल संचयन के अन्तर्गत नगर क्षेत्र में वार्ड संख्या 09 के अन्तर्गत प्राईमरी स्कूल से पैन्थली जी के मकान से होते हुये पंचायत भवन तक भूमिगत नाली के माध्यम से भूमि जल संचयन सम्बन्धी कार्य किये जाने हैं। जिस हेतु इच्छुक ठेकेदारों / फर्मों / कम्पनियों से निविदायें कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिषद, मुनिकीरेती- ढालवाला में दिनांक 15.04.2023 को अपराह्न 02:00 बजे तक ई- निविदा दो लिफाफा प्रणाली (Double bid system) के अन्तर्गत “तकनीकी भाव पत्र” (Technical Bid) एवं “वित्तीय भाव पत्र” (Financial Bid) के माध्यम से www.uktender.gov.in पर ऑनलाईन के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाती है। जो कि उसी दिन साथ 4:00 बजे निविदा समिति के द्वारा निविदादाताओं के सम्मुख खोली जायेगी। तकनीकी बिड में सफल निविदादाताओं की ही वित्तीय बिड निविदा द्वितीय चरण में खोली जायेगी। निविदा प्रपत्र पालिका कार्यालय, मुनिकीरेती ढालवाला व www.uktender.gov.in पर से दिनांक 14.03.2023 तक सायं 04:00 बजे तक निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य जी०एफ०डी० सहित कूल कार्यालय में नगद / बैंक ड्राफ्ट जमा कर प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। कार्य सम्बन्धी विस्तृत सूचना एवं अन्य निविदा शर्त निविदा प्रपत्र के साथ संलग्न हैं। जो कि कार्यालय, मुनिकीरेती ढालवाला व www.uktender.gov.in में किसी भी कार्यदिवस में देखी जा सकती है। निविदा को बिना कारण बताये स्वीकृत / अस्वीकृत / निरस्त करने का अधिकार अध्यक्ष, निविदा समिति को होगा।

क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम/विवरण	कार्य की आगमन लागत	घरोहर धनराशि	निविदा शुल्क	निविदा की वैधता
1	नगर क्षेत्र में वार्ड संख्या 09 के अन्तर्गत प्राईमरी स्कूल से पैन्थली जी के मकान से होते हुये पंचायत भवन तक भूमिगत नाली के माध्यम से भूमि जल संचयन सम्बन्धी कार्य	31.16 लाख	75000.00	4000+18% GST	90 दिवस

(तनवीर सिंह मारवाहा)
अधिसूचना अधिकारी,

(रोशन रतूडी)
अध्यक्ष

‘Chinese moves along LAC provocative’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Amidst tension continuing at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh and China ramping up its military infrastructure on its side there, the US has said some of the steps being taken by Beijing along the India-China border have been “provocative.”

Making this observation, Kurt Campbell, the Deputy Assistant to the US President and Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific told a Washington based think-tank late Thursday there his country is destined to work more closely with New Delhi.

The think tank-Centre for a new American Security (CNAS)-in its report said Indian officials believe China is trying to contain India by forcing it to divert more resources into defending simultaneously both its western border with Pakistan and eastern flank with China and by weakening its willingness and ability to challenge Chinese ambitions to dominate the region.

Campbell also said India is not an ally of the United States and will never be so. “But it does not mean that we will not be close partners and share many things. That’s how we need to understand the role that India will play as a great nation on the global stage.

“We want to encourage that and support that and deepen this relationship, which is



already very strong, probably the strongest people-to-people relationship of any country that the United States has on the global stage,” he said.

The think tank report said the India-China border intrusions and clashes have become more frequent and threaten to lead to all-out conflict.

The increased prospect of India-China border hostility has implications for the United States and its Indo-Pacific strategy between the two Asian giants, it said.

Campbell told the think-tank, “Some of the steps that China has taken along this vast 5,000-mile border have been provocative and deeply concerning to Indian partners and friends.”

The think tank’s report, authored by Lisa Curtis and Derek Grossman, has made several recommendations to help deter and respond to further Chinese aggression along the border with India.

Prominent among them include the United States should elevate Indian territorial disputes with China on par

with Beijing’s assertiveness against other US allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific and ensure this is reflected in all national security-related documents and speeches.

It also recommended that the US offer India the sophisticated military technology it requires to defend its borders and initiate the coproduction and co-development of military equipment and assist India in strengthening its maritime and naval capacity.

The think tank also urged the US to conduct joint intelligence reviews with India to align assessments of Chinese plans and intentions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and enhance coordination with Indian officials on contingency planning in the event of a future India-China conflict.

It asked the US to criticise Beijing’s ‘efforts at land-grabbing’ in multilateral forums, including the UN, Shangri-La Dialogue, G20, and East Asia Summit and be prepared to extend full support to India in the event of another border crisis or conflict.

Indian-Americans slam violence against mission by Khalistani supporters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Taking note of the violent incidents by alleged Khalistan supporters in the last few days in the US, eminent Indian-Americans, including members of the Sikh community from Silicon Valley have condemned the actions against the Indian diplomatic mission and diplomats in San Francisco. The group conveyed these feelings in a meeting with the officials of the Department of Justice of US.

Meanwhile, a senior US State Department official said his country takes the safety and security of diplomats and diplomatic missions in the country quite seriously.

“We take the safety and security of the diplomatic missions that we host in the United States and the diplomats that work in them quite seriously,” Vedant Patel, the Deputy Spokesperson of the State Department told reporters at a press conference here late Thursday.

As regards Indian Americans taking exception to the incidents, some of them



met with the officials of the US Department of Justice (DOJ) on Wednesday and condemned the recent violence against the Indian diplomatic mission and diplomats in San Francisco.

During the meeting, the Indian-Americans told the DoJ officials that they felt unsafe going to the San Francisco Consulate and felt disturbed while the Sikh community members said such unlawful activities, which do not reflect the voice of the majority, bring a bad name to the community. They also talked about personal safety and the lack of action by the San Francisco Police.

The meeting came after a group of Khalistan supporters this month attacked and damaged the Indian Consulate in San Francisco.

Parliamentary committee asks DoPT to look into IAS officers’ property returns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Noting that a large number of IAS officers have not filed annual immovable property returns, a Parliamentary committee has asked the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to form a panel to look into it and also put in place a mechanism to check the veracity of asset details filed by bureaucrats. As many as 1,393 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers did not file their asset details in the 2011 to 2022 period, according to a recent report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice.

“Keeping the wider ramifications of corruption in public administration in mind, the Committee recommends the central government to constitute a committee to examine the issue of non-submission of annual immovable property returns by public servants in detail,” said the report tabled in Parliament recently.

The Committee said that DoPT should put a mechanism in place to check the veracity of the property return statement filed by public servants. It said India is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) which mandates the state parties to establish and promote effective practices aimed at prevention of corruption. The Committee said DoPT is the nodal department for anti-corruption, including matters concerning UNCAC.



The panel also took up the matter of posting of an All India Service (AIS)-Indian Foreign Service (IFS) couple at the same station and suggested framing of appropriate guidelines. It appreciated the Department of Personnel and Training for formulating guidelines for posting husband and wife, who are in government service, at the same station.

“However, the Committee feels there is a lacuna in the policy which needs to be addressed. It is observed that DoPT’s guidelines do not provide any relief to spouses where one of the spouses belongs to an All India Service and the other spouse belongs to the Indian Foreign Service,” said the report tabled in Parliament recently. The three All India Services are IAS, Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service.

“The IFS does not have positions earmarked in the state governments except for postings in Regional Passport Offices and branch secretariats. Moreover, these positions are restricted to certain pay levels. Secondly, the AIS officer can opt for deputation but the rules require him/her to go back to the cadre for ‘cooling off’ period or in case of other exigencies,” the report said.

NIA seizes ₹8L as proceeds of terror from Babbar Khalsa



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has seized Rs 7.80 lakh in cash and a vehicle as “proceeds of terrorism” in a case related to the recovery of arms and explosives, smuggled from Pakistan by the proscribed Babbar Khalsa International, in Haryana last year.

The cash and the Innova vehicle were seized on Thursday as proceeds of terrorism under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the NIA said in a statement.

On May 5, 2022, police intercepted the vehicle at Bastara Toll Plaza in Haryana and recovered three improvised explosive devices (IEDs), one pistol with two magazines, 31 rounds of ammunition, and Rs 1.30 lakh in cash which had been concealed in a specially designed cavity. Four terror operatives -- Gurpreet Singh alias “Gopi”, Amandeep Singh alias “Deepa”, Parminder Singh alias “Pinder” and Bhupinder Singh -- who were on their way to Adilabad in Telangana were arrested, the agency said.

The NIA investigations have revealed that multiple consignments of arms, explosives and drugs had been sent from Pakistan by designated terrorist Harwinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda, a ‘designated terrorist’ under UAPA, through drones to pre-decided locations near the India-Pakistan border.

India, Philippines resolve to strengthen bilateral ties during fourth Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and the Philippines on Friday resolved to further strengthen their Defence ties during the fourth Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting here between officials of the two countries.

Giving details, officials said the Indian delegation was led by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence Amitabh Prasad, while the Philippines delegation was headed by Assistant Secretary for Strategic Assessments and International Affairs, Department of National Defence Pablo M Lorenzo.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed the ongoing bilateral defence cooperation and discussed effective and practical initiatives to further expand the engagements. The

co-chairs reaffirmed their commitment to implement 2006 agreement concerning defence cooperation, based on mutual trust and understanding, common interest and shared values of democracy and rule of law.

Both sides agreed to initiate measures to enhance cooperation in Defence Industry and Technology domain and look forward to greater synergy in effectively deepening bilateral cooperative engagements across the spectrum.

They discussed cooperation in multilateral forums and noted complementarities in their approaches to the Indo-Pacific region and decided to hold regular consultations on issues of mutual interest. The interest and enthusiasm towards strengthening the bilateral relations across sectors were appreciated.

Now, not only Ministries, but Mins to come under CAG’s ambit also

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In a major paradigm shift in the audit methodology by the country’s audit watchdog CAG, not only the Ministries but Ministers, too, will come under the ambit of audit of their concerned departments, which so far remained confined only to the bureaucracy or the executive system.

Sources in the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) said that for years the accounting and audit details used to be an examination of accounts between CAG and officers of the concerned department but from now onwards, after the change in policy, CAG will give an opportunity to the political executives as well to have their say, if any, to avoid any confusion at a later stage.

“CAG outreach is now being extended to include political executives to highlight audit concerns. The intention is to build a shared understanding of the most pressing concerns in governance and find possible solutions,” the Comptroller and Auditor General, GC Murmu, had said earlier.

Sources said that while the all departments be it Centre or State/UTs have to undergo audit from the CAG, now it will be also the responsibility of the auditor as well the concerned minister or political executive to share/divulge the required accounting information.



“The political executive how so ever high will have to cooperate according to the new charter of this constitutional body. This we are doing for more effective and greater transparency in the system at all level and channels,” explained a senior CAG official. Under this now a range of Council of Ministers will also be audited for the responsibilities they owe.

In the recent times the CAG has also been working overtime to scan all kind of tenders, media reports of major projects based on which the audit watchdog prepare itself to move ahead to check the details and the probabilities of the projects at the costing evaluated.

The CAG also announced for full operationalisation of the One IAAD One System (OIOS) workflow system in the audit offices effective from April 1, 2023. Presiding over an event on Friday, Murmu declared that “from tomorrow (Saturday) onwards, all new audit work in our institution will take place only through OIOS and physical paper-based workflow must

cease. From tomorrow onwards, the digitisation process would be irreversible”. OIOS is an enterprise wide end-to-end IT application. OIOS is web-enabled solution with support for multiple languages with offline functionality and a mobile app. The OIOS roll out process involved work relating to master data, audit design, audit execution, legacy data migration, knowledge management system, quality assurance, quality control, audit products, communication and follow-up.

“The institution of the CAG has always been one of the first Government organizations to adopt new technology in its working model. Be it digitizing the accounting and entitlement process, adopting IT enabled audit, using data analytics in facilitating audit, work flow automations, OIOS is a step in that direction which strengthens our Audit officers to continue to provide independent and credible assurance on public resources and be a global leader in public sector auditing,” Murmu said.

Def Min inks pact with UDPL to upgrade naval aircraft yards at Goa, Kochi



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to modernize the Naval aircraft yards (NAYs) at Goa and Kochi, the Defence Ministry on Friday signed a contract with Ultra Dimensions Pvt. Ltd. (UDPL), Vishakhapatnam. The deal is approximately Rs 470 crore. The NAYs undertake servicing and repairs of Naval Aircraft, Aero Engines, Rotables and Test Equipment.

Induction of latest state-of-the-art aircraft into Indian Navy inventory requires modernisation of existing maintenance and repair facilities at Naval Aircraft Yards to bridge the technological and capability gap to meet the present and future aviation maintenance challenges.

The modernisation includes repair facilities with state of art automated machineries and composite repair bays. This project will generate an employment of more than 1.8 lakh man-days

over a period of three years. The modernisation will augment operational readiness of naval aviation platforms and reduce dependence on external agencies and foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) for repairs. This project will be a proud flag bearer of ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’.

In addition, the defence ministry has inked a contract with Mecon Ltd, Ranchi as Project Monitoring Consultant, at a cost of Rs 24 crore.

Conceived last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s pet mission ‘Amrit Sarovar’ is moving full steam with a battery of people from various walks of life such as freedom fighters, senior members of panchayats, family members of martyrs and Padma awardees have already participated to develop 40,000 water bodies.

Taking people’s participation as an important component under the scheme, 54,088 user groups were formed for developing the water bodies which will be known as Amrit Sarovars. These user groups are involved in feasibility assessment, execution and its utilization, he explained.

As of now 66 percent of user groups are engaged in agriculture, 21 percent in fisheries, six percent are involved in water chestnut and lotus cultivation and seven percent of the groups are involved in animal husbandry.

The Mission is boosting rural livelihood as the completed water bodies have been identified for activities like irrigation, fisheries, cultivation of water chestnut and animal husbandry. It also aims at qualitative implementation and development of water bodies as a hub of local community activities and convergence with different ministries for the job, he said.

Centre trying to strangle MGNREGS through budget cuts, says CPI(M)

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CPIM) has alleged that Modi Government is trying to “strangle” the rural job guarantee scheme as well as other welfare programmes by periodically cutting budget allocations. The latest editorial of the Left party’s organ People’s Democracy also criticised the introduction this year of the compulsory marking of attendance by workers under the scheme through mobile-based application ‘National Mobile Monitoring Service’ (NMMS).

“This has led to chaos at work sites across the country. With patchy internet connectivity, workers are reported to be spending hours just to get their attendance recorded. It is a life and death issue for them because failure to mark their attendance would mean loss of wages for the day,” said the editorial.

“Imposition of this kind of hi-tech measures is a well known ploy of this government, ostensibly to tackle fraud. It has been imposed earlier in PDS distribution, in marking attendance of government school teachers, etc - all with similar chaotic and tragic consequences for the people,” it said. Hitting out at the BJP



Government at the Centre, it said ever since the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014, it has been “trying to somehow strangle the rural job guarantee scheme (MGNREGS).”

“Driven by its commitment to the discredited neoliberal dogma that public expenditure should be cut down in order to allow the private sector to have its way and guide the economy more ‘efficiently’ and ‘productively’, the government has not only periodically cut budget allocations to various welfare schemes, including MGNREGS, but it has also taken other devious measures to squeeze the schemes,” the editorial said.

The editorial also said that apart from internet connectivity issues, thousands are

deprived of Public Distribution System (PDS) rations due to a slew of “errors”, including Aadhaar mismatch, bank account mismatch and fingerprint recognition failure. “Similar problems are being faced by workers in MGNREGS. The effect of such rules is to discourage workers from approaching the MGNREGS system for work,” it said.

Raising the issue of ‘delay’ in wages for workers, the editorial claimed it went beyond the 15 days leeway that is allowed. According to the government’s own data, Rs 3,630 crore worth of wages were paid after more than 15 days delay in the current year while Rs 1,010 crore was pending as unpaid wages, said the editorial blaming Modi Government.



Vice-Chief-of-Naval-Staff Vice-Admiral SN Ghormade with other Armed Forces personnel during a ceremony to accord him a Guard of Honour on his superannuation, in New Delhi on Friday. (PTI)

21 held, 300 booked in Mumbai clash

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Police have registered a first information report (FIR) against nearly 300 people and arrested 21 so far in connection with a clash between two groups during a Ram Navami procession in Mumbai's Malvani area, an official said on Friday.

The incident occurred on Thursday night at Malvani in suburban Malad (West) when the procession was going on and some people objected to high volume DJ and loud music accompanying it.

Those involved in the clash are being identified with the help of drone and CCTV footage of the area at the time and action is being being according to their role, he said.

While nearly 300 persons have been booked, police have arrested 21 persons so far and more arrests are likely, the official said, adding that probe in the case underway. In the FIR, police have pressed charges under Indian Penal Code sections 353 (assault or use of criminal force to deter a public servant from discharge of his duty), 324 (voluntarily



Charred remains of a vehicle after a clash between two groups near a Ram temple in Aurangabad, on Thursday.

PTI

causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 332 (whoever voluntarily causes hurt to any person being a public servant in the discharge of his duty as such a public servant), 145 (joining or continuing in unlawful assembly) and 143 (unlawful assembly). Earlier,

police had apprehended more than 20 persons on the charge of rioting and said the process to place them under arrest was on. During the clash between the two groups on Thursday night, stones were hurled, which triggered panic in the area. Additional police

force was called in and the police personnel used force to disperse the crowd, the official said. Senior police officials and some local political leaders rushed to the spot and appealed for peace, he said. After the incident, supporters of a right-wing organisation gathered

outside the Malvani police station and demanded action against those who allegedly pelted stones. A large number of police personnel were deployed in the area and the situation was brought under control, he added.

Man hurt in Ram Navami attack dies

Aurangabad: Hours after he suffered injuries in a mob attack on police personnel following a clash near a Ram temple in Maharashtra's Aurangabad city, a 51-year-old man died during treatment at a hospital, an official said on Friday.

The deceased was identified as Shaikh Muniruddin, he said. The victim died during treatment at a private city-based hospital on Thursday night, hours after the violence, a senior police official said. The police, however, did not specify the reason behind his death.

Ajit Pawar says citizens must work to ensure peace

Pune: Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra Assembly Ajit Pawar on Friday said political parties, civil society and citizens must work towards ensuring peace in Aurangabad, where a person died after two groups clashed recently.

At least 12 people, including 10 policemen, were injured after a mob of around 500 people hurled stones and petrol-filled bottles when cops tried to control situation following a clash between two groups near the Ram temple in Kiradpura locality of Aurangabad.

"An unfortunate incident has occurred in Sambhajinagar. There is a need to make efforts to ensure that a peaceful environment prevails. Though I am the Leader of Opposition, I will not make any statement which will deteriorate the atmosphere. The police are doing their work but everyone, should work towards prevailing peace there," he said. **PTI**

Manipur to set up temporary shelter for Myanmar refugees

Imphal: The Manipur Government has asked district authorities of Chandel district to set up a shelter camp at Gamphazol village for people fleeing strife-torn Myanmar.

Tribal Affairs and Hill Development Minister Letpao Haokip, who visited Gamphazol village on Thursday and interacted with more than 100 immigrants from Myanmar, told the officials "to set up a temporary shelter camp and construct a barbed fencing around the camp".

Haokip was recently appointed as the head of the newly created Cabinet Sub-Committee under the instruction of Chief Minister N Biren Singh. Law Minister Thounaojam Basanta Singh and Water Resources and Relief and Disaster Management Minister Awangbow Newmai are also members of the sub-committee. Haokip later told the media, "construction of a temporary shelter camp has been initiated

where the immigrants will be provided with food, medicines and other requirements."

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner of Chandel district, Mayanglabam Rajkumar told PTI that "we are in the process of carrying out a verification of the immigrants. We expect somewhere around 400-600 immigrants from Myanmar seeking shelter in Chandel district but we cannot give the exact number as official works are in process."

During the visit, the Law Minister also told gathering comprising state officials, village leaders and immigrants, "the idea of all of us coming together is that immigrants should have a safe place and should return back..."

Not one single person will be allowed to stay back...We will also make an announcement to village authorities that legal actions will be initiated against them if they harbour illegal immigrants."

Maha Cong demands probe into source of ₹20K cr funding to Adani

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had during the last nine years "worked only for his friends and helped them by putting public money in their pockets", the Maharashtra Congress on Friday said that "Modi should show courage" to order an inquiry into the source of Rs 20,000 crore allegedly invested in the Adani group through shell companies.

On a day when the Congress staged protests at different places across the state to demand an inquiry into the source of Rs 20,000 crore allegedly invested in the Adani group through shell companies, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee President Nana Patole alleged that "thieves" like Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi, Vijay Mallya



defrauded people's money and fled abroad. "For calling Nirav Modi and Lalit Modi thieves, Rahul Gandhi was sentenced by a Surat court for defamation and the very next day the BJP government disqualified him from the Lok Sabha.

All this has been decided by the BJP. Rahul Gandhi was sued for raising his voice against the Modi government, exposing the Modi-Adani corrupt alliance," Patole said. Apart from Patole, State Congress

leaders Balasaheb Thorat, Ashok Chavan, Prithviraj Chavan addressed simultaneous news conferences at Ahmednagar, Parbhani and Pune respectively to demand probe into the money invested in the Advani group of companies through shell companies and to slam the dictatorial regime of the Narendra Modi government.

"The situation in the country is alarming and the question whether there is democracy or not in the country is posed in front of us. Action has been taken against Rahul Gandhi due to political vendetta.

He was not allowed to speak in the Parliament, dissenting voices are suppressed in our democracy. Differences of opinion happen in a democracy, this is a sign of a healthy democracy, but BJP does not allow that to happen, it is

going towards the end of democracy," Leader Balasaheb Thorat said. Talking to media persons in Pune, former Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan said: "It is the basic duty of the opposition party is to ask questions to the government, as the Congress leaders were barred from that duty in Parliament, we are trying to provide information with the help of the media.

The Hindenburg report has alleged that Gautam Adani is a big scam, and it is also alleged that Adani expanded the group by giving false information and bringing pressure from that duty in Parliament.

"Rahul Gandhi raised this question in Parliament. What is relationship between Gautam Adani and Modi? Rahul Gandhi also asked who gave Rs 20,000 crores in Adani group through benami companies.

Call for prayer sirens by 3 faiths gives Kerala civic body headache

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Municipal Council of Changanassery in Kottayam district of Kerala is faced with a hitherto unheard problem as two major communities in the local body have approached the authorities with a bizarre plea.

The genesis of the issue was an office order dated March 23 issued by the secretary of the municipal council ordering the sounding of the local body's siren every evening at 6.30 till April 21 to coincide with the Ramadan fasting period of the Muslim community.

The decision of the municipal secretary was in response to the demand made by MHM Haneefa, secretary of the Muslim Jama Ath of Changanassery.

Amused over the municipal council's decision to sound the siren to mark the end of fasting time of the Muslim communi-

ty, Ganesh Kumar, an ardent devotee of the local Hindu Temple, who is also a Hindu Front activist, approached the local body with a plea to sound the siren to mark the beginning and end of the daily poojas held in the temple at 4.45 in the morning and at 6.45 in the evening.

Not to be left behind, the Christian community under the auspices of Christian Association and Alliance for Social Action (CASA), an umbrella organization representing all sects of the Church.

The CASA's request is that the municipal siren be sounded to inform the faithful about the daily Holy Mass being held at the age-old St Mary's Cathedral in the town at 5.30 AM, 7.00 AM, and at 5.00 PM with the three special Masses held on Sundays. If the council accedes to the demands made by these communities, Changanassery

Municipality would become a town with maximum number of daily sirens catering to the requirements of the three major religions in the State.

While the municipal council opted to ignore the demands made by CASA and the Hindu Front, two petitions were moved in the Kerala High Court demanding the quashing of the municipal secretary's order to sound the siren to alert the Islamists about the conclusion of the fasting hours.

The petitions contend that fasting during Ramadan was purely an Islamic ritual and that the Municipality, an instrumentality of the State within the ambit of Article 12 of the Constitution could not be used for conducting a religious ceremony or ritual at the expense of exchequer. Though petition was scheduled for hearing on Friday, the Court could not take it up because of other pressing issues.

403 immovable properties of Kalptaru Buildtech group attached

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached 403 immovable properties worth ₹83,96,58,834 of real estate major Kalptaru Buildtech Corporation Ltd, its group entities and Directors under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The ED initiated a probe on the basis of various FIRs registered by UP Police and other State police for cheating and fraud with investors in various schemes floated by Kalptaru Buildtech and its other group companies.

Investigation revealed that Jai Krishna Singh Rana, CMD of Kalptaru Group started collecting deposits from the public fraudulently in Kalptaru Agro (I) Limited by giving them assurance for registration of plots after specified time.

PNS

Ministry forms panel to monitor dal prices

New Delhi: To reduce the prices of urad, moong and arhar dal, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs has asked pulses importers to declare their stockpiles. The ministry has also formed a committee to monitor dal prices.

In a meeting with Retailers Association of India (RAI) and major organised retailers, the consumer affairs secretary Rohit Kumar Singh told them to calibrate the retail margins in such a way that the composition of pulses consumption basket of households is not disturbed by price rise. The average retail price of tur dal has increased by 11.12 per cent to

Rs 115 per kilogramme in the country in the last one year as per the data maintained by the consumer affairs ministry.

Since February till now, the price of Arhar pulses has increased by about Rs 1200 per quintal. In February, arhar was widely available at Rs 8,550 to Rs 9,000 per quintal, but since then the price has increased to Rs 10,500. Prices are under pressure as the country's tur production is estimated to be lower at 36.66 million tonnes in the 2022-23 crop year (July-June), as against 42.20 million tonnes in the previous year as per the agriculture ministry's second estimate. **PNS**

TN masks up as Covid cases rise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As Covid virus continues its Northward journey with more than 3,000 cases reported second day in a row on Friday morning, the Tamil Nadu has become a first State to make wearing of face masks mandatory at all government hospitals across the State from Saturday i.e. April 1. Delhi Government has already advised its citizens to wear the masks whenever in the public areas.

Sources said that if the Covid surge continues, other States may join the suit and make the mask mandatory. In fact, since the beginning of March, there is a continuous

rise in the corona cases. In the meantime, the World Health Organization (WHO) has issued revised recommendations for prioritising the use of COVID-19 vaccines to reflect the impact of Omicron and high population-level immunity due to infection and vaccination.

According to the Ministry data, 3,095 new Covid cases were registered in India on Thursday (30 March). This figure is the highest in the last six months.

Now the number of active cases in the country has reached 15,208. "The country has seen a rise in the number of new Covid cases in the last few days amid a spurt in the data of H3N2 Influenza cases.

More than 3000 cases have been reported for the second consecutive day. Earlier on Wednesday (March 29), 3,016 new Covid-19 cases were registered. Also, currently the recovery rate is 98.78 percent," said an official from the Ministry.

With 3,852 cases, Kerala tops the list of infections in the country, followed by 3016 active cases in Maharashtra, then 2247 in Gujarat, 1037 in Karnataka, 932 in Delhi.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the government has been testing sewage to pre-empt a possible return of the virus. All the cases are also being sent for genome sequencing to timely identify new variants if any, he said.



President Droupadi Murmu with Oscar 2023 winning documentary short film 'The Elephant Whisperers' producer Guniet Monga and director Kartiki Gonsalves, in New Delhi, on Friday

PTI

Transgenders open salon in Kalyan with USAID help

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The US Consulate in Mumbai and US Agency for International Development (USAID) on Friday launched a new salon named 'TransFormation,' which is owned and operated by members of the transgender community, at Kalyan in neighbouring Thane district.

Inaugurated by U.S. Consul General Mike Hankey and USAID Deputy Mission Director for India Karen Klimowski on the occasion of International Transgender Day of Visibility, the TransFormation Salon will offer services for all in an inclusive and stigma-free environment. "The U.S. Government is proud to support TransFormation, where anyone - regardless of how they identify - can access salon services in a safe and inclusive environment for all guests.

We recognize and celebrate the important contributions of transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming



people and take pride in supporting improved health outcomes through innovative models that mobilize communities to take charge of their financial and physical health," U.S. Consul General Mike Hankey said.

Neeta Kene, Chairperson, Kinnar Asmita, a community-based organization, which set up TransFormation and will operate the new saloon, said: "This initiative is a strong message to the society that Transgender Persons with the right kind of skill and support can effectively mainstream themselves. For us this is not

only an initiative on livelihoods, it is on dignity, self-worth, and progress. We are thrilled to start this initiative and we need the support of the mainstream to make it a roaring success both socially and financially."

The International Transgender Day of Visibility is an annual celebration and recognition of the contributions of transgender people around the world. On this day and every day, the U.S. Government honours transgender people who are fighting for freedom, equality, dignity, and respect.

HC: Transgender becoming girl after surgery can get relief in domestic violence case

Mumbai: A transgender person who chooses to be a woman by undergoing gender reassignment surgery can seek relief under Domestic Violence Act, the Bombay High Court has ruled upholding a lower court order directing a man to pay maintenance to his estranged wife, who was initially a transgender person. A single bench of Justice Amit Borkar in order of March 16, a copy of which was available on Friday, said word "woman" is no more limited to binary of women and men and also includes transgender persons who have changed their sex in tune with how they identify themselves. Justice Borkar noted that section 2(f) of DV Act that defines a domestic relationship is gen-

der neutral and hence includes persons irrespective of their sexual preferences. There is no manner of doubt that a transgender person or either a male or female who has undergone a sex change operation is entitled to the gender of their choice, the order said.

"The object and purpose of provisions of Domestic Violence Act is to provide more effective protection of rights of women who are victims of violence of any kind that occurs within family," it said. The bench further noted that the need to pass such legislation was because existing law was inadequate to address a woman who was subjected to cruelty by her husband and their family. **PTI**

Guj: 8 AAP workers held for putting up anti-Modi posters

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Eight workers of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have been arrested for allegedly putting up posters saying "Modi Hatao Desh Bachao" in different parts of Ahmedabad city in Gujarat, police said on Friday. The Gujarat unit of AAP condemned the arrests saying the action has proved their point that "democracy is in danger".

In a release, the city crime branch said eight persons have been arrested on the charge of damaging public property by putting up posters with the text "Modi Hatao Desh Bachao" in areas like Isanpur, Maninagar, Vatva, Narol and Vadaj.

The posters were put up by the AAP workers on Thursday, it said. The arrests were made on Thursday night after the registration of first information reports (FIRs) in different police stations earlier in the day,



said the release. Police have identified the AAP workers as Natwar Thakor, Jatin Patel, Kuldeep Bhatt, Bipin Sharma, Ajay Chauhan, Arvind Chauhan, Jivan Maheshwari and Paresh Tulsiani.

AAP's Gujarat vice president Sagar Rabari said though the party posted such posters in many other states on Thursday, only Gujarat police booked their workers. "Ahmedabad is the only city where people are deprived of their Constitutional rights

because police can arrest you anytime and book you as per their whims and fancies. This police action proves that our apprehension that democracy is in danger is not misplaced and we were not wrong in carrying out that poster drive," said Rabari. In last year's Gujarat Assembly elections, AAP won five seats and secured 13 per cent of popular vote, in a performance that belied its high-decibel campaign in the state. BJP registered a record 156 wins in the house of 182 seats.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Proof of the pudding...

Foreign Trade Policy 2023 has good intentions but these need to translate into action for \$2-trillion exports

The new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) is in sync with the basic thrust of the economic policy regime: doing away with incentives and moving towards a system in which is friendlier to exporters in terms of costs and procedural rigours. The key approach to the policy, according to the Government, is based on four pillars: incentive to remission; export promotion through collaboration involving exporters, states, districts and Indian missions; ease of doing business, reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives; and emerging areas ase-commerce developing districts as export hubs and streamlining SCOMET policy. SCOMET is the acronym of special chemicals, organisms, materials, equipment and technologies. Announcing the policy, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said, "We will achieve \$2 trillion in exports by 2030, but it shouldn't be that merchandise exports are outperformed by services exports." The Government's focus is correct, for merchandise exports are laggards. In the first 11 months of 2022-23, they stood at \$405.94 billion, which was 7.55 per cent more than \$377.43 billion in the corresponding period 2021-22. In contrast, services exports went up from \$227.58 billion in April 2021-February 2022 to \$296.94 billion in April 2022-February 2023, which was a rise of 24.56 per cent. This is not surprising because India's weakness in manufacturing is no secret; economic reforms began

more than three decades ago, but they still have to percolate to the lowest levels. This explains the greater focus on states, districts, ease of doing business, reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives in FTP.

FTP 2023 is based on continuity of time-tested schemes facilitating exports, an official press release said, adding that it is a document which is nimble and responsive to the requirements of trade. The release highlights the nimbleness and responsiveness by pointing out that changes were done subsequent to the initial release of FTP 2015-20. That may be true, but the point is that this did not help merchandise exports much, as the latest figures suggest. Services exports have been doing well, but that is primarily because the businesspersons in this sector don't have to interact much with the government officials. For instance, an IT firm is not bothered by the boiler inspector. An important feature of FTP 2023 is that it is open-ended. As Director General of Foreign Trade Santosh Kumar Sarangi told the media, it will be updated "as and when required." Another feature is a one-time amnesty scheme for exporters to close the old pending authorisations and start afresh. He also said, "The approach of the new policy is to move from an incentive-based regime to a remission of taxes regime." Just as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the efficacy of a policy is in its implementation. The target of exports worth \$2 trillion can be achieved if the good intentions of FTP 2023 get translated into action.

PICTALK



A tiger cools itself in a pond on a hot day, at Maharajbagh Zoo in Nagpur

PTI

Words matter, better choose them carefully

It is imperative to choose words with empathy. They should build bridges, not create barriers

Words are a mysterious manoeuvre of communication in an individual's life. They are the most powerful drug used by humans so if they can inspire and connect at the same time they can divide, demoralise and incite hate.

Words are invasive and their impact on different people varies because it depends on their understanding and conception. As they are used in every aspect of life, their power is immense and powerful as a result. A single phrase, an uplifting word or even a single act of kindness can change an individual's life forever towards the betterment.

Words are what an individual uses to express themselves, thoughts and feelings. One must never underestimate words' power. A person's choice of language can affect not only how another person feels but also how they perceive events around them. Childhood bullying, verbal abuse in domestic relationships, and even word choice by medical



professionals can lead to emotional challenges. Several researchers have found that the choice of words can cause specific areas of the brain to activate and affect a person's subjective experience of pain. Pain-related words create stronger responses in many areas of the brain, including the anterior cingulate cortex and dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. Words when used as bullets, with a feeling of superiority and condemnation will never restore a relationship to love. As seeds of support and sincerity, they can rebuild a relationship in a positive and life-affirming way. Words impact different people differently because it depends on their understanding and conception of them. They are

by far the most powerful force available to humanity. Children or learners can be instilled with confidence by the words, tone, or even the tone of encouragement they receive from their parents, teachers, or coaches. This even helps promote cognitive development. Also, giving a compliment to a co-worker or a colleague positively impacts their emotional state resulting in creating a ripple effect of positivity. When people use powerful words and phrases such as "please and thank you"; "how may I help you?"; acknowledging and appreciating work, they inspire the individual, thus making their work environment more enjoyable. Such words even help in motivating, encouraging and building mutually respectful relationships with team members, clients and customers. On the other hand, negative words along with sarcasm at times, can tear down, intimidate and discourage an individual especially young learners resulting in the release of dozens of stress-producing hormones which ultimately interrupt brain functioning. For adults, it

may lead to stress, anxiety and anger followed by a disconnect in the relationship. A word is not just a combination of letters or sounds but a functional unit that helps thoughts take shape. It's the words that have the power and power to help, heal, hurt, harm or humiliate anyone. Since it is not in anyone's control what others say or do to a loved one, learning how to respond in loving ways can always prove fruitful.

Remember, no one can create a better reality while complaining or crying over current problems. It is imperative to choose words carefully with empathy and intention. Words should build bridges, and opportunities and not barriers, spread love and affection and not hate and war. Always be mindful of the conversation going on in your mind, for it can destroy or uplift you. It is imperative to become aware of words because words and feelings, when directed outwardly, can rebound and cause havoc in one's own life.

(The author is an educator)



SAKSHI SETHI

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(The author is an educator)

Congress' OBC paranoia is age-old

Party leader Rahul Gandhi's stand against the other backward classes will cost the Congress dear, just as it had during Rajiv Gandhi's time

Late Rajiv Gandhi was the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha in 1990 when the then Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh took the historic decision to implement the Mandal Commission Report to give effect to reservation to other backward classes (OBCs) to the extent of 27 per cent. Six years before Rajiv Gandhi had led Congress to win 404 seats with over 49 per cent vote share.

The Mandal Commission Report was a turnaround for Indian politics, as Rajiv Gandhi stood in the Lok Sabha to oppose its implementation. The Bharatiya Janata Party leaders Atal Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani welcomed the decision of the VP Singh government, stating that the time had come to recognise the legitimate demands of the OBCs in the country.

The stand of Rajiv Gandhi was almost unilateral as records of those times show that the OBC leaders within the Congress were appalled at the decision of their leaders. The Congress leaders were shocked that Rajiv Gandhi was disconnected from the masses. He was not ready for the march of social justice.

Within a few years, Congress was reduced to a party with the best tally of about 200 Lok Sabha seats even when the party came to power in alliance with other political parties. From the strength of 404 Lok Sabha seats, Congress' fortune was cut by half in the Lok Sabha, solely for its anti-OBC mindset. The space vacated by Congress was occupied by the regional parties. They mushroomed all across the country. The political parties espousing the cause of the OBCs came up in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere. They ate into the vote base of Congress. Even after three decades, Congress has mostly lost its vote base in states where the OBC identity-based regional parties cropped up.

The BJP was clear from its beginning that the OBC deserved social justice and the party's leadership was steadfast in their support. The BJP's sup-



port for the OBC was also manifested in a strong leadership of the party from the backward castes. They were at the forefront of the party workers in several states. They also took the leadership of the party and even became chief ministers.

The journey of Congress and the BJP is in sharp contrast. Congress went into a steep political fall since the 1990s. The BJP rapidly rose in its political stock since the 1990s. The Congress base shrank. The BJP vote base expanded. Congress kept hitting lower and lower in its Lok Sabha tally. The BJP tally in the Lok Sabha kept rising.

In the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, Congress won 197 seats. The BJP had won 85 Lok Sabha seats in the same election. Three decades later, the BJP won 303 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Congress for the second time in a row could not win enough seats to gain the status of the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. The people of the country punished Congress for its anti-OBC bias in the last three decades.



THE BJP WAS CLEAR FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THE OBCS DESERVED SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP WAS STEADFAST IN ITS SUPPORT TO THEM

Rahul Gandhi repeated the same mistake that his father had committed in the Lok Sabha in 1990. There is not a single independent voice in the country that didn't admonish him for his 2019 election speech in Kolar, Karnataka in which he asked "why all thieves have Modi surname". This was an outrageous statement by a person who was president of Congress. He had been a member of the Lok Sabha multiple times. He is also 52 years old. He couldn't have made the scandalous and outrageous statement to question the integrity of the OBC community.

Worse is the fact that there is no remorse on the part of Rahul Gandhi. He has occasions to express remorse and apologise in the Surat Court. But he chose not to apologise. It's beyond understanding that a number of lawyers who hold senior positions in Congress would not have gauged the consequences of Rahul Gandhi not apologising for his defamatory statement.

Also, there had been a number of precedents in

which senior political leaders escaped judicial fury by apologizing in the court. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also levelled baseless allegations to defame the late Arun Jaitley and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari. Both forgave him after he apologised for his mistakes. But here Rahul Gandhi doesn't want to own up to his mistake. In place, he has chosen to enact political stunts in the name of his conviction by the court in a criminal defamation case and the subsequent automatic disqualification from membership of the Lok Sabha, which was in accordance with the Supreme Court ruling of 2013. Rajiv Gandhi's anti-OBC stand had cut Congress' strength by half. Rahul Gandhi's stand against the OBC will also bring similar wrath, and the Opposition party given its current strength may find among the regional parties sitting in one corner of the Lok Sabha with a handful of members after the 2024 general elections.

(Author is the national general secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AMERICA'S BACKING FOR RAHUL

Sir — All is not well for the Indian government as the United States of America and Germany are backing and supporting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and noting his disqualification of membership from the parliament and receiving congratulations from all the opposition parties and its leaders and Congress supporters across the country.

Since it is a great embarrassment for the Indian government to intervene in foreign countries in the internal matter of India which has been rejected but the growing support or backing of foreign countries to Rahul Gandhi is a cause for concern which may spoil the friendship and relationship with US and Germany and many other countries in future. It is high time the tense situation in the country must be defused at the earliest to avoid many more foreign countries interfering in the internal matter of India to make it an international issue.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

COMMUNAL TENSION ON RAM NAVAMI

Sir — At a time when the world is admiring us watching different festivals being celebrated all over the country democratically, Ram Navami brought us shame and communal violence in the name of festivity. Ram Navami was celebrated across the country with grand processions and special pujas, but the festivities were marred in Madhya Pradesh where 14 devotees died after falling into a well at a temple, and in Maharashtra where a clash left 12 injured.

In the nation's Capital, Delhi, a large number of people defied a police order and took out a procession in Jahangirpuri, which witnessed riots last year during the Hanuman Jayanti celebrations. Meanwhile, stones were pelted at a march in Gujarat's Vadodara too. The celebrations remained largely incident-free in the rest of the country with people coming out on the streets with religious fervour and enthusiasm and law-enforcement agencies on the watch.

Cause of great concern



As cases of the Covid-19 virus are rising again, it is yet another reminder that the world must not lose its guard against the pandemic, India logged 3,016 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, over 40% rise in daily tally. A concern over a fresh spike in infections in the country, Though Number speaks: No cause for alarm on Corona outbreak as of now as nationwide we have administered around 220.65 crore doses of Covid vaccine.

Though we have fully upgraded our health care system, with adequate ICU facility and

Oxygen supply to meet any eventuality, India must take concrete steps for its prevention as in the view of the ground realities reflecting poverty, social backwardness, Lockdowns are not the answer as it affects more poor people with the closure of business establishments and the sufferers are especially daily-wage earners, and cannot be treated as the only solution. We have seen the plight of people during the Corona-19 second wave which will prove a counter-productive and will further wreck the economy.

Patients with slight symptoms of shortness of breath, and lowering of Oxygen should immediately report to their family doctor. Other notable steps are, fully adhering to Corona-19 protocols, like wearing masks in crowded places, keeping a safe distance, and if cases increase we can go for pre-screening with testing increase testing and citizens to adhere to strictly to the covid --19 protocols. Also virus knows no geographical boundaries, hence we must keep with an international traveller coming from those countries with cases of Corona-19

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bengaluru

Lord Ram will be an inspiration for humanity in every era. Maryada Purushottam Lord Ram's birth anniversary brought a feud and fight in the streets and made a mockery of the celebrations. Thus, far we did make an impact as a country of different castes, creed and religions brought out the fighting past and a bleak future during the festivities of this nature. Again, as the festivals collide in this country, so do people go haywire and collide in disruptive ways.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

HATE SPEECH – A VICIOUS CIRCLE

Sir — Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Supreme Court that hate speeches were being made by several people against the members of the Hindu community and the court could not be selective in its approach in seeking a response

from the states on the action taken against such statements. He asked the court why it had not taken Suo motu cognizance of such cases and held state governments to account even when those speeches were in the public domain.

The hate speeches were a vicious circle and said they are being made by fringe elements. Every action has an equal reaction. We are following the constitution and orders in every case are bricks in the structure of rule of law. We are hearing the contempt petition because states are not taking action in time. This is because the state has become impotent, and powerless, and does not act in time.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Coimbatore

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

THE HYBRID
WORKPLACE PUZZLE

Post pandemic, 'hybrid' will define the employer-employee relationship



ARNAB GHOSH

Post-pandemic commercial real estate professionals are grappling with the word "hybrid." The agile workspace is dead. A hybrid workplace is the new holy grail of office design. How we interpret this new word will define the employer and employee relationship now. The perfect solution will take some time to arrive. Meanwhile, we can only attempt to solve this hybrid jigsaw with our eyes and ears open wide.

Designing a hybrid workplace involves creating a flexible work environment that allows employees to work remotely and on-site. As a design brief, it is a challenge and thus needs a structured approach.

The first step is to assess the needs of your workforce, including their work styles, preferences, and job requirements. One-to-one interviews with senior leaders, online surveys, and real-time occupancy data from existing workplaces will help establish the baseline.



The second step is to evaluate your technology infrastructure. A hybrid workplace relies heavily on technology, including communication tools, collaboration software, and video conferencing systems. After evaluation, we need to do a gap analysis and ensure the proposed new technology infrastructure is robust enough to support remote and on-site work.

Once the above is done, the designer is ready to start with his design thinking process. A few approaches which might work for the designer while designing a hybrid office space are as follows:

1. Redesign your physical office space to create a more flexible work environment that supports remote and on-site work. This may include the conscious selection of flexible work furniture, which can be rearranged for different work environments, dismantlable partition systems, formal and informal meeting spaces, and quiet spaces.
2. Today, it is essential to understand that the purpose of the office has changed dramatically—accordingly, the spaces it used to contain need also to evolve. The ambience of an office today is designed to provide a positive and inclusive environment for all employees. The use of wallpapers, curated artwork, designer work furniture, and decorative light fixtures today help designers to achieve that desired reality. The new trend of serviced offices is forcing the new office design to be strongly influenced by hospitality design principles.
3. While we do all the above, let us remember the imminent climate change disruption expected soon. Energy efficiency and wellness thus need to be default goalposts for designers today—no compromise on those aspects.
4. Finally, please continuously evaluate your hybrid workspace's effectiveness and adjust as needed. Gather feedback from employees and make changes based on their input.

By following the above steps, you can physically create a hybrid workplace that is flexible, productive, and supportive of your employees' needs. However, in addition to the physical execution, certain managerial aspects need to be part of this change management.

A key aspect of a hybrid workplace is to not have dedicated workstations for employees. This can be a major change to adjust employees. Please establish clear policies around remote work, including work hours, communication, and productivity expectations. Organizations must be cognizant of today's new reality and establish their design briefs accordingly. Design and project professionals should look at the workspace through all lenses before recommending solutions to their clients.

(The writer is Managing Director, Corporate Fitouts, Colliers India)

Reforming the capital gains tax a smart move

It is perfectly justified if the rich class is made to pay more which, in turn, helps the Government provide services to the poor



In the Finance Bill, 2023 passed by the Lok Sabha on March 24, 2023, an amendment relates to a change in the tax treatment of capital gains from non-equity or debt mutual funds (DMF). This has led to consternation in the investor fraternity including high net-worth individuals (HNIs), corporate, and so on who argue this will undermine efforts to deepen the bond market which is crucial for financing the long-term development needs of the economy.

They also say such a change should have been introduced in the Union Budget. This would allow for thorough discussion in Parliament, instead of an official amendment. Now that it is part of the Finance Act, any discussion on the procedure adopted is merely academic. Before discussing the amendment that will take effect from April 1, 2023, let us look at the existing position. DMF is a scheme that invests in fixed income instruments, such as corporate and government bonds, corporate debt securities, and money market instruments etc. that offer capital appreciation. Debt funds are also called income or bond funds.

Currently, any capital gain on redemption of units in a debt fund held for three years or longer is treated as long-term capital gain (LTCG) and is taxed at a flat 20 percent with the benefit of indexation (it adjusts the cost of a person's investment to account for inflation, effectively reducing her capital gains and in turn, her tax liability). Any capital gain on redemption of units held by investors before three years is treated as short-term capital gain (STCG) and is taxed at an individual's income tax (albeit personal) slab rate.

The amendment does away with this distinction in the case of 'Specified mutual funds' (SMFs) which essentially refer to mutual funds where not more than 35 percent of their total proceeds are invested in equity shares of domestic companies. As a result, gains arising from SMFs irrespective of the period for which the units



WE NEED TO LOOK AT THINGS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT WHICH IS EXPECTED TO MAKE LAWS WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF INCLUSIVE GROWTH THAT ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF ALL SECTIONS OF SOCIETY

(The writer is a policy analyst)

are held by investors are deemed STCGs and hence, liable to tax at the rate applicable to the slab in which their total income falls.

Given the way SMFs are defined, the new tax treatment will also apply to exchange-traded funds (ETFs), international funds, gold/silver funds, outbound mutual funds and even equity funds etc. wherein the gains will be taxed at the personal income tax (PIT) slab rate. The amendment will be applied prospectively from April 1, 2023. This implies that all MF units already in possession of the investors as well as those acquired before this date will continue to be covered by the old dispensation.

IMPACT ON INVESTORS

Consider a high-income earner earning Rs 2 crore per annum. The applicable effective tax rate in her case is 39 per cent. Assume she has invested Rs 100 in DMF units which yield a return of 10 percent per annum. Further, assume that inflation is 5 percent. With these basics, under the old regime i.e., 20 per cent LTCG tax with indexation benefit, her gain at the end of three years would be Rs 17.4 (value of investment Rs 133.1 minus inflation adjusted cost Rs 115.7). Tax @20 per cent on Rs 17.4 comes to Rs 3.5. Under the new regime i.e., tax rate in the relevant slab (39 per cent in this example) and no benefit of indexation, capital gain at the end of three years will be Rs 33.1 (value of investment Rs 133.1 minus cost Rs 100). Tax @39 per cent on Rs 33.1 will be Rs 12.9 which is almost 4 times the tax under the previous regime. It is this steep increase in the tax burden that is hurting the high-income earners.

We need to look at things from

the perspective of the government which is expected to make laws with the objective of inclusive growth that address the concerns of all sections of society and not just pander to the interests of a particular class. If the rich class is made to pay more resulting in more revenue for the government. This in turn, helps it cater to the majority of the poor, this is perfectly justified.

Even so, the existing taxation regime was arbitrary, inequitable and customized to grant undue benefit to HNIs/corporate etc. Income earned by a person has no colour. Irrespective of the source from where earnings are made be it salary, profit from business, investment in shares, bonds or mutual funds and so on, these add to her income. Therefore, the tax treatment must be uniform. It can't vary depending on the source.

Yet, the regime gave preferential treatment to income generated from DMF investment by taxing capital gains from these at 20 percent against the applicable slab rate of 39 percent. It was discriminatory even compared to investment in other avenues. For instance, interest income from investment in fixed deposits (FDs) in banks or bonds issued by governments or companies is taxed at an individual's income tax slab rate. These earnings don't also benefit from indexation.

While HNIs should have no grudges about paying more tax, those earning less, especially the middle class, will not stand to lose in the new dispensation. Under the proposed PIT regime as per the 2023-24 Budget, a person with annual income up to Rs 700,000 pays 'nil' tax. For those earning Rs 700,001-Rs 900,000, the tax rate is

10 percent and for those earning Rs 900,001-Rs 1,200,000, it is 15 per cent. For all investing in DMFs, the switch to taxing capital gains at the applicable slab rate will be beneficial. Under the earlier regime, these were taxed at a higher rate of 20 percent.

The Finance Bill, 2023 also addressed another anomaly. This one relates to a fancy instrument called market-linked debentures (MLDs). Unlike a normal debenture on which a fixed return is paid, MLD holders get a return linked to stock price movement, say the Nifty 50 Index. Earlier capital gains from listed MLDs were taxable at 10 per cent if held for more than a year. They were also taxable at a slab rate if held for up to 1 year. Now, these will be taxed at the slab rate even when owned for more than one year.

To conclude, the 2023-24 budget has ended DMF preferential treatment by taxing all capital gains — irrespective of the holding period — at the slab rate and withdrawing the indexation benefit. It has created a level playing field by aligning their tax treatment with other avenues such as FDs and bonds etc. It would be naïve to believe that this would lower the shine of such instruments (read: debt MFs) as investment in these units is liquid; it can be withdrawn at any time unlike FDs where premature withdrawal attracts a penal interest rate. Besides, the former offer investors the possibility of setting off capital gains in some units by short-term capital losses in others thereby reducing tax liability. Any fear that the amendment would impact funding the long-term development needs of the economy is without any basis.



UTTAM GUPTA

Fill top vacancies at 3 important institutions for PwDs

The Government must ensure that three institutions funded by it for the welfare of the disabled population function properly and deliver in right earnest

In a welcome move which though, comes much after dilly dalling for years, the Government has now promised to fill by April-end the top-level vacancies at the three statutory institutions — Chief Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities (CCPD), National Trust (NT) and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) — of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

The Secretary of the Persons with Disability Department, Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in a recent submission before a Parliamentary Panel said that the process is on to fill the posts. He submitted that the candidates were being shortlisted and interviews will be held in the first week of the



ARCHANA JYOTI

(The writer is a special correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

next month i.e., April.

He also expressed confidence that by the end of April month they will send three proposals to the DoPT. After that the final accreditation will come from the ACC (Appointment Committee of the Cabinet), the Secretary submitted before the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment when asked about the vacancy position in the offices of the three statutory bodies. Headed by Lok Sabha MP Rama Devi, the panel submitted its report last week in Parliament.

However, disability rights activists are not impressed. In fact, they have dismissed these promises as just lip service. They argue that advertisements for appointments have been published from time to

time over the past years, but the posts were never filled up.

To corroborate their points, in this regard, they have drawn attention to a reply to a query in Parliament in 2021 when Union Social Welfare and Empowerment Minister of State, Pratima Bhoomik, while admitting that the post of Chairperson, RCI, has been lying vacant since September 15, 2015, the steps were being taken to fill the post.

However, it is needless to say that this has not happened till date. Presently, Secretary Rajesh Aggarwal is the officiating head of the RCI and NT. This speaks volumes of how serious the Government is for the welfare of the sector. The CCPD is headed by bureaucrat Upma Srivastava, an

additional secretary in the Ministry.

In the absence of appointments of a candidate through a transparent process, new policies, existing programmes and funds remain half-heartedly implemented. Focus of the NT, RCI and CCPD has lost in between, leaving the sector to fend on its own, laments activist Alok Bhuvan from Manovikas Charitable Society.

This apathy also leads one to doubt government's intention if it is really keen for transparent appointments for the sensitive posts or wants to put its cronies who toe the government's line. The delay in appointment is also strengthening the doubts that the government is just doing lip service but not keen in

actually taking steps to empower, handhold the sector which has big potential if given the chance. As per the latest report, India has 3 crore people with a wide range of disabilities.

The Council formed under the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 is mandated to regulate and monitor the training of rehabilitation professionals while the activities of the National Trust include training, awareness and capacity building programmes and shelter, caregiving and empowerment to the people with intellectual disability. Similarly, CCPD has been conceived with an aim to ensure legal rights of the sector enshrined in the Persons with Disability Rights Act.

Bhuvan maintains that it's high time that the government adopts a right-based approach instead of the Charity Model. Charity model of disability views the person with disabilities as the problem and dependent on the sympathy of others to provide assistance in a charity or welfare. This model treats the disabled as dependent upon society. Thus, leaving them hapless and helpless, dependent on the benevolence and charity of the so-called 'abled' in the society.

In contrast, the Rights-based model of disability regards disability as a normal aspect and that the disabled are equally entitled to rights as others, ensuring that criteria for support programmes are prioritized by people

themselves respecting their autonomy and freedom of choice. The disability rights model focuses on equality and non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, accessibility, breaking down barriers, equal participation and inclusion and private and public freedom, says Dr Dilip Kumar Upadhyay, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Madhav University, Rajasthan.

By ensuring that the three important institutions seriously deliver what they are meant to, the Government will be implementing what has been enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. That is 'all human beings are born free and equal in rights and dignity'.

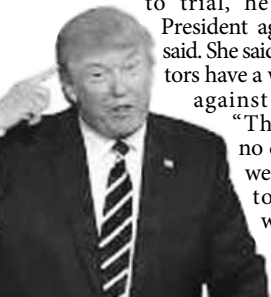
Donald Trump’s indictment evokes mixed reactions

AP ■ NEW YORK

Donald Trump’s indictment ignited mixed responses from New Yorkers, with some hailing the development as “spectacular” while others slamming it as a “political witch hunt” from which the ex-president will emerge stronger. A grand jury in Manhattan on Thursday afternoon voted to indict 76-year-old Trump over hush money payments made to adult film star Stormy Daniels in 2016, making him the first former US president to face criminal charges. About 6.5 kilometers from the Lower Manhattan courthouses where the grand jury decided to indict Trump, the scene outside the Trump Tower in the upscale Fifth Avenue in Manhattan was sombre and quiet. It was inside this popular Manhattan building in June 2015 when Trump descended the “golden escalators” into a crowd of supporters and media persons to announce his presidential run. On a chilly Thursday evening, barring a couple of New York Police Department (NYPD) patrol vehicles, barricades lining the sidewalk and some reporters and camera persons, the scene outside Trump Tower was uneventful.

New Yorkers and tourists strolled by the building, some stopping only briefly to take pictures of the multi-story glass tower, which is ensconced among the world’s most luxurious brands on 5th Avenue, and that bears Trump’s name. “As far as Trump being indicted is concerned, sure they’ll handcuff him, they’ll take a mug shot and then he will be good to go. This has made Trump’s base stronger,” New York activist Susan-Anne Miller told PTI outside the Trump Tower. “By the time the case goes to trial, he will be President again,” she said. She said prosecutors have a weak case against Trump.

“There was no case, they were trying to find a way to work it around



so that they could hold him. This is a political witch hunt and in the end, he will be proven innocent,” she said. Miller said there will be no riots from Trump supporters in the aftermath of the indictment. An elderly couple said it was “about time” that Trump was indicted. “We are very excited. We hope he is indicted. We don’t want him to become President again. (The indictment and charges) are a long time coming, he is a crook,” they said.

Charle Earlston, a lawyer and veteran, said he had hoped to see more crowds of protestors and supporters outside the Trump Tower after the indictment news. The indictment is “symbolic” of where the country is at right now, he said.

“The Democratic Party and their allies have been wanting to get Trump indicted on something, whatever it was, for the better part of about eight years now,” he said. “This is the most ridiculous one that they could have thrown out there,” he said, referring to charges related to the hush money payments to Daniels. “May be they want to knock him off the ballot through legal means by moving forward with this. This is just the next step of this country becoming a banana republic,” he said.

Benjamin Adams, a New Yorker, said the Trump indictment was going to divide the American people even more. “I think the country has a lot more pressing issues at the moment than to worry about this,” he said. His friend listed China, Russia, the US dollar and a weak economy as more pressing issues the country is facing and needed attention. Another New Yorker termed the indictment as “spectacular” and said: “it is a long time coming.” “He is finally going to face consequences. His base is going to get riled up about anything anyway,” he said. Al Mason, Indian-American Trump supporter, real estate businessman and co-chair of the Trump Victory Indian-American Finance Committee, told PTI that the charges against Trump are “100 per cent political.” “Trump will emerge even stronger after this witch hunt. Never underestimate him.

Conservative media figures leap to US ex-Prez defence

New York (AP): Conservative media figures leaped to Donald Trump’s defense with apocalyptic language on Thursday, claiming the former president was being unfairly persecuted by a Manhattan grand jury’s indictment and predicting his 2024 bid for the White House would get a boost from his perceived martyrdom. “This is totally unacceptable and a disgrace to this country,” said Fox News Channel host Jesse Watters.

“This is repulsive,” said Fox’s Sean Hannity, three days after he interviewed Trump on his show. “This is a disgusting political hit job the likes of which we have never seen in this country anymore.” “It’s insane,” said Newsmax’s Eric Bolling. The actual charges in the grand jury indictment against Trump have not been

made public. The Manhattan district attorney’s office has investigated payments made during the 2016 presidential election to silence claims of an extramarital affair. For conservative-oriented media, Thursday’s fury represented a rapid turnaround. Trump had recently complained of being looked over by Fox, by far the most popular media outlet for conservatives, and had not appeared there for an interview in months before Hannity spoke to him earlier this week.

“This is a horrible night for the republic, but politically it’s a great night for Donald Trump,” commentator Pete Hegseth said, predicting that mug shots of the former president would be proudly displayed in college dorm rooms and on T-shirts.

‘India, Japan join hands with Lanka to bolster regional connectivity in Indo-Pacific region’

PTI ■ LANKA

India and Japan have jointly agreed to cooperate with Sri Lanka to bolster regional connectivity in the strategic Indo-Pacific, a media report said on Friday, amid China’s aggressive military manoeuvring in the resource-rich region. The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific. China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas.

Beijing has also made substantial progress in militarising its man-made islands over the past few years.

Indian High Commissioner Gopal Baglay said India and Japan share wide-ranging interests in a peaceful, progressive and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, the Daily Mirror Lanka newspaper reported. He made these remarks at an event here in the presence of the Japanese envoy Mizukoshi Hideaki, it said. Asserting that Sri Lanka is an important member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IROA) countries, Baglay said there is a great deal of opportunity for India, Japan and Sri Lanka to work together



for the prosperity of people here and the benefit of all sides, the report said. “This should be in accordance with the priorities of Sri Lanka,” he said

“Sri Lanka is at the happy confluence of three important pillars of India’s foreign policy,” Baglay was quoted as saying in the report. Japanese Ambassador Hideaki said that during Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida’s recent visit to India, the two countries exchanged views on cooperation with Sri Lanka and agreed to work closely. “I believe that connectivity is the best area to showcase how two countries can bring tangible benefits to the entire region including Sri Lanka. To this end, perspectives and insights from countries in the region are critical, and this report precisely addresses that,” he was quoted as saying in the report. Sri Lanka is a key part of

China’s Belt and Road Initiative, a long-term plan to fund and build infrastructure linking China to the rest of the world. But China’s unproductive projects in Sri Lanka, including the Hambantota port, which Beijing took over on a 99-year lease in 2017 as a debt swap, have come under sharp criticism. Earlier this month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a USD 3 billion bailout programme to help Sri Lanka overcome its economic crisis and catalyse financial support from other development partners, a move welcomed by Colombo as a “historic milestone” in the critical period. Last week, Sri Lanka received USD 330 million as the first tranche of the IMF bailout programme, which will pave the way for the debt-ridden country to achieve better “fiscal discipline” and “improved governance,” according to President Wickremesinghe. Sri Lanka was hit by an unprecedented financial crisis in 2022, the worst since its independence from Britain in 1948, due to a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves, sparking political turmoil in the country that led to the ouster of the all-powerful Rajapaksa family.

Trump not alone in US presidential pantheon of controversies, scandals

New York (PTI): Donald Trump will go down in history as the first US President to be indicted on criminal charges but he is far from alone in the pantheon of presidential predecessors whose tenures have been marred by scandals and controversies.

A grand jury in Manhattan on Thursday afternoon voted to indict the real estate tycoon, former reality TV host and America’s Commander-in-Chief in connection with hush money payments to adult film star

Stormy Daniels, making Trump the first former US President to face criminal charges. But Trump, the 45th US president, does not stand alone among current or former US Presidents when it comes to controversy plaguing the White House occupants.

Bill Clinton was the 42nd president of the United States and sat in the Oval Office from 1993 to 2001. In December 1998, Clinton was impeached by the US House of Representatives on charges

Nepal PM Prachanda expands Cabinet

Kathmandu (PTI): Nepal’s Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ on Friday expanded his Cabinet for the seventh time in three months, inducting ministers from five new parties, including the Nepali Congress.

The newly-appointed ministers took an oath of office and secrecy from President Ramchandra Paudel at Sheela Niwas, the President’s Office. A total of four leaders of the Nepali Congress have been appointed ministers in the first phase owing to internal disputes in the party, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported. Despite the seventh reshuffling, the Cabinet is yet to get into full shape.

Prachanda is still looking after the foreign ministry, ministries of law, justice and parliamentary affairs; forest and environment; health and population and the ministry of youth and sports, the report said. Nepal’s 10-party ruling alliance on Thursday failed to reach a consensus on the power-sharing deal, causing yet another delay in the expansion of the Cabinet. Top leaders held meetings at the Prime Minister’s official residence here at Baluwatar to reach an agreement on the distribution of ministries among



various political parties. Power sharing and the distribution of ministerial portfolios were the major bottlenecks among the members of the ruling alliance as the demand for Cabinet posts was exceeding the number of ministries available, officials said. Before the expansion, Prachanda was overburdened with about 16 ministerial portfolios, including the ministries of Home, Finance, Foreign, Industry and Commerce, Science and Technology, and Agriculture. There were only six Cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister and one minister of state in the Prachanda-led government before Friday’s expansion, as ministers from CPN-UML, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and Rashtriya Swatantra Party had resigned from the posts following the break up of the seven-party coalition.

‘14 dead in gold mine collapse’

Khartoum (AP): At least 14 workers are dead after a gold mine collapsed in northern Sudan, mining authorities said Friday. The fatal collapse happened after one of the hillsides that surround the Jebel Al-Ahmar gold mine - situated near the Egyptian border - gave way Thursday afternoon, the Sudanese Mineral Resources Company said in a short statement. Some twenty other minors were injured in the collapse and transferred to a nearby hospital, it said.

According to a report published Thursday by Sudan’s state-run news agency SUNA, a search operation was launched to find those trapped beneath the rubble. Witnesses cited by SUNA said the workers were searching inside mining wells for gold using heavy machinery which caused the collapse. A security source cited by the state agency said workers were thought to be trapped beneath the mine’s groundwater.

After being fired, Israel’s defence min caught in limbo

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Five days ago, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s decision to fire his defence minister set off a wave of spontaneous mass protests and a general strike that threatened to paralyse the country, forcing the Israeli leader to suspend his divisive plan to overhaul the judicial system. But Netanyahu never even sent Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant a formal termination letter, a spokesperson for Netanyahu said. As of Friday, Gallant — whose criticism of Netanyahu’s planned judicial changes led to his dismissal — was still on the job. Gallant’s aides said it was business-as-usual at the Defence Ministry. As local media this week crackled with reports of Netanyahu considering whether to replace Gallant with stalwarts of his right-wing Likud party, Gallant remained in limbo — and even so, the public face of

his ministry. He greeted the Azerbaijani foreign minister, toured two military bases and attended Tuesday’s security cabinet meeting this week.

On Thursday, Gallant attended a celebration ahead of the Jewish Passover holiday with the director of the Shin Bet security service, his office said, releasing a photo of him smiling beside Director Ronen Bar. “We have a duty to calm the spirits in Israeli society and maintain an inclusive and unifying discourse,” Gallant said at the holiday toast. The questions swirling around the fate of Israel’s crucial Defence Ministry — which maintains Israel’s 55-year-old military occupation of the West Bank and contends with threats from Iran, Lebanon’s Hezbollah militant group and the Gaza Strip’s militant Hamas rulers — reflects the tensions tearing at Netanyahu’s right-wing coalition after one of the most dramatic weeks for Israel in decades.

Iranian adviser killed in Israeli airstrike in Syria

Beirut (AP): Israeli airstrikes hit the suburbs of Syria’s capital city early Friday for the second day in a row, killing an Iranian adviser, the state media of Syria and Iran reported. Loud explosions were heard over Damascus shortly after midnight Thursday, according to residents in the capital and the state news agency SANA.

The airstrikes came after similar attacks early Thursday. SANA said Syrian air defences confronted “hostile targets,” adding that the strike caused material damage. SANA said some of the Israeli missiles were shot down by air defences. Iran’s state television reported Friday that Milad Heidari, an Iranian military adviser, was killed during what it called a “criminal strike” by Israel early Friday morning in Syria. Without giving Heidari’s rank, the report called him a “guard of Islam.” The outlet said he was a member of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and warned Israel will receive an answer for the crime.

6 found dead near Quebec border: Police

Montreal: The Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service said late on Thursday it was investigating the discovery of six bodies in a marshy area of Quebec near Canada’s border with New York state. Police said they were awaiting the results of post-mortem and toxicology tests to determine the cause of death. They said they were still trying to identify the dead and their status in Canada. It wasn’t immediately known if they were migrants trying to cross the border. “The first body was located around 5:00 PM in a marsh area in Tsi Snaihne, Akwesasne, Quebec,” police said in a statement on social media. “There is no threat to the public at this time.” Last month, the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police reported a recent increase in illegal entries through their lands and waterways. The statement said some migrants required hospitalisation. And in January the force noted people involved in human smuggling had attempted to utilize shorelines along the St. Lawrence River in the area.

Indian-Americans meet US justice dept officials over embassy attack

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Eminent Indian-Americans, including members of the Sikh community from Silicon Valley, recently met with the officials of the US Department of Justice and condemned the recent violence against the Indian diplomatic mission and diplomats in San Francisco.

During the meeting that took place on Wednesday, the Indian-Americans told the DoJ officials that they felt unsafe going to the San Francisco Consulate and felt disturbed while the Sikh community members said such unlawful activities, which do not reflect the voice of the majority, bring a bad name to the community. They also talked about personal safety and the lack of action by the San Francisco Police. The meeting came after a group of Khalistan supporters this month attacked and damaged the Indian Consulate in San Francisco.

Raising pro-Khalistan slogans, the protesters broke open the makeshift security barriers

raised by the city police and installed two so-called Khalistani flags inside the Consulate premises. Two consulate personnel soon removed these flags. Later, the Khalistani supporters also held a protest in front of the Indian Embassy in Washington and tried to incite violence and even threatened the country’s envoy, but timely intervention by law enforcement agencies prevented them from vandalising the property. During the meeting, senior officials from the DoJ addressed and interacted with Indian-Americans and Sikhs at two separate round tables hosted by eminent community leader Ajay Bhutoria during which they discussed issues of safety and security of the Indian consulate, hate crimes, and community tensions.

The meeting aimed to promote understanding, build stronger relationships, and ensure safety and security for everyone. Sikh community leaders told DoJ that they do not believe in violence.

“We must try to create an environment where everyone

feels safe to express their opinions and concerns without fear of violence,” Bhutoria said as he underscored the safety and security of the Indian Consulate in San Francisco which provides a critical service to the community. It is essential that those seeking services can access them without facing protestors and feel safe, Bhutoria said.

The discussion spread over two days and two different sessions highlighted the importance of respecting and valuing diverse perspectives within the community and ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the dialogue. DoJ representatives Harpreet Mokha and Vincent Player were present at the event to listen to the community’s concerns and offer support.

The roundtable aimed to build stronger relationships between diverse Indian community groups and the broader US community while ensuring the safety and security of the Indian consulate and its staff and the premise.

US Senate confirms Verma for top State Dept position

Washington (PTI): The US Senate has confirmed Indian-American lawyer, diplomat and executive Richard Verma as the Deputy Secretary of State, Management and Resources, a position which is normally seen as the CEO of the powerful State Department in the US government. Verma, 54, was confirmed by a vote of 67-26 on Thursday.

He served as the US ambassador to India from January 16, 2015, to January 20, 2017, and is currently the chief legal officer and the head of global public policy at Mastercard. During the previous Obama administration, Verma served as the Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs.

Earlier in his career, he was National Security Advisor to United States Senator Harry Reid and was Democratic Whip, Minority Leader and then Majority Leader of the United States Senate. Verma has served as Vice Chairman of The Asia



Group, Partner and Senior Counsellor at Steptoe and Johnson LLP, and Senior Counsellor at the Albright Stonebridge Group.

He is a veteran of the United States Air Force, where he served as a Judge Advocate. Verma, who was born in 1968 to an Indian immigrant, grew up in Pennsylvania. He attended a private college on a US Air Force scholarship.

Inflation increasing poverty in Argentina

Buenos Aires (Argentina): One of the world’s highest inflation rates is making it more difficult to make ends meet in Argentina, where at the end of last year nearly four of every 10 people were poor, official figures revealed Thursday. Poverty increased to 39.2 per cent of the population in the second half of 2022, a three percentage point increase from the first six months of the year, said Argentina’s national statistics agency, INDEC. Among children under age 15, the poverty rate increased more than three percentage points to 54.2 per cent.

In a poor neighbourhood in Argentina’s capital, those who run a soup kitchen don’t need the statistics to tell them what they have been seeing amid an economy wracked by inflation that reached 94.8 per cent last year. “There’s more poverty than before,” said Graciela Gamarra, who runs the soup kitchen in the Fraga district that hands out more than 800 portions of food every weekday afternoon.

“After the pandemic, everything got worse,” she said. “Most have precarious jobs, they don’t have fixed employment to say that they’re sure about how much they’ll make each month.” Rosa Guerrero, 76, was one of the people who went to the soup kitchen with her plastic container to get food on a recent afternoon.

“If it weren’t for the soup kitchen, what would become of me?” Guerrero said, noting that more people from outside the neighbourhood had been arriving recently to ask for food.

Mexican experts say mummy exhibit may pose health risks

AP ■ MEXICO

Mexican government experts said Thursday they are concerned that a travelling display of mummies from the 1800s may pose a health risk to the public. The preserved corpses were unintentionally mummified when they were buried in crypts in dry, mineral-rich soil in the state of Guanajuato. Some still have hair, leathery skin and their original clothing.

But the National Institute of Anthropology and History said in a statement that one of the mummies also appears to have fungal growths.

The federal institute distanced itself from a state government decision to display a half dozen of the mummies in glass cases at a tourism fair



in Mexico City. It was unclear whether the cases were air-tight, and the institute said it had not been consulted about the display.

“It is even more worrisome that they are still being exhibited without the safeguards for the public against biohazards,” said the institute.

“From some of the published photos, at least one of the corpses on display, which

was inspected by the institute in November 2021, shows signs of a proliferation of possible fungus colonies,” the institute wrote.

“This should all be carefully studied to see if these are signs of a risk for the cultural legacy, as well as for those who handle them and come to see them.”

The mummies are usually on display in the Guanajuato state capital. But they have travelled before, and some were exhibited in the United States in 2009. They were naturally preserved, some say because of the climate, mineral-rich environment, other because of the sealed crypts, though no one knows for sure. They were dug up starting in the 1860s, because their families could no longer pay burial fees, and put on display.

Indiana boy shoots baby with handgun

Lafayette (US): A 16-month-old boy was fatally shot by his 5-year-old sibling after the older child found a handgun in a northwestern Indiana apartment, police said. The circumstances of Tuesday’s fatal shooting of Isiah Johnson remained under investigation Thursday by the Lafayette Police Department, which does not plan to release additional information during the ongoing investigation, said Capt. Brian Phillips.

Police said previously that the shooting occurred when one adult and two children were inside the apartment in Lafayette, about 96 kilometers north of Indianapolis. Phillips said Thursday that the 5-year-old sibling who shot Isiah gained access to a handgun in the apartment. He declined to provide additional information about the sibling and said police were still investigating who owns that weapon.

An autopsy performed Wednesday determined that Isiah died from a single gunshot wound, but his manner of death is pending completion of the police investigation and toxicology reports, said Tippecanoe County Coroner Carrie Costello, the Journal and Courier reported.

Once police complete their shooting investigation, Phillips said those findings will be forwarded to the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor’s Office for review and to determine if charges might be filed.

Ukraine marks grim Bucha anniv, calls for justice

‘Kremlin warning a shift in rhetoric’

AP ■ BUCHA (UKRAINE)

Ukrainians marked the anniversary Friday of the liberation of Bucha with calls for remembrance and justice after a brutal Russian occupation.

“We will not let it be forgotten,” President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said at a formal ceremony in Bucha, vowing to punish those who committed outrages there. “Human dignity will not let it be forgotten. On the streets of Bucha, the world has seen Russian evil. Evil unmasked.”

The town near Kyiv has come to stand as a symbol of atrocities committed by Moscow’s military since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022. Ukrainian troops who retook the town found hundreds of bodies, on the streets, in yards and homes, in a mass grave. Some showed signs of torture.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, fighting continued Friday: Russia used its long-range arsenal to bombard anew several areas, killing at least two civilians and damaging homes.

And the Kremlin-allied president of neighboring Belarus raised the stakes when he said Russian strategic nuclear weapons might be deployed in his country, along with part of Moscow’s tactical nuclear arsenal. Moscow said earlier this week that it planned to place in Belarus tactical nuclear weapons, which are comparatively short-range and low-yield. Strategic nuclear weapons such as missile-borne warheads would bring a greater threat.

At the official commemoration in Bucha, Zelenskyy was joined by the president of Moldova and the prime ministers of Croatia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The Kremlin’s forces occupied Bucha weeks after they invaded Ukraine and stayed for about a month. When Ukrainian troops retook the town, they encountered horrific scenes. Over weeks and months, hundreds of bodies were uncovered, including children. Russian soldiers on intercepted phone conversations called it “zachistka” — cleansing, according to an investigation by The Associated Press and the PBS series “Frontline.” Such organized cruelty, which Russian troops employed in past conflicts as well, notably in Chechnya, was later repeated in Russia-occupied territories across Ukraine. Zelenskyy handed out medals to soldiers, police officers, doctors, teachers and emergency workers in Bucha, as well as to the families of two soldiers killed during the defense of the Kyiv region. “Ukrainian people, you have stopped the biggest anti-human force of our times,” he said. “You have stopped the force which has no respect and wants to destroy everything that gives meaning to human



Members of the Ukrainian State Emergency Service clear the rubble at the building which was destroyed as a result of Russian strike in Zaporizhzhia district, Ukraine on Friday.

Lukashenko: Russia might put strategic nukes in Belarus

Tallinn (AP): Russian strategic nuclear weapons might be deployed in Belarus along with part of Russia’s tactical nuclear arsenal, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said Friday. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced last week that his country intended to deploy tactical, comparatively short-range and small-yield nuclear weapons in Belarus.

The strategic nuclear weapons such as missile-borne warheads that Lukashenko mentioned during his state-of-the-nation address would pose an even greater threat, if Moscow moves them to the territory of its neighbour and ally.

Belarus was a staging ground for amassing Russian troops before the invasion of Ukraine a little over 13 months ago. Lukashenko, the only person to have served as president since the country’s independence from the Soviet Union, delivered his annual address amid escalating tensions over the conflict in Ukraine.

More than 1,400 civilian deaths, including 37 children, were documented in the Bucha district by Ukrainian authorities, Zelenskyy said. More than 175 people were found in mass graves and alleged torture chambers, he said. Ukraine and other countries, including the U.S., have demanded that Russia answer for war crimes. Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin alleged



Both he and Putin have alleged that Western powers want to ruin Russia and Belarus.

“Putin and I will decide and introduce here, if necessary, strategic weapons, and they must understand this, the scoundrels abroad, who today are trying to blow us up from inside and outside,” the Belarusian leader said.

“We will stop at nothing to protect our countries, our state and their peoples.”

Friday that many of the dead civilians were tortured. Almost 100 Russian soldiers are suspected of war crimes, he said on his Telegram channel, and indictments have been issued for 35 of them.

Two Russian servicemen have already been sentenced by a Ukrainian court to 12 years in prison for illegally depriving civilians of liberty, and for looting.

Joe Biden asks Russia to release detained US journalist

Washington: President Joe Biden on Friday urged Russia to release Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich after the country’s security service arrested him on espionage charges — allegations that the newspaper denies.

“Let him go,” Biden told reporters at the White House on Friday morning when asked about his message to Russia on the arrest of Gershkovich. Russia’s Federal Security Service has accused Gershkovich, a U.S. citizen, of trying to obtain classified information.

It is the first time an American journalist has been detained on accusations of spying since the Cold War. The Journal has said it “vehemently denies” the charges. The Biden administration said Thursday that it was working to secure consular access to Gershkovich.

Sunak hails post-Brexit win UK joins CPTPP trade bloc

AP ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Friday hailed UK’s “post-Brexit freedoms” as the country joined the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) trade bloc comprising 11 countries spanning the Indo-Pacific region. Downing Street said the historic agreement follows two years of intense negotiations by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and puts the UK at the heart of a dynamic group of economies, as the first European member and first new member since the CPTPP was created. The UK would not have been able to join the bloc as a member of the European Union (EU), something the Brexit-backing Sunak has highlighted as a big win.

“We are at our heart an open and free-trading nation, and this deal demonstrates the real economic benefits of our post-Brexit freedoms,” said Sunak. He said, as part of the CPTPP, the UK is now in a prime position in the global economy to seize opportunities for new jobs, growth and innovation. “Joining the CPTPP trade bloc puts the UK at the centre of a dynamic and growing group of Pacific economies, as the first new nation and first European country to join. British businesses will now enjoy unparalleled access to markets from Europe to the south Pacific,” he said. The bloc — made up of Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam — is home to an estimated 500 million people and is forecast to be worth 15 per cent of global GDP once the UK joins. According to official estimates, joining the bloc is expected to boost the UK economy by 1.8 billion pounds in the long run,



Opposition pressures PM over wife’s biz interest

London (PTI): The UK’s Opposition parties are piling on the pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak over a recent Budget policy that could benefit his wife, Akshata Murty, through her business interest in a childcare firm. Murty, the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, is listed as a shareholder in Koru Kids Ltd which is likely to benefit from a new pilot scheme announced in the Spring Budget earlier this month to incentivise people to become childminders. While 10 Downing Street has stated that Sunak had followed the UK’s ministerial code on the matter, the Opposition has called for further explanations.

“There are serious questions for Rishi Sunak to answer over any potential conflict of interest, and any extra income his family could receive from his own government’s policy,” said Liberal Democrat chief whip Wendy Chamberlain, who has called on the Independent Adviser on Ministers’ Interests Sir Laurie Magnus to investigate. First reported by the ‘i’ newspaper, the UK’s Companies House register lists Murty as a shareholder in Koru Kids — one of six childminder agencies in England listed on the government’s website with contact details.

with wages also forecast to rise by 800 million pounds compared to 2019 levels.

A cut in tariffs on exports for UK industries including food, drink and cars and new advantages for business are among the positives being highlighted by the British government. “This is an important moment for the UK. Our accession to CPTPP sends a powerful signal that the UK is open for business and using

our post-Brexit freedoms to reach out to new markets around the world and grow our economy,” said UK Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch — who is also in charge of the ongoing free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with India.

She said joining the CPTPP will support jobs and create opportunities for companies of all sizes and in all parts of the UK.

Japan FM to visit China amid friction over detained citizen

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said Friday he will visit China this weekend for talks with his counterpart Qin Gang, becoming Japan’s first top diplomat to do so in more than three years amid growing frictions between the two countries, including a recent flap over the detention of a Japanese national in Beijing. Hayashi hopes to “engage in a candid and in-depth exchange of views toward establishing a constructive and stable relationship” at his planned talks with Qin and other officials during his April 1-2 visit, he told a news conference.

He is expected to demand the release of the detained Japanese national, discuss security concerns in the region and ask China to act “responsibly” on global issues including Russia’s war on Ukraine.



Hayashi noted an agreement between the leaders of the two countries to build constructive and stable relations but said “Japan-China relations are facing many challenges and concerns, although there are various possibilities (for cooperation).” Despite close economic and business ties between the two Asian powers, Tokyo and Beijing have been increasingly at odds in recent years as Japan considers China’s growing influence in the region as a threat to its national security and the

economy. “I believe it is important to build a constructive and stable relationship while we insist on our position on some issues, seek (China’s) responsible actions and continue our dialogue,” Hayashi added. His predecessor Toshimitsu Motegi’s December 2019 visit to China was the last such trip made by a top Japanese diplomat, just prior to China’s near-total closure of its borders amid strict pandemic control measures.

Commenting on Hayashi’s visit, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said it was in the “common interests of the two sides and the region to maintain the sound and stable development of China-Japan relations.” Mao said Qin and other Chinese leaders she didn’t name would “have an in-depth exchange on bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual concern.”

China, Japan set up military hotline

Beijing (PTI): China and Japan on Friday set up a military hotline to strengthen their capability of managing and controlling maritime and air incidents arising due to their aggressive patrolling of the disputed waters in the East China Sea.

The hotline mechanism was announced ahead of the visit by Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi to Beijing this weekend for talks with his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang on improving bilateral relations amid Beijing’s vocal criticism against Japan’s active role in the US’ Indo-Pacific strategy.

China is also sharply critical of the Quad alliance comprising the US, India, Japan and Australia saying that it is aimed at containing its rise.

This will be the first visit by the Japanese Foreign Minister to China since 2019 when Hayashi’s predecessor

Toshimitsu Motegi went to Beijing after which China shut down its borders to combat COVID-19. China reopened the country for international travel early this year. Announcing the hotline, the Chinese Defence Ministry said as agreed upon by the defence departments of China and Japan, the two sides have recently completed the construction of a direct telephone line for the sea and air liaison mechanism and will maintain communication on the arrangement for the launch. The establishment of the direct telephone line will effectively enrich the communication channels between the defence departments of China and Japan, strengthen the capabilities of the two sides to manage and control maritime and air crises, and help further maintain regional peace and stability, the ministry said.

‘China rolls over \$2bn as loan to Pakistan’

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Cash-strapped Pakistan has received a rollover loan of USD 2 billion that matured last week from its “all-weather ally” China, finance minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday, a move that will help Islamabad secure the much-required bailout from the IMF.

The rollover is one of the key requirements for Pakistan meeting its external financing needed for it to ink the staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

“I am happy to confirm that this has been rolled over on March 23,” Dar told parliament, adding that all formalities were completed. Pakistan, currently in the throes of a major economic crisis, is grappling with high external debt and dwindling foreign exchange reserves. Pakistan is scrambling to increase its forex reserves which are estimated to be at USD 4.8 billion after China refinanced USD 500 million a fortnight ago. Pakistan has been negotiating with the IMF for the release of a USD 1.1 billion bailout package since February but has so far met with little success due to the stringent conditions imposed by the Washington-based lender.

The funds are part of a USD 6.5 billion bailout package the IMF approved in 2019, which analysts say is critical if Pakistan is to avoid defaulting on external debt obligations. The rollover comes days after Pakistan decided to skip the Democracy Summit in Washington so that it does not potentially upset its “all-weather ally” China.

‘Some steps taken by Beijing along India-China border provocative’

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Some of the steps being taken by Beijing along the India-China border has been “provocative”, a top White House official has said while reaffirming that the United States is “destined” to work more closely with India. Kurt Campbell, the US Deputy Assistant to the President and Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific, told a Washington-based think-tank on Thursday that India is not an ally of the United States and will never be so.

“But it does not mean that we will not be close partners and share many things.

That’s how we need to understand the role that India will play as a great nation on the global stage. “We want to encourage that and support that and deepen this relationship, which is already very strong, probably the strongest people-

to-people relationship of any country that the United States has on the global stage,” he said. Campbell said that the India-US relationship “is the most important bilateral relationship for the United States in the 21st century.”

“I believe we are destined to work more closely together. I believe that our people-to-people ties are strong, animate in a relationship that is becoming deeper, richer and more strategically important,” he said. The think tank — Centre for a New American Security (CNAS) — in a report said that the India-China border intrusions and clashes have become more frequent and threaten to lead to all-out conflict.

The increased prospect of India-China border hostility has implications for the United States and its Indo-Pacific strategy between the two Asian giants, it said.

Stampede at food distribution centre kills 11 in Karachi

Karachi (PTI): At least 11 people, including women and children, were killed and several others injured in a deadly stampede at a Ramzan food distribution centre in Pakistan’s port city of Karachi on Friday, officials said. The stampede took place after some people unknowingly stepped on a live wire where food was being distributed, leading to the tragedy. Soon, people started pushing each other, due to which some even fell into a nearby drain, police said.

At least 11 people, including women and children, died in the stampede and several others were injured. “Initially two persons were electrocuted after stepping on the live wire and that led to panic and stampede,” SSP Ameerullah told PTI. “Two children and two women fell in a drain when its wall collapsed due to the rush of the people,” he said.

At least 11 other people, including women, have died while trying to get free flour from government distribution outlets in Pakistan’s Punjab province in recent days.


**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**
PARADIP PORT-754142, Odisha (India)
ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT
(Estate Wing)
ADJEST/GENL/01/2021/H010 Dt.28.03.2023
Sd/-
E-Tender Notice
An e-Tender notice invites bids for the work "Providing field/office assistance for Estate Works for a period of 2 (Two) years" is available in the website from 29.3.2023 to 19.04.2023. Interested bidders may log on the website:- <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.
PPA/PR/238/2022-23 Sr.Asst.Estate Manager
29/3/23 Paradip Port Authority

Notice is hereby given that my client Mr. Narendar Sachdeva has availed a loan from Shriram Finance Limited against the property mentioned in the schedule. My client is the recorded owner of the property vide Gift Deed dated 07.07.2012 executed by Dharmender Sachdeva, which is duly registered before SR-LX, vide document no. 7642, vol. no. 6588, on pg.no. 103-107.
Dharmender Sachdeva is the owner of entire property no. H-76 (OLD) & 76-B, admeasuring 200 Sq. Yards, falling under Kharsa no. 24/Min, Situated in the regularized approved colony Krishna Nagar, area of Village Hamayunpur, New Delhi vide Gift Deed dated 23.07.2009, duly registered at SR-LX, document no. 5693.
It is hereby informed to the general public at large that the Gift Deed (In original) dated 23.07.2009 has been lost and in lieu of which an FIR/Lost Report was lodged vide Lost Report No. 274737/2023, dated 24/03/2023, before Crime Branch, Delhi. It is further informed that in case any person has found, he/she may inform/ deposit the same to undersigned.
It is further informed that the said Gift Deed dated 23.07.2009 is not mortgaged with any of the Bank/ Financial Institution. In case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 7 days of this publication to Mr. Kamalkant Gupta (Advocate).
Schedule of Property Mentioned above:
Entire Ground Floor and Entire First Floor built up on free hold property no. H-76 (OLD) & 76-B, admeasuring 200 Sq. Yards, falling under Kharsa no. 24/Min, Situated in the regularized approved colony Krishna Nagar, area of Village Hamayunpur, New Delhi.
Kamalkant Gupta (Advocate)
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, Mob. 9810083351

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**
PARADIP-754142, ODISHA (INDIA)
(An autonomous body under Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Govt. of India)
No. AD/RSC-22/196/2015(PL-V)/718 Dated, the 28th March, 2023
Advertisement
Applications are invited from Indian Nationals for engagement of 01 (one) Sr. Manager (Business Development & Trade Promotion) on contractual basis in Paradip Port Authority.
For further details, visit our website <https://www.paradip-port.gov.in/Carrer.aspx>.
PPA/PR/238/2022-23
Dt. 29/03/2023
Sd/- Dy. Secretary,
Paradip Port Authority

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**
Azzadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of Work and its Location:-	30-Elect-82-T-2022-23-E3 Electrical work in connection with (i) New washing line for maintenance/ originating/ termination for train no. 12392/12391 from Ghaziabad station. (ii) Improvement of broken catwalk, beam. Column and water supply pipeline in washing line no. 4 & 5 at Delhi Sarai Rohilla.
Approx Cost of the works in:-	Rs. 63.95 Lacs
Address of the Office:-	Sr. Divil. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Bid Security:-	Rs. 127900.00
Date & time of submission of tender:-	24.04.2023, 12.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender:-	24.04.2023, 12.00 Hrs.
Website & Notice Board:-	www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**
Azzadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of tender through E-tendering (e-Procurement Systems)

No. E-File No. -173515RT	Dated : 31.03.2023
NIT No.	E-File No. - 173515RT
Name of Work and its location	Tender for "Provision for security manpower through outsourcing proposal for security services at RCHK, SNP"
Approx Cost of work	Rs. 48,18,123.96/- including GST (Rs. Forty Eight Lacs Eighteen Thousand One Hundred Twenty Three & Paise Ninety Six Only)
Earnest Money	Rs. 96,400/-
Completion period of work	04 months of date of execution of work
Cost of Tender document on cash/by post	Nil
Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 11:30 hrs on 14.04.2023 Opening of Tender at 11:30 hrs.
Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

India on track to achieve \$2-trn exports by 2030, says Goyal



Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal with Ministers of State Anupriya Patel and Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal releases 'Foreign Trade Policy 2023', in New Delhi on Friday

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday exuded confidence that India's merchandise and services exports will cross \$2 trillion by 2030 from the current level of \$765 billion, as he unveiled a "dynamic and responsive" foreign trade policy.

He said that goods exports have witnessed good growth considering the current global scenario while services exports may see a quantum jump in the current fiscal.

"We have to meet our exports targets going forward," said the minister, adding that "we will need to work a bit harder" on goods exports.

"It shouldn't be that by 2030, services exports cross \$1 trillion while you (merchandise exports) lag behind. I am confident that we will cross \$2 trillion by 2030," Goyal said.

The minister said he has asked the Department of Commerce to undertake a "massive focused concentrated" outreach globally in the next 4-5 months sectorally as well as country-wise through Indian missions abroad with special focus on trade, technology, tourism and investment.

India's total exports growth decelerated to 13.4 per cent in 2022-23 annually from 36 per cent expansion in the previous financial year as global demand was affected following outbreak

of Russia-Ukraine war in February 2022 and other geopolitical reasons.

"We will achieve exports of \$1 trillion each in goods and services by 2030," Goyal said.

The Foreign Trade Policy 2023 outlines a host of measures and incentives to boost exports from India.

"We always had the capacity to do more, but I feel it needed Prime Minister Narendra Modi to pump up our energies and enthusiasm and see the change witnessed thereafter," Goyal said. The WTO's global trade has forecast growth in world trade to slow down to 1 per cent in 2023 due to global uncertainties.

FTP 2023 to facilitate greater trade, boost manufacturing: FIEO president Sakthivel



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The new foreign trade policy will facilitate greater trade, boost manufacturing and help in making the rupee a global currency, the president of apex exporters' body FIEO A Sakthivel on Friday said.

The Foreign Trade Policy 2023 was unveiled by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday. It will come into effect from April 1, 2023. Terming the FTP as a dynamic without an end date, the FIEO President said it maintains policy continuity with a window for the trade and industry to ensure a responsive and nimble approach.

Sakthivel said that India has been continuously touching record-high exports, as the country's FTP has contributed immensely to this illustrious export performance.

He said that the focus of the FTP 2023 has been mainly on four pillars, including moving on from incentives to remissions, and export promotion through collaborations.

"The policy has rightly emphasised key elements, including ease of doing business with a reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives," he said.

Online approvals with a physical interface, reduction in user charges for MSMEs under advance authorisation and EPCG, e-certificate of origin, and paperless filing of export obligation discharge applications will not only reduce the transaction time and cost but will also help exporters in the timely discharge of the export contract, he added.

He requested the government that a 3-6 months transition period may be provided, whenever a major change is notified in the Foreign Trade policy so that the existing contract can be executed factoring in the prevailing benefits.

Unlike the practice of a five-year foreign trade policy, the FTP 2023 is without an end date and will be updated as per the requirement.

Crif Microlend report: MFI loans grow 20% in Q3



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The gross micro loans portfolio grew 20 per cent to ₹3.16 lakh crore in the quarter ended December 2022 as compared to the year-ago period, a report said on Friday.

The gross loan portfolio growth came at 5.5 per cent when compared to the September quarter, according to the report by credit information company Crif Microlend.

Delinquencies of advances overdue for over 90 days by value declined 1.7 per cent while as a percentage of overall advances, it was at 2 per cent at the end of December 2022 as against 2.7 per cent in the year-ago period.

The coronavirus pandemic had impacted the microfinance sector as field agents were unable to visit borrowers to extend loans and also ensure timely repayments.

The report said that non-bank finance companies continue to dominate the market with a 35.7 per cent share, followed by banks at 33.5 per cent and small finance banks at 16.9 per cent.



Govt raises interest rates on most small saving schemes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Friday raised interest rates on most post office saving schemes by up to 0.7 per cent for the April-June 2023 quarter in line with the firming of interest rates in the economy.

While the interest rates for popular PPF and savings deposits have been retained at 7.1 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively, there has been an increase between 0.1 per cent and 0.7 per cent in other saving schemes, a finance ministry statement said.

The highest increase was in the interest rate of the National Savings Certificate (NSC), which will now attract 7.5 per cent, up from 7 per cent, for the April 1 to June 30, 2023 period.

The new rate for the girl child savings scheme Sukanya Samriddhi has been increased to 8 per cent from 7.6 per cent.

The interest rate on the senior citizen savings scheme and Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) is 8.2 per cent (up from 8 per cent

and 7.6 per cent (up from 7.2 per cent), respectively. KVP will now mature in 115 months as against 120 months earlier.

Interest rates were increased in the last quarter as well.

Interest rates for small savings schemes are notified on a quarterly basis.

With the revision, a one-year term deposit with post offices would earn 6.8 per cent (up from 6.6 per cent), for two years — 6.9 per cent (up from 6.8 per cent), three years — 7 per cent (up from 6.9 per cent) and five years — 7.5 per cent (7 per cent).

The interest rate on Public Provident Fund (PPF) has been retained at 7.1 per cent and that of the savings deposit at 4 per cent. Monthly Income Scheme has been increased by 30 basis points to 7.4 per cent.

The Reserve Bank since May has raised the benchmark lending rate by 2.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent, prompting banks to raise interest rates on deposits as well.



Retail inflation for industrial workers remains flat at 6.16% in February

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation for industrial workers remained flat at 6.16 per cent in February compared to that of January this year.

"Year-on-year inflation for the month stood at 6.16 per cent compared to 6.16 per cent for the previous month (January, 2023) also and 5.04 per cent during the corresponding month (February 2022) a year before," a labour bureau statement said.

It stated that food inflation stood at 6.13 per cent against 5.69 per cent of the previous month and 5.09 per cent during the corresponding month a year ago.

The Labour Bureau, an attached office of the Ministry of Labour & Employment, has been compiling Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) every month on the basis of retail prices collected from 317 markets spread over 88 industrially important centres in the country.

The index is compiled for 88 centres and all-India and is released on the last working day of succeeding month.

The all-India CPI-IW for February 2023 decreased by 0.1 point and stood at 132.7 points. It was 132.8 points in January 2023.

On 1-month percentage change, it decreased by 0.08 per cent with respect to previous month.

A decrease of 0.08 per cent was recorded between corresponding months a year ago too.

The maximum downward pressure in current index came from food & beverages group contributing 0.1 percentage point to the total change.

At item level, cabbage, cauliflower, brinjal, carrot, onion, potato, peas, french-bean, drum stick, kundru, grapes, sunflower oil, soyabean oil, mustard oil, poultry/chicken, eggs-hen and fish fresh etc. Are responsible for the fall in index.

However, this decrease was checked by rice, wheat, wheat atta, buffalo milk, cow milk, pure ghee, garlic, gourd, lady's finger, parwal, cumin seed/jira, apple, banana, mango, country liquor, foreign liquor and medicine allopathic, etc. Putting upward pressure on the index.

Forex kitty rises \$5.98 billion to \$578.78 billion

PTI ■ MUMBAI

In a second consecutive weekly increase, India's forex reserves rose \$ 5.977 billion to \$578.78 billion in the week ended March 24, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the kitty had risen by \$12.8 billion to \$572.8 billion.

It can be noted that in October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments.

For the week ended March 24, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by \$4.38 billion to \$509.728 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Markets end last trading day of FY23 in style; Sensex Nifty rally nearly 2 pc on firm global trends

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended the last day of 2022-23 fiscal with nearly 2 per cent jump on Friday in line with firm trends in the global markets and heavy buying in index major Reliance Industries.

Fresh foreign fund inflows also added to the positive momentum in the equity market. The 30-share BSE Sensex zoomed 1,031.43 points or 1.78 per cent to finish at 58,991.52. During the day, it jumped 1,108.38 points or 1.91 per cent to 59,068.47.

The broader NSE Nifty climbed 279.05 points or 1.63 per cent to end at 17,359.75.

"Markets saw a perfect ending to FY23 as charged bulls went berserk on Dalal Street thus propelling both the benchmark indices to close above the psychological mark. The rally was long overdue as fading worries over the recent turmoil in the US and European banking industry prompted investors to latch upon the beaten down stocks.

"Also, falling US bond yields and the return of FILs into the local markets in recent sessions have bolstered the market sentiment," said Amol Athawale, Deputy Vice President - Technical Analyst, Kotak Securities Ltd.

Among the Sensex firms, Reliance Industries emerged as the biggest gainer as it jumped over 4 per cent. Nestle,



Infosys, ICICI Bank, Tata Motors, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra and Axis Bank were the other major winners. Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance and Titan were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Japan, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the green. European markets were trading with gains during the afternoon trade. The US markets ended in positive territory on Thursday.

"As the financial year drew to a close, the market witnessed an upward trend marked by bullish moves in the banking and IT sectors driven by robust global cues. Notably, an increased interest from foreign institutional investors due to the moderation in Indian stock valuations also aided," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Indian equity markets were closed on Thursday on account of 'Ram Navami'.

Investors' wealth erode by ₹5.86 L crore in FY23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dalal Street investors became poorer by Rs 5.86 lakh crore in 2022-23 fiscal as the equity market faced a tough time in view of plenty of negative triggers such as high inflation, geopolitical conflicts and higher interest rates.

The domestic stock market encountered many headwinds this fiscal such as high inflation, the Russia-Ukraine war, higher interest rates, foreign fund outflows and the recent global banking turmoil.

"In FY23 we have seen events of decadal high inflation, aggressive monetary policy stance by global central banks w.r.T interest rate hikes, banking crisis in US and Europe, and continuing Russia-Ukraine war," said Srikanth Subramanian, CEO of wealth management company Kotak Cherry.

Amid the sluggish trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies fell by ₹5,86,605.38 crore to ₹2,58,19,896.00 crore in the entire 2022-23 fiscal.

The main issue facing equity market in FY23 was inflation, which resulted in the increase in interest rates around the world and lowered investor sentiment, said Parth Nyati, Founder of online stock trading app Tradingo.



Coal India crosses FY23 production target of 700 MT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) on Friday said it has crossed the annual coal production target of 700 million tonne (MT) in 2022-23. As of Thursday, March 30, the company produced 700.4 MT of coal, up 13 per cent over 619.8 MT on the same date a year ago, the miner said in a statement.

"CIL has breached its challenging production target of 700 MT one day ahead of FY23 closure. CIL is likely to end FY23 with 703.6 MT output going by the current rate of production. It produced 622.6 MTs in the previous fiscal year," it added.

The stiff target of 700 MTs was a challenging task but all their subsidiaries went the extra mile to chip in their best, the statement noted.

The production increased by 81 MT year-on-year in FY23. It outstrips, by nearly two-fold,

the previous high of 44.5 MT hike reported in 2015-16.

Odisha-based CIL subsidiary Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) production rose by 25 MT year-ion-year to 192.8 MT in FY23. It accounted for 27.5 per cent of CIL's total production.

South Eastern Coalfields Ltd's production increased by 24.3 MT to 166 MT as of March 30 from 142.5 MT last year.

CIL's overburden removal (OBR) rose to a new record of 1,651.7 M.Cu.M (million cubic metres) as of March 30. The previous high was 1,362 M.Cu.M.

"Growth in OBR is an encouraging indicator and bodes well for CIL in ramping up the production in the first quarter of FY24, especially when faced with a challenging target of 780 MT. Exposing the coal seam for future readiness, OBR facilitates faster coal extraction," the statement said.

Output of eight key infra sectors record almost flat growth at 6% in February

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Production of eight infrastructure sectors recorded an almost flat growth rate of 6 per cent in February as against 5.9 per cent in the same month last year, according to official data released on Friday. The output of core sectors had increased by 8.9 per cent in January 2023.

Barring crude oil, all the segments posted an increase in production. Crude oil output contracted by 4.9 per cent in February. The growth rate of eight infrastructure sectors — coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity — stood at 7.8 per cent in April-February this fiscal as against 11.1 per cent during the same period last fiscal.

Sebi extends compliance period for three years for big corporations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday extended the compliance requirement to three years for 'large corporates' to raise at least 25 per cent of their incremental borrowings through debt securities to a contiguous block from two years at present.

This comes after the board of Sebi approved a proposal in this regard on Wednesday.

Currently, the rules mandate large corporates to mobilise a minimum of 25 per cent of their incremental borrowings in a financial year through the issuance of debt securities which has to be met over a contiguous block of two years.

IN-BRIEF

NTPC POWER GENERATION HIGHEST AT 400 BU

New Delhi: NTPC Ltd, India's largest integrated power generator, has registered the highest-ever power generation of 400 BU in FY23, a growth of 10.80 per cent via-a-vis previous year. NTPC continues to demonstrate an upward trend in coal production from its captive mines with a coal production of 23.2 Million Metric Tonnes with a robust growth of over 65 per cent vis-à-vis the previous corresponding year. NTPC has taken several steps to augment the coal production to demonstrate an upward trend in coal production from its captive mines with a coal production of 23.2 Million Metric Tonnes with a robust growth of over 65 per cent vis-à-vis the previous corresponding year. NTPC has set an ambitious goal of reaching half its installed capacity through RE by 2032, to serve the nation and support its decarbonisation goals. During the financial year, FY 23, the company registered a growth of 24.24% in a non-fossil portfolio.

POWER GRID WINS 3 SPVS FOR TRANSMISSION

Gurugram: Power Grid Corporation of India Limited has acquired three Project Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) for various Transmission System Projects after competing with various private sector players and emerging as successful bidder in the Tariff Based Competitive Bidding process (TBCB) conducted by PFC Consulting Limited as per the Guidelines notified by Government of India. These Project SPVs are Bhadla Sikar Transmission Limited, Dhamrajgarh Transmission Limited and Raipur Pool Dhamtari Transmission Limited.

SKILL BUILDING INITIATIVE GENERATES JOBS

New Delhi: Bal Raksha Bharat (globally known as Save the Children), with support from Avaya India recognised 380 youth and adolescents who found placements after going through vocation skills training under a joint programme. 150 of these young adults who will form the alumni group, were felicitated at a 'Youth Conclave 2023', held in New Delhi, to celebrate their success through their journey 'from a trainee to a working employee'.

DEPT OF POST LAUNCHES SUB-POST OFFICE IN VIT

Vijayawada/Amaravati/ Guntur: The Department of Posts has launched the Sub Post Office in the VIT-AP University. Aditya Kumar Naik, IPOS, Director- Postal Services, Andhra Pradesh Circle has inaugurated the new sub-post office with the postal code 522241. Operations of the post office have started with immediate effect in the campus.

MEDVEDEV, ALCARAZ REACH MIAMI SEMIS

AP ■ MIAMI GARDENS

World number one Carlos Alcaraz and in-form Russian Daniil Medvedev booked their places in the Miami Open semi-finals with convincing victories over American opponents at Hard Rock Stadium on Thursday. Alcaraz crushed ninth-seed Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-2, while Medvedev ended qualifier Christopher Eubanks' impressive run with a 6-3, 7-5 victory in their quarter-final. Alcaraz needed just 78 minutes to dismiss Fritz with the Spaniard yet again dominating with his big serve and attacking the American from the outset.

The powerful Alcaraz set the tone by breaking Fritz's first service game and he did the same again at the start of the second set, winning the game to love.

The 19-year-old broke again to go 5-2 up and wrapped up the win without losing a point in the final game. He will be up against Italian tenth-seed Jannik Sinner next as he seeks to complete the 'Sunshine Double' following his triumph over Medvedev at Indian Wells.

The 26-year-old Eubanks was playing in his first ATP Masters 1000 quarter-final after upsetting Frenchmen Adrian Mannarino and Gregoire Barrere and Croatia's 17th-ranked Borna Coric.

The 6-foot-7 (2.01m), big-serving Eubanks showed no signs of nerves, holding his first two serves, but he was unable to take advantage of five break-points in a thrilling fourth game.

A half hour rain-break appeared to disrupt Eubanks' momentum, however, and he was broken on his first service game after the resumption of play, going long and allowing Medvedev to take a 4-3 lead.

The Russian, who after the



break noticeably stepped further into the second serve, broke again to take the first set, but Eubanks was not about to roll over against the world number five.

In the sixth game of the second set, Medvedev won a great rally at the net to go 4-2 up but Eubanks again showed his character to break back and keep his hopes alive.

'MISTAKES AMPLIFIED'

Eubanks saved two match points as Medvedev looked to break him and avoid a deciding set, but then on the third match point he messed up a straightforward vol-

ley, putting it out and ending his resistance.

The American, who will move from 119th to 85th in the ATP rankings, said Medvedev had shown the ruthlessness that exists at the top level of the game.

"The mistakes are going to be amplified at this level. Little things, missed opportunities, that maybe in some tournaments I've played in the past or (against) some opponents don't seem like such a big deal," he said.

Medvedev has now won 22 of his past 23 matches, capturing titles in Rotterdam, Doha and

Dubai during that run and reaching the final in Indian Wells, where he lost to world number one Carlos Alcaraz.

"I have never had such a good start to the season. A lot of matches won, tournaments won. I am really happy," Medvedev said.

"I was disappointed at Indian Wells when my streak ended but the only thing you can do is begin a new streak and I am happy I was able to bring my form into Miami."

Medvedev, in the semi-finals in Miami for the first time, will face fellow-Russian Karen Khachanov for a place in the final after the 14th

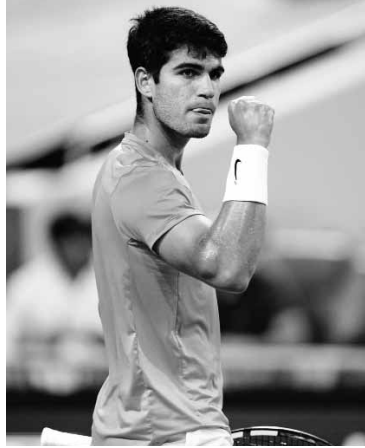
seed beat Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo 6-3, 6-2.

Khachanov needed just 75 minutes to take care of business against Cerundolo despite a determined start from the Argentine.

Cerundolo broke the Russian to go 3-2 up but then lost his next two service games and was never able to recover. Khachanov now faces a familiar foe in Medvedev.

"We know each other from young age. We've been playing against each other since we were kids... we're good friends outside, but we're rivals on the court," he said.

Facing Alcaraz tougher than any of the 'Big Three': Fritz



AP ■ MIAMI GARDENS

American Taylor Fritz had his first taste of facing world number one Carlos Alcaraz in a Miami Open quarter-final loss on Thursday and said it had been a tougher experience than facing any of the sport's former 'Big Three'.

Asked how his maiden appearance against the Spaniard compared to his first matches against the now retired Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal or Novak Djokovic, Fritz did not disguise his opinion.

"Oh, I definitely felt like I had more breathing room against those guys than in this match," he said.

"I think that it's different game styles. Novak will have these long rallies, but he'll kind of slowly get you out of position and overwhelm you. I still feel like I can hang in these rallies for a long time and get more chances to attack," he said.

"I think that I'd go back to the first couple games of the match. He just hit

winners off of a lot of shots, shots that people normally aren't hurting me off of. "I just felt he was more offensive and pressed me a lot more," he said.

Fritz believes that Alcaraz is ahead of where multiple Grand Slam winners Federer, Nadal and Djokovic were in their late teens.

"It's not even what I saw today. It's what I have seen for a while now. I said it a year ago when I watched him play, for how young he is, he just has all the tools," he said.

"He can come to the net, he can dropshot you, he can lob you, he's incredibly fast, he has all the power, his forehand is good, his backhand is good," he said.

"It's very rare to see someone so young so developed in their game and not really have anything that they need to work on so much," he said.

"He has tons of different ways to play, and he can incorporate tons of different game plans to play different players because he has so many tools to win a match.

"I think that's something that I wouldn't say any of those people had at such a young age. There is always I guess things that people need to improve on," he said.

Alcaraz started his rapid rise in the past year by winning Miami before his first Grand Slam win at the US Open.

The Spaniard is now looking to complete the 'Sunshine Double' following his win at Indian Wells earlier this month.

Fritz certainly expects to see plenty more victories for the 19-year-old who he says is already the complete package and conceded he simply couldn't cope with the start of the match.



Tuchel hire 'changed our preparation' for Munich clash: Terzic

AP ■ MUNICH

Borussia Dortmund manager Edin Terzic said Thomas Tuchel's appointment as Bayern Munich manager forced his side to change their preparation for Saturday's 'Der Klassiker' clash. Dortmund travel to Munich one point clear of Bayern at the top of the Bundesliga table.

Speaking at the pre-match press conference on Friday, Terzic said the firing of Julian Nagelsmann in favour of the former Dortmund mentor "obviously changed our preparation a little bit" for the top-of-the-table clash. "We don't know how much Thomas Tuchel will continue on with what Julian Nagelsmann did in the last few weeks, or whether he brings in completely new ideas.

"But what hasn't changed is that they still have a top manager on the bench and a top team on the field."

Terzic admitted his side had watched "the first six games of Thomas Tuchel at Chelsea" to get an idea of "what could happen in this situation or that".

The Dortmund coach prai-

sed Tuchel's ability to "bring Chelsea together in just a few months and be rewarded by winning the Champions League at the end of the season".

"He's one of the best managers in Europe and one of the most successful." Terzic spoke publicly for the first time on Nagelsmann's sacking, saying "I find it to be a real pity what happened with Julian Nagelsmann, who's an absolute top coach."

"But we know how quick things can go in football." Dortmund have not won in Munich in the league since 2014 but Terzic said "we're a different side" this year.

Terzic said on Friday several players would return from injury for the clash, including goalkeeper Gregor Kobel, midfielder Julian Brandt and forwards Youssef Moukoko and Karim Adeyemi.

Terzic confirmed that there were "question marks" over English teenager Jamie Bynoe-Gittens and Germany defender Nico Schlottbeck for the game, while USA forward Gio Reyna and Belgium defender Thomas Meunier have been ruled out.

Rybakina beats Pegula to reach Miami final

AP ■ MIAMI

Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina reached the final of the Miami Open by beating American world number three Jessica Pegula 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 at Hard Rock Stadium on Thursday.

Kazakhstan's Rybakina is on course to claim the 'Sunshine Double' after winning in Indian Wells earlier this month.

The 23-year-old, ranked seventh in the world, will face the winner of Friday's semi-final between Petra Kvitova and Romanian Sorana Cirstea.

In a rain-disrupted match, neither player was able to settled into their serve with 11 breaks in total throughout the two sets.

Pegula had been 4-2 up in the

second set but after she was broken again, the contest turned decisively in Rybakina's direction when the American, on her serve, found the net on a return to go 5-4 down to the Moscow-born Rybakina.

Rybakina then held her serve with ease to secure back-to-back WTA 1000 finals and she said the unwelcome prospect of a third set had pushed her to take a more positive approach.

"I think that I started being a bit more aggressive because I knew that if it's going to go to the third set, it's going to be much more difficult, so I maybe risked a bit more in the end of the second set," she said, noting how tough it has been to go all the way in back-to-back tournaments.

"It's really difficult because of



different conditions and these two weeks by the matches, you will see that it's been much more difficult for me here than in Indian Wells, but for the sunshine double, I am going to give it my best and hopefully I can make it," she added.

Pegula was left to regret not being able to hold after making breaks.

"I think she was playing better as in those moments, she was returning really well. I guess I could have served a little better, but sometimes I was hitting pretty good serves and she was still ripping returns," she said.

"But that's her game, she's pressuring you on your serve as well to come up with something big and I just wasn't able to really do that I guess," she said.

Two-times Wimbledon champion Kvitova reached the Miami semi-finals for the first time after fighting to a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 win over Ekaterina Alexandrova on Thursday.

The Czech grabbed the first set, in the match which was postponed due to rain on Wednesday, after breaking Alexandrova on her second service game but the Russian fought back well.

Kvitova, ranked 12th in the world, held off four break-points at 2-2 and but was finally broken at 4-2 and Alexandrova held on to her serve to force a third set.

It was tight throughout until the 33-year-old Kvitova made the decisive break to go 5-3 up and then served out for the match, yelling out her delight and relief.

Chelsea stun Lyon in Champions League shoot-out

AP ■ LONDON

Ann-Katrin Berger made two saves in a penalty shoot-out as Chelsea knocked holders Lyon out of the Women's Champions League on Thursday to set up a semi-final with Barcelona.

An already dramatic two-legged tie had finished all-square at 2-2, but only after Chelsea substitute Maren Mjelde scored a penalty in the eighth minute of added-on time at the end of extra-time to send the match to spot-kicks.

Germany goalkeeper Berger then denied Wendie Renard before ending the match when she got a strong hand to Lindsey Horan's strike low to the bottom left corner.

The Blues' 4-3 shoot-out success sparked joyous scenes at Stamford Bridge, with Chelsea — yet to win the Women's Champions League — now facing a Barcelona side that beat them 4-0 in the



2021 final.

Earlier two-time Champions League winners Wolfsburg secured a last-four place against Arsenal, one of Chelsea's London rivals, with a 2-1 aggregate win over Paris Saint-Germain.

It is the first time since the 2017/18 season that two English teams have qualified for the semi-finals.

Eight-times champions Lyon

appeared to have done enough when Sara Dabritz's goal deep into extra-time put the French side 2-0 up on the night and 2-1 ahead on aggregate.

But in the third minute of added-on time at the end of extra time, Lyon's Vicki Becho clipped Lauren James inside the box.

Following a lengthy VAR check, and with Lyon players surrounding the referee, a penalty was awarded.

Mjelde then kept her cool to fire in from the spot as her effort levelled the tie and sent it to a shoot-out. Earlier, a 1-1 draw at home was good enough for Wolfsburg to go through.

The German club took an early lead through star striker Alexandra Popp but that was soon cancelled out by a Kadidiatou Diani equaliser.

Wolfsburg manager Tommy Stroot enjoyed his side's "extremely special" victory, saying "we made it, we're proud of it — and now Arsenal waits for us."

Renard named coach of France women's football team

AP ■ PARIS

Herve Renard was on Thursday appointed as the new coach of the France women's football team after the sacking of Corinne Diacre, the French football federation announced.

The 54-year-old Renard resigned as coach of Saudi Arabia earlier in the week after leading them to a memorable group stage win over Argentina at last year's World Cup in Qatar.

His departure was confirmed following Tuesday's 2-1 friendly defeat by Bolivia. Renard has signed a contract with France through to the 2024 Olympics in his first job coaching a women's team.

Renard, a two-time Africa Cup of Nations winner with Zambia and Ivory Coast, takes over less than

four months before the Women's World Cup begins in Australia and New Zealand.

Diacre was removed from her role at the start of March after her position was weakened following a revolt by leading players.

She was under contract until 2024 but came under serious pressure after captain Wendie Renard announced she would no longer play for the team, with fellow stars Kadidiatou Diani and Marie-Antoinette Katoto following suit.

France have four friendlies before starting their World Cup campaign against Jamaica in Sydney on July 23.

Renard's first game at the helm will be on April 7 against Colombia with another match four days later against Olympic champions Canada.

Alonso fastest in wet Australian 2nd practice, Verstappen third

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso topped the timesheets ahead of Ferrari ace Charles Leclerc in a rain-hit second practice at the Australian Grand Prix on Friday, but world champion Max Verstappen went fastest for the day.

The Spanish veteran followed up his podium finishes at the first two races of the season in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia with another eye-opening run.

He powered around the bumpy Albert Park circuit under darkening clouds before rain fell in a best time of one minute 18.887 seconds among his 13 laps, bettering his fourth place in the first one-hour session.

"The afternoon was obviously impacted by the rain, so there is still some work to do tomorrow," said Alonso.

"We need to learn more about the tyres and the long-run pace of the car because there was not much time for that today. So far though the car seems to behave well."

Leclerc, who won in Australia last year, came an encouraging second after Ferrari's early season reliability and pace issues, nearly half a sec-



NO HOPE OF CHALLENGING RED BULLS IN AUSTRALIA: HAMILTON

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton admitted on Friday that Mercedes had little hope of keeping pace with the Red Bulls in Australia, and matching his fifth place in Saudi Arabia was a more realistic target.

The Briton came a surprise second in the opening practice at Albert Park behind Red Bull's Max Verstappen, before slumping to 13th in a rain-affected second session.

He blamed changes made to the car between the two hour-long runs for the gapping difference.

The car "felt a little bit better this morning, we made some changes, they didn't work, so we'll revise those tonight," he said.

"Then it rained obviously so it wasn't the best of sessions. You don't really learn a huge amount when it's between (conditions), so just keep the car safe."

He learned enough to know that come race-day on Sunday, Mercedes will again be playing catch-up to Verstappen and his Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez.

Hamilton said another fifth-placed finish would be a good result for him in Australia.

"We won't be competing against the Red Bulls," he said. "It will just be about trying to see if we can get up as high as possible. I think we've got pace to be around fifth, same as the last race."

Russell, who was fourth in the second practice, was more optimistic, saying it "wasn't too bad a day".

ond adrift but ahead of Verstappen.

The Red Bull pilot, the early championship leader, clocked a 1:18.790 in the first practice when he had an out-of-character spin, which was better than Alonso's second session best.

But the Dutchman had no decent opportunity to improve on it on a wet track, saying it was slippery and he had low grip.

Red Bull are attempting to score a third consecutive 1-2 finish for the first time in the team's history in Melbourne after their dominance in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

Verstappen's teammate and Jeddah winner Sergio Perez came seventh.

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton was a surprise second in the opening practice but could only manage a disappointing 13th in FP2.

His teammate George Russell was fourth ahead of Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, with Alpine's Esteban Ocon sixth.

McLaren's Lando Norris, Haas driver Nico Hulkenberg and Pierre Gasly in the other Alpine rounded out the top 10.

Williams' Logan Sargeant, who had an electrical problem during the first practice, failed to complete a lap.

GAIKWAD TAKES CSK TO 178/7

Ruturaj scores 92 runs from 50 balls to help Chennai post a fighting total against GT



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Opener Ruturaj Gaikwad was all class in his 92 off 50 balls as Chennai Super Kings posted a challenging 178 for seven against defending champions Gujarat Titans in the IPL opener here on Friday.

Gaikwad regaled the near capacity crowd here with his sublime strokeplay. It was a display of effortless hitting from Gaikwad, who relied on his lofted drives over extra cover and crisp pull shots to collect as many as eight sixes.

Apart from Gaikwad, the only other batter who put the Titans under pressure was Moeen Ali who came up with a 17-ball 23. Ali's flat six off Mohammad Shami on a free-hit ball was the highlight of his cameo.

Gaikwad pulled IPL debutant Joshua Little on his very first ball to set the tone of his innings. That over went for 15 runs and with Shami conceding 17 runs in the following over, CSK got the momentum they were looking for.

Titans' trump card Rashid Khan was introduced in the powerplay and as he often does, he got the wicket that his team was looking for

by getting the dangerous looking Ali caught behind.

Rashid's second over saw him getting rid of England Test captain Ben Stokes, who too was caught by wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha, leaving CSK at 70 for three.

However, the fall of wickets did not make Gaikwad change his game as he kept getting the boundaries. He welcomed Alzarri Joseph into the attack by smashing him for three sixes in the eighth over.

Titans did well to stem the flow of runs in the middle overs and got the wicket of Ambati Rayudu.

Shivam Dube struggled to find the big hits and that put pressure on Gaikwad who was caught in the deep in the 17th over and missed out on a deserving hundred.

Skipper M S Dhoni came out to bat at number eight but still managed to make an impact as he pulled Little for a six before flicking him for a four in the final over, sending the crowd into a frenzy.

Kane Williamson injured his knee while fielding at the boundary and limped off the field.



Hazlewood likely to miss first 7 games of RCB

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Set to miss at least first leg of the IPL due to an Achilles (heel) problem, Royal Challengers Bangalore's Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood would reach India by April 14 but would take another week to be match-fit.

While Hazlewood will miss at least seven IPL games, his Australian teammate Glenn Maxwell is doubtful for RCB's opening match against Mumbai Indians on April 2 in Bengaluru as he is yet to fully regain strength post leg fracture.

"Everything is ticking along according to plan, so I'll be heading over on the 14th (of April) depending on how the next two weeks go," Hazlewood was quoted as saying by The Age.

"I probably won't be quite ready to go right then, but (after) another week in India to touch things up skills wise I should be ready to go hopefully."

Hazlewood, who had to opt out of Border-Gavaskar Trophy in India, is hoping to get ready for the Ashes via the IPL. "You don't need a lot of workload for T20. It's more just ticking off those boxes of getting up to speed and pushing back in the run-up. I'm probably only going to need to do one or two sessions at full pace and then I'm probably good to play."

"T20 is a lot different to Test and even one-day cricket. You only need 20 balls at full pace and that's pretty close to a game, which is a good thing," he said.

The 32-year-old pacer, however, is still awaiting a medical clearance from Cricket Australia before departing for India.

"It's a niggly one, the Achilles tendon. It's a slow process but it thrives on a bit of work, and I'd have to be bowling to prepare for the Ashes, so it may as well be in a game of cricket," Hazlewood said.

Warrier joins MI as Bumrah's replacement

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians on Friday replaced injured pacer Jasprit Bumrah with Sandeep Warrier for the 2023 Indian Premier League.

Bumrah was ruled out of the entire tournament due to a back injury.

"Sandeep Warrier, right-arm fast bowler, will join the Mumbai Indians squad as a replacement player for Jasprit Bumrah. Sandeep, who debuted for India in 2021, is an experienced player in the



domestic circuit having played over 200 games with 69 of them in T20 format, taking 362 wickets in his career so far across formats," Mumbai Indians said in a statement on Friday afternoon.

The release added, "Sandeep will join the Mumbai Indians squad ahead of the team's first game of IPL 2023 against Royal Challengers Bangalore."

Warrier, who has played 66 First-Class, 69 List A and 68 T20 matches in the domestic circuit taking 217, 83 and 62 wickets respectively, made his debut for India in the shortest format at Colombo in July 2021 against Sri Lanka. He represented Kerala in domestic cricket before moving to Tamil Nadu in 2020.

Injury-hit KKR, PBKS look to make positive start

PTI ■ MOHALI

Plagued by injuries and unavailability of a few foreign players, both Punjab Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders would still look to put their best foot forward as they lock horns in their opening IPL encounter here on Saturday.

These are the two franchises, which over the years have flattered to deceive. Inconsistency in team selections seemed to have also affected the team badly.

While PBKS finished sixth, two-time champions KKR ended a rung below in the seventh spot in the 10-team competition last year.

Both teams will be led by new skippers this season. While veteran Shikhar Dhawan will be at the helm of Punjab, domestic star Nitish Rana has replaced injured Shreyas Iyer as KKR captain.

On paper, though, PBKS looks a tad more stronger than KKR. But Englishman Jonny Bairstow's absence will certainly leave a big void in Punjab's team composition.

Bairstow has been ruled out of the entire IPL as he continues to recover from a leg injury he had sustained while playing golf last September.

In Bairstow's place, PBKS has roped in BBL's player-of-the-tournament this season, Matthew Short who is expected to open the batting along side Dhawan.

Other key PBKS players, who will miss Saturday's game are hard-hitting all-rounder Liam Livingstone, who is yet to get clearance from the ECB, following a knee injury, and South



These are the two franchises, which over the years have flattered to deceive. Inconsistency in team selections seemed to have also affected the them badly

African Kagiso Rabada who is on national duty.

PBKS squad is stacked with all-rounders, the most lethal among them being \$2 million plus buy Sam Curran, who is more than handy with the bat and is a very fine death bowler. Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza is another utility all-rounder

PBKS could bank upon.

But they would depend on Dhawan and Short to provide consistency at the top.

On the bowling front, PBKS would miss Rabada on Saturday and in his absence the onus would be on Arshdeep Singh, old guard Rishi Dhawan, Curran and leg-spinner Rahul Chahar to do the job.

For two-time champions KKR, new coach Chandrakant Pandit will be the key man as it is now an open secret that he along with Mumbai stalwart Abhishek Nayar are going to take all decisions from the dug-out and Rana's only job would be to implement them.

KKR too have been hurt by injuries with regular skipper and batting mainstay Shreyas being almost ruled out of the tournament with a back problem.

The two Bangladeshis Shakib Al Hasan and Litton Das are also going to miss the opening game due to national commitments.

KKR's strength too lies in the team's all-rounders with the likes of Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, David Weise, Vernkatesh Iyer and Shakib Al Hasan in their rank.

Even though both Tim Southee and Lockie Ferguson have joined the KKR squad, the latter is a doubtful starter on Saturday having injured his right hamstring last week.

KKR's weakness lies in an unsettled top-order and it remains to be seen who will anchor the innings.

In Wiese, Rinku Singh and Afghan Rahmanullah Gurbaz, KKR have some terrific hard-hitters who can pull off a win on their given day.

India have firepower in pace department to trouble Oz in the WTC Final: Taylor

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former New Zealand skipper Ross Taylor has backed the Indian pace unit to cause trouble for Australian batters in the World Test Championship final scheduled at the Oval in London from June 7-11.

Taylor feels Indian fast bowlers have the wherewithal to create problems for Australia even though Jasprit Bumrah will be sidelined.

"Any time you play in England, conditions and the weather play a big part," Taylor was told ICC website.

"Any time you think of Australia and India, and also you're playing in a neutral ground, the seamers play a big part. The Australian seamers are renowned for bowling with the Dukes ball and have a lot of experience."

But Taylor didn't rule out India's chances. "I wouldn't rule out this Indian side. They have had a lot of success over there in the years gone past, they have a few of these seamers," he added. While spin played a key role

in the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy in India, Taylor expects pacers of both the teams to rule the roost in the WTC Final at The Oval.

Taylor is confident that even without Bumrah, India have enough options in the pace department to make an impact in English conditions.

"Very tough to replace someone like Bumrah. He has been fantastic in all three formats and is the leader of their bowling attack," he said.

"But I think there's still enough depth in this Indian line-up to trouble the Australian side. (Mohammed) Shami and co are fantastic in these conditions."

"When you consider the India attack, (Mohammed) Siraj and Co. Are also very good with the Dukes ball.

"I think there are still a lot of (India) seamers that are fantastic and enjoy bowling with the Dukes ball. Umesh Yadav also bowls 140-plus. They will relish the opportunity to bowl with the Dukes ball and in English conditions," Taylor added.

Stirling leads Ireland to maiden Bangladesh win

AP ■ CHITTAGONG

Paul Stirling hit an aggressive 77 off 41 balls to lift Ireland to their first win against Bangladesh on Bangladeshi soil in Friday's third and final T20 match.

The visitors lost the opening two matches but raced to 126-3 in 14

overs after bowling out their hosts for 124 in Chittagong.

Shamim Hossain struck his maiden 50 to lift Bangladesh from a precarious 41-5 but it was not enough to deny Ireland their first win of the tour.

Stirling hit 10 fours and four sixes, including a six and three fours off consecutive

deliveries, to hasten his team's victory.

Taskin Ahmed bowled Ross Adair for seven before Shoriful Islam dismissed Lorcan Tucker for four, but Stirling shared a 68-run partnership with Harry Tector for the third wicket to keep Ireland on course.

NZ beat SL by 6 wickets, win ODI series 2-0

AP ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand capitalized on another failure by Sri Lanka's batters and avoided one of its own to win the third ODI by six wickets in Hamilton on Friday and to take the three-match series 2-0.

After being bowled out for only 76 in the first match — which New Zealand won by 198 runs — Sri Lanka was dismissed for 157 in 41.3 overs as it batted first after winning the toss in Game 3.

New Zealand also was in trouble early when it lost two wickets in the second over of its innings and was 6-2, then 21-3. But Will Young, who had been out of form with only 30 runs from his last four ODI innings, ground his way back to



form with an unbeaten 86, which guided New Zealand to victory with 17.1 overs remaining.

Young and Henry Nicholls (44) shared an unbroken partnership of exactly 100 runs for the fifth wicket.

Vaughan cleared of racism on 'balance of probabilities'

AP ■ LONDON

Former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan was on Friday cleared "on the balance of probabilities" of using racist language before a match for county club Yorkshire in 2009.

He was alleged to have used the term "you lot" when referring to a group of four players of South Asian ethnicity, including Pakistan-born Azeem Rafiq.

A Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) report said it was "not satisfied on the balance of probabilities" that Vaughan spoke the words he was alleged to have used.

But it added that its findings "do not in any way undermine the wider assertions" made by

Rafiq, who told lawmakers in November 2021 that English cricket was "institutionally racist".

In its concluding remarks the CDC report said: "This is not a case which necessitated a conclusion from the panel that anyone has lied or acted out of malice."

"Far from it, the panel had to consider whether the case as presented to it by the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board), in light of all the evidence, was sufficiently accurate and reliable, on the balance of probabilities, to rule out mistake. It was not."

Vaughan, who appeared in person at a CDC hearing earlier this month to answer the

charges brought by the ECB, thanked the panel for "their careful attention in very difficult circumstances".

"It has been both difficult and upsetting to hear about the painful experiences which Azeem has described over the past three years," the 48-year-old said in a statement on social media.

"The outcome of these CDC proceedings must not be allowed to detract from the core message that there can be no place for racism in the game of cricket, or in society generally."

Yorkshire accepted in September 2021 that Rafiq, now 32, had been the victim of racial harassment and bullying during his time at the club.

