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INDIA CAN BE THE
GLOBAL SKILL CAPITAL

WORLD 8

TURKEY, SYRIA QUAKE SURVIVORS
STRUGGLE TO STAY WARM; TOLL 19K

MONEY 10

SENSEX RISES OVER 140 POINTS
TO CLOSE AT 60,806

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY FEBRUARY 10, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3

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AS INDIA FOLD
AUS FOR 177
12 SPORTIndia none's fiefdom, our works
reflect national interests: ModiWhy Cong first family
ashamed of using
Nehru surname: PMPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Launching a fresh attack on the second day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday accused Opposition parties of using "half truths" to "create new narratives and spread falsehood" and accused them of not being "bothered" about the country, but only about their politics.

Also, in a sharp attack on the Congress and the party's first family "Gandhis", Modi questioned why none of the family members used the "Nehru" surname after the country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru if they considered Nehru to be a "great man". Modi said, "This country is not anyone's fiefdom. Our policies reflect national and regional aspirations...But these people who are now sitting (with Congress), I want to expose them today."

"The Opposition is against science and technology as they are not bothered about the country, but only about their politics. Today, more than 350 private companies have come into the defence sector. Our country is exporting goods worth ₹1 lakh crore in this sector. From retail to tourism,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi replies to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Rajya Sabha during Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

every sector has grown," Modi said in the Rajya Sabha while replying to the Motion of Thanks to President's Address.

The PM had attacked the Congress, particularly Rahul Gandhi, in the Lok Sabha a day earlier in response to Rahul's allegation of Modi's close relationship with the Adani group.

"If we miss out on mentioning Nehru anywhere, they (Congress) get upset. Nehru was such a great person, then why does none of them use the Nehru surname. What is the shame in using the Nehru name," Modi said.

"This country is not the property of any family," the PM added, amid sloganeering and unrelenting demand by

Opposition parties over the Adani-Hindenburg row.

Modi also attacked the grand old party and claimed that the then Congress Government at the Centre had dismissed 90 State Governments by "misusing" Article 356 of the Constitution. He also said that former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi "misused" it 50 times to dismiss elected State Governments.

"The country is with us and people have rejected the Congress party and punished them from time to time. Had the Congress worked with good intentions for tribals, I would not have to work so hard in the third decade of the 21st century," said the PM amid

chants of Modi Modi from the treasury benches.

Modi said as he lives for the country and wants to do something for the country the Opposition parties are rattled and they are playing political games just to save themselves.

The PM pointed at the Opposition MPs who had gathered in the Well of the House in a bid to shout him down, and said, "Naare bolne ke liye bhi unko badal karna padhta hai (they have to take turns even to shout slogans). *Ek conviction ke karan chala hoon, desh ke liye jeeta hoon, desh ke liye kuch karne ke liye nikla hoon* (I live for the country and have embarked on the path with conviction to serve the

nation)," he said, adding his political opponents are playing games as they do not have the courage to take him on. Opposition members from Shiv Sena, TMC, AAP, BRS kept shouting "Modi-Adani, bhai-bhai" during Modi's 90 minute speech.

As he rose to speak, Opposition MPs, some holding placards, rushed into the Well of the House shouting slogans against the Prime Minister and seeking a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into allegations levelled by the US short-seller Hindenburg Research against tycoon Gautam Adani.

Hitting back, Modi said, "Jitna keechad uchhaloge, kamal utna hee zyada khilega (the more dirt you fling, the bigger the kamal — the election symbol of BJP — will bloom)." "Keechad unke pass tha, mere pass gula. Jo jis ke pass tha, usne diya uchal," Modi quoted a poem in response to the allegations Opposition parties levelled on him and his Government.

Modi accused the Congress of adopting only "tokenism" in solving problems the country faced and said it was bothered only about its political ambitions and not the welfare of the nation.

"We don't believe in tokenism. We have chosen the path of hardwork in taking the country forward," he said, adding technology was being used as an aid in this mission.

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ISIL-K plans to hit
Indian Af embassy to
malign Taliban: UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

The ISIL-K have threatened to launch terrorist attacks against the embassies of India, Iran and China in Afghanistan and by targeting them, the terror group sought to undermine the relationship between the Taliban and the UN member states in the Central and South Asia region, according to a UN report.

The revelations were made in a report by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the threat posed by ISIL.

"The activities of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) remained a significant terrorist threat in Central and South Asia, and the group retained ambitions to conduct external operations," the 16th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Daesh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of member states in countering the threat said here.

The Security Council will on Thursday hold a meeting on "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts" during which Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov will present the report issued last week.

The report said ISIL-K had positioned itself as the "primary rival" to the Taliban and was reportedly set to portray the Taliban as incapable of providing security in the country.



"By targeting diplomatic missions, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan also sought to undermine the relationship between the Taliban and member states in the region," it said.

"The group also threatened to launch terrorist attacks against the embassies of China, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran in Afghanistan," the report said.

In June last year, India resumed its diplomatic presence in Kabul by deploying a technical team in its embassy in Kabul, over 10 months after it pulled out its officials from the mission following the Taliban's capture of power.

The reopening of the embassy took place after an Indian team led by senior Ministry of External Affairs official JP Singh had visited Kabul and met acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi and some other members of the Taliban dispensation. The report added that an attack in September last year on the Russian Embassy in Kabul was the first against a diplomatic presence in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover.

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US carries out advice to
cut visa backlog in India

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US State Department has quietly implemented recommendations of a presidential commission which has suggested steps like opening up American diplomatic missions outside India for visa appointments to reduce the visa backlog in the country.

India was one of the very few countries where applications for US visas saw a major upswing after coronavirus-related travel restrictions were lifted.

Moved by a commission member, Ajay Jain Bhutoria from Silicon Valley, the presidential commission observed that inordinate visa appointment delays were causing huge problems for the students and visitors who have plans to come to study in the US and visit the country.

The State Department should allow virtual interviews where applicable and allow staff from embassies around



the world and the US consular staff to help conduct the virtual interviews at embassies with high backlogs and help clear them, the commission recommended.

The recommendations included opening up American diplomatic missions outside India for visa appointments, having more counters and deploying additional resources to process visa applications.

The US Embassy in India processed over 1 lakh applications just in January 2023, their highest total in a single month and the highest in any month since July 2019.

In its December meeting, the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders recommended several steps to reduce the growing delay in visa appointment times in India and other countries like Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

It recommended the State Department hire new Full-Time officers/consular or Temporary Staff or contractors or bring back retired consular officers to clear the backlog at Embassies in Asia which have wait times of 400 or more days and shrink the wait time to 2-4 weeks by clearing the visa application backlog.

The State Department could also use staff from other embassies around the world to help clear the backlog in countries in Asia which have huge backlogs and delays in visa appointments, it had recommended.

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Doval calls on Putin,
talks strategic ties

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday held wide-ranging discussions in Moscow and agreed to continue working towards implementing the strategic partnership between the two countries.

The Indian Embassy in Moscow said the discussions were focused on bilateral and regional issues, but it did not elaborate on the issues.

"NSA Ajit Doval called on HE President Putin. Wide-ranging discussion on bilateral and regional issues. Agreed to continue work towards implementing the India-Russia strategic partnership," the Embassy tweeted.

Doval began his two-day visit to Russia on Wednesday.

On Monday, Russian Ambassador to New Delhi Denis Alipov said Russia wants to further diversify its relations with India.



The NSA's visit to Russia came three months after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar travelled to the country during which the two sides vowed to expand their economic engagement including India's import of petroleum products from its "time-tested" partner. On Wednesday, Doval attended the fifth meeting of Secretaries of Security Council/NSAs on Afghanistan which was hosted by Russia.

In the meeting, Doval said no country should be allowed to use Afghan territory to export terrorism and asserted that India will never abandon the people of Afghanistan in their time of need.

Besides Russia and India, the meeting was attended by representatives from Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

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Will make cooking
gas cheaper if global
prices dip: Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Thursday said if international price of fuel comes down from its current price of USD 750 per metric tonne, domestic LPG can then be sold at "even more economical rates" but added that the country will have "to navigate the next two or three years" through the "situation as it exists today."

"The day international price is determined by a 'variety of factors' and one of the analysis I read said in a few years time it will all be thing of the past because there will be so much gas available," Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri said in the Lok Sabha.

"But we will have to navigate the next two or three years through the kind of global situation as it exists today and as it is evolving," he added.

The Minister was replying to questions of the members



who wanted to know why the cost of the domestic gas cylinders is not being reduced.

He said the Government is "sensitive" to the requirements of the consumers, particularly the most vulnerable.

"We did not allow the cost of domestic LPG to increase. The Saudi contract price went up by 330 per cent, yet the price increase was very small for the domestic thing," he said.

"It would be ideal if the international Saudi contract price could come down from USD 750 per metric tonne, it would enable domestic LPG to be sold at even more economical rates," he added.

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Caterer killed by DJ in
wedding venue brawl

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 48-year-old catering staffer was beaten to death by members of a disk jockey team at a wedding venue in the Japanese Park in outer Delhi's Rohini Sector 12 early on Thursday. The police said the victim was attacked with a plastic crate for not serving food plates to the DJ and his helpers.

The deceased has been identified as Sandeep Thakur, a resident of Prem Nagar, Kirari area in Delhi. Two men have been apprehended in the case and raids are being conducted to catch the others, according to officials.

The Prashant Vihar police station received a call at 12.58 am about the fight behind

Sawariyan Tent near Japanese Park in Sector-12 of Rohini, a senior police officer said.

When police reached the spot, they found that a man, wounded in the fight, was taken by his friends to Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Rajneesh Garg said.

According to police, Thakur was beaten up by two men after he failed to come up with plates for people who were with the DJ during the function.

A fight broke out between him and two other people and he was hit on his head with a plastic crate, Garg said.

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Comfortable with India buying
Russian oil; no sanctions: USPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

As India continues to procure fuel from Russia during the ongoing Ukraine conflict despite objections from western countries, the US has said it is not looking at imposing sanctions against India and is "comfortable" with oil purchase.

US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Karen Donfried late on Wednesday said that the relationship with India is most consequential and while the policy approach of the US and India may differ, both share a commitment to uphold the order based on international rules and have



respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty.

US Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources Geoffery Pyatt added the US was "comfortable" with India's approach on Russian oil purchase "but we value the dialogue that we continue to have on the issue". He also mentioned how energy security was invariably part of most bilateral discussions lately.

India continues to buy discounted oil from Russia despite the West's sanction. Moscow

has become New Delhi's second biggest oil supplier, replacing Saudi Arabia, after Iraq. Moreover, New Delhi has so far refrained from voting against Russia in the UN on the issue of its military action in Ukraine.

The US has backed its decision on the price cap imposed on Russian oil and said it was an opportunity for India, even though it is not participating in it, to negotiate a better price. In December, US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the price cap "will lock in the discount on Russian oil" and countries like China and India would be able to bargain for steep price reductions.

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'Bullet train dream project'
HC rejects plea against
Mumbai land acquisition

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Terming the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train a "dream project of this country and of national importance and in public interest," the Bombay High Court said on Thursday dismissed a petition filed by Godrej & Boyce company challenging acquisition proceedings initiated by the Maharashtra Government and the NHSRCL in Mumbai's Vikhroli area for the project.

"It is the paramount collective interest which would ultimately prevail. In the facts of this case, the private inter-



est claimed by the petitioner does not prevail over the public interest which would subserve infrastructural project of public importance which is a dream project of this country and first of its kind," said the division bench of Justices RD Dhanuka and MM Sathaye.

Detailed report on P5

Four Hero Motor
staffers crushed
to death in Noida

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

In a tragic incident, four factory workers were killed after they were mowed down by an Uttar Pradesh roadways bus near Noida around 11.30 pm Wednesday, officials said Thursday. Three others sustained injuries.

"Workers of the Hero Motor Company in the Badalpur area had come out of the factory after their shift in the night when the bus hit some of them on the road," said Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Noida) Vishal Pandey.

"Three workers died on the spot while one died during treatment at a hospital here," Pandey said.

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2.25L renounced Indian citizenship in 2022: Data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 16 lakh Indians renounced their Indian citizenship since 2011 including 2,25,620 last year, the highest during the period, while the lowest of 85,256 was in 2020, according to government data.

The year-wise number of Indians who renounced their citizenship was provided by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in response to a question in Rajya Sabha.

Jaishankar said the number of Indians who renounced their Indian citizenship in 2015 was 1,31,489, while 1,41,603 people gave it up in 2016 and 1,33,049 in 2017.

In 2018, the number was 1,34,561, while 1,44,017 renounced their citizenship in 2019, 85,256 in 2020 and



1,63,370 in 2021.

The number in 2022 was 2,25,620, according to the minister.

For reference purposes, Jaishankar said the data for 2011 was 1,22,819, while it was 1,20,923 in 2012, 1,31,405 in 2013 and 1,29,328 in 2014.

The total number of Indians who gave up their Indian citizenship since 2011 comes to 16,63,440.

To a specific query, he said, according to information, five Indian nationals obtained the citizenship of the United Arab Emirates during

the last three years.

Jaishankar also provided a list of 135 countries whose citizenship Indians acquired.

To another question, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said the government is aware of the issue of professionals having been laid off by US companies in recent months.

"Of these, a certain percentage is likely to be Indian nationals on H-1B and L1 visas. The government of India has consistently raised issues relating to the movement of high skilled workers, including IT professionals, with the US government," he said. "It has also been working with various stakeholders, including industry organisations and business chambers on these issues," Muraleedharan said.

NCC instilled patriotic fervour into youth: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday said that the National Cadet Corps (NCC) has instilled patriotic fervour among the youth of the country and also shows a sense of responsibility to serve its people.

Felicitating 30 NCC cadets for winning various awards in the Annual Republic Day Camp, Sisodia said the facilities and NCC's rigorous training have empowered the cadets to excel and make Delhi residents proud.

"It is a matter of great pride that our NCC cadets have brought such laurels to the state. I am proud that we are able to provide excellent facilities for our NCC cadets of Delhi. The wonderful facilities and NCC's rigorous training offered here have empowered our NCC cadets



to excel, and make Delhi residents proud," said Sisodia, who is also Delhi's education minister.

NCC officers and cadets along with NCC ADG Major General SP Vishwasrao and Education Secretary Ashok Kumar were also present at the felicitation ceremony. "Seeing the NCC cadets in uniform reminds me of my school and college days when I was an NCC cadet.

The NCC training instilled the passion to serve the nation, discipline and the spirit of patriotism in me which still keeps me going," the deputy chief minister said. The Delhi government is

building a state-of-the-art underground firing range in the NCC building at Rohini, which is being built at a cost of Rs 3 crore, according to the city government officials.

The Annual Republic Day Camp (RDC) is held at Parade Ground, Delhi Cantonment every year where students participate in a number of activities, including cultural competitions, national integration awareness programs and institutional training.

This year a total of 116 cadets from the Delhi Directorate participated in the Republic Day Camp for NCC Cadets.

Eighteen cadets participated in the parade on Kartavya Path during Republic Day Parade, seven cadets were chosen for Guard of Honour, nine cadets from the NCC Delhi Directorate competed for Best Cadet Award, 40 NCC cadets from Delhi Directorate.

2 bodies found in West Delhi apartment

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

Two persons were found dead in an apartment building at west Delhi's Kirti Nagar area on Thursday afternoon, police said.

The police received information regarding the incident on the second floor of a building in Ramesh Nagar at 3.31 pm.

When they reached the spot, they found a man hanging from a ceiling fan while a woman was found dead on the bed, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Ghanshyam Bansal said.

The deceased have been identified as Vijay Kumar (28) and Anchal (25). They were residents of Patel Nagar and Anand Parbat and had known each other for years, the police said.

US carries out advice to...

From Page 1

The advisory committee noted that in 2012 President Barack Obama issued a memo to reduce the wait time from several months to a few days and this memo streamlined the visa process. The Trump administration had rescinded the President Obama memo, and this is also contributing as one of the factors in causing delays for Visa appointments, it said.

As such, it recommended that President Joe Biden should consider issuing a

memo to the State Department to shrink the visa appointment wait times to 2-4 weeks maximum for countries with significant backlogs including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and other countries in a similar situation.

There have been growing concerns in India over the long waiting period for first-time visa applicants, especially for those applying under B1 (business) and B2 (tourist) categories.

The waiting period for first-time B1/B2 visa appli-

cants in India was close to three years in October last year.

In January, the State Department not only implemented remote processing of interview waiver cases for applicants with previous US visas but also launched several initiatives, including scheduling special interviews for first-time applicants and increasing the strength of consular staff.

It also conducted "special Saturday interview days" on January 21.

ISIL-K plans to hit...

From Page 1

In December, ISIL-K claimed attacks against the Embassy of Pakistan and a hotel frequented by Chinese nationals. "Apart from high-profile attacks, ISIL-K conducted near-daily attacks targeting Shia minorities, which also served to undermine the Taliban's authority and challenge their nascent security agencies," the report said.

It said that UN member states in the Central and South Asian region estimate the current strength of ISIL-K at between 1,000 and 3,000

fighters, of whom approximately 200 are of Central Asian origin.

Other member states believe that these numbers may be as high as 6,000, it said. The group was concentrated primarily in eastern Kunar, Nangarhar and Nuristan Provinces, but a large cell remained active in Kabul and its environs. Balkh, one of the most economically developed provinces in the north, is of primary interest to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan in terms of revenue generation.

Doval calls on Putin...

From Page 1

Doval's visit to Moscow comes weeks ahead of the G-20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is expected to travel to India to attend the meeting on March 1 and 2. The ties between India and Russia remained strong notwithstanding Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. India's import of Russian crude oil has gone up significantly in the last few months despite increasing disquiet over it in many Western countries. India has not yet condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and it has been maintaining that the crisis must be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue.

Caterer killed by DJ in wedding...

From Page 1

The victim was declared dead when he was brought to the Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital. A case under sections 302 (murder) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered at the Prashant Vihar Police Station, they said. Investigation so far has revealed that four people

were present at the spot when the fight happened, police said.

Two of them are being interrogated and the role of all suspects is being ascertained. Multiple teams have been constituted to nab the two accused who are absconding, police added.

Arjun Thakur, the elder brother of the deceased, said

they received information about the incident from hospital.

"We received a call from the hospital regarding his death. The hospital authorities called us from Sandeep's mobile phone. He used to work as a catering staff in parties. We never thought that this would happen," Arjun Thakur said.

India none's fiefdom, our works reflect national interests...

From Page 1

Modi also took the opportunity to take a jib on the recent alliances of the Congress and narrated how elected Governments of the Left in Kerala, NT Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh, Sharad

Pawar in Maharashtra and MG Ramachandran in Tamil Nadu were dismissed by the Congress.

"And today these parties are sitting along with the Congress," said Modi.

With many parties in

States promising freebies and reverting to heavy cash out-flow schemes like old pension in run-up to elections, Modi cited examples of near bankruptcy in neighbouring countries to say that they should not play with the financial

health and economic policies.

Attacking the Congress, he said the party named as many as 600 schemes after the Nehru-Gandhi family. "Some people's behaviour and language are disappointing not just for the House but for the

country," he said in oblique reference to the allegations Opposition parties levelled at him. Later, the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address was adopted with voice vote.

Will make cooking gas cheaper...

From Page 1

On another issue relating to the progress of work in the 'smart cities', the Government said in the Lok Sabha that almost all 100 cities selected under the smart cities initiative are progressing "fairly well" with some facing a slowdown in work due to Covid and local factors.

Hundred smart cities had been selected through four rounds of competition from January 2016 to June 2018. The Ministry had launched the Smart Cities Mission on June 25, 2015.

The Centre's assertion came in response to a question in Lok Sabha by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who asked about "discrepancies" in the implementation of the projects under the Smart City programme.

Tharoor cited a comparison between Varanasi with Atal Nagar in Chhattisgarh, saying while most projects are complete for the former, only a few had wrapped up for the latter.

In response to the question during Question Hour, Minister for Housing and

Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri said, "When you read facts and figures, you have to be careful."

Sometimes, very little work is left for a project under construction to be completed but till the completion certificate comes, it will be shown as work under progress, Puri pointed out. "Almost all 100 cities are doing fairly well. In some due to the Covid period, there was a slowdown, or there were local factors....The state governments also has a role in this (projects)," he said.

Puri stressed that in places where local MPs and elected representatives take interest, there is a very big difference. Responding to the claim of "uneven progress", Puri said, "Varanasi was declared a smart city in September 2016, while Atal Nagar came in round three, much later. So to compare something which is in round one to something which is in round three also requires what I call a statistical hop, step and jump which I think educated members and analysts should try and avoid indulging in."

Four Hero Motor staffers crushed to death in...

From Page 1

"Three others who suffered injuries have been referred to Delhi for treatment," Pandey said.

He said the police responded immediately upon receiving the information and helped the injured rush to hospital. The bus of the Noida depot has been impounded but its driver fled the spot and efforts are on to arrest him, the additional DCP said.

MCD, Govt agree to hold Mayor poll on Feb 16; LG nod awaited

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After failing in three Attempts, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has sent a proposal to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena to conduct elections for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and members of the standing committee on February 16.

According to AAP sources, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has also agreed to the proposal sent by the MCD. The final decision to this effect will be taken by Lt Governor's office.

Earlier, AAP's mayor candidate Dr Shelly Oberoi has approached the Supreme Court of India for urgent completion of mayoral elections of MCD. This is the second time a petition has been filed by Dr Shelly Oberoi concerning the mayoral polls.

Earlier, she had approached the Supreme Court demanding timely conduct of the mayoral elections and later withdrawn the petition on the ground that the elections were going to take place on 6th February 2023.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala issued notice on the plea and seeking replies by next Monday.

The House in January had convened for the first time after the high-stakes December 4 civic polls and was adjourned following acrimonious exchanges between members of



the BJP and the AAP.

The second municipal House held on January 24, was briefly adjourned after the oath-taking ceremony, and was later adjourned till next date by the pro tem presiding officer.

After the House was adjourned on Monday again for the third time, a month after the first municipal House, the AAP had alleged that the mayoral election could not be held on Monday as the BJP is "strangling democracy and the Constitution of India", while the saffron party accused the Aam Aadmi Party of coming out with excuses to stall the mayoral poll and blamed the AAP for the stalemate.

The AAP had emerged as a clear winner in the December 4 polls, bagging 134 wards and ending the BJP's 15-year rule in the civic body. The BJP won 104 wards to finish second, while the Congress won nine wards in the 250-member municipal House.

Civic body likely to pass budget 2023-24 in absence of Mayor

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) budget 2023-24 is likely to be passed by the special officer of the civic body in the absence of Mayor and less than a week is left to complete the budget exercise.

The MCD House has failed to elect a Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Standing Committee members for the third time in a row as both the AAP and the BJP have accused each other of stalling the process. The absence of mayor in the MCD has put many principal tasks of the civic body in jeopardy.

According to officials, if this happens, it will be an "unprecedented development" in the civic body's journey as the budget is traditionally passed by a House.

Officials say the budget passed through the administrative route may have a big impact on the citizens. "In that case, policies concerning the citizens which could have been included in the budget through public discourse would not feature in the budget," said an official. As per the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, the Budget needs to be



wrapped up and passed before February 15 without fail. The financial exercise that starts in December every year, starts with the Budget proposal presented in front of the Standing Committee by the MCD commissioner.

After the proposal, it goes through several rounds of discussions and is altered accordingly. The Budget is further presented in front of the House and then passed with any necessary changes.

The civic body conducted a meeting last week to discuss the budget proposal for 2023-24 for various provisions, including the funds allocated for various works and the tax slab rates. The municipal commissioner presented the budget

proposals worth Rs 16,023 crore to the special officer on December 8 last year.

The annual budget has to be presented by a commissioner before December 10, according to statutory requirements. The budget is eventually approved by the Leader of House in a special meeting of the House chaired by the mayor.

"However, as the House is still to get a mayor after three attempts in vain, and the matter has now gone to court, and the budget exercise is to be completed latest by February 15 as statutorily mandated under the DMC Act, 1957, it seems the budget will be passed by the special officer only," an official source said.



BJP workers and leaders stage a protest over the alleged 'snooping' on politicians by AAP's Feedback Unit, in New Delhi on Thursday

Couple lose jobs for abusing help; cops search for placement agency

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Gurugram couple arrested for allegedly torturing and sexually abusing a minor domestic help have been sacked from their jobs, while police began a search on Thursday for the placement agency through which the girl was employed.

The public relations agency for which the woman worked and the insurance company where her husband was employed announced their termination on Twitter.

On Thursday, an official of the Jharkhand Bhawan in Delhi also visited the civil hospital to meet the girl, a staffer of the health facility said.

Earlier, the Jharkhand Chief Minister's Office has urged office of the Haryana chief minister and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) to provide support for the girl's rehabilitation. "Chief Minister Hemant Soren is deeply anguished at this inhuman act of child torture that's come to light.

NCPCR & cmohr are kindly requested to take due note of this grave matter with utmost importance and provide necessary support to rehabilitate the girl back to her family," his office tweeted.

The girl from Ranchi in Jharkhand was hired through a placement agency and the couple made her work and also beat her mercilessly daily, according to the complaint filed by Pinky Malik, the in-charge of the Sakhi centre that along with police rescued the



girl. Several injuries were found on her hands, feet and mouth, police had said after arresting Manish Khattar (36) and his wife Kamaljeet Kaur (34), residents of New Colony here, on Wednesday. According to the FIR, the girl is 17 years old and not 14 as told by a police officer earlier.

Malik claimed that the couple would not let her sleep in the night and also did not give her food.

"Her mouth was completely swollen while injury marks were found everywhere on her body," she said. According to the FIR, the victim said five months ago, her uncle left her at Khattar's flat where he lives with his wife and daughter.

The victim said she was humiliated and beaten every day, it said. Heated iron tongs were allegedly used on her. Khattar used to strip her naked and hurt her on her private parts, according to the FIR. The victim said the couple confined her at their house and did not allow her to talk to her family.

The FIR has been registered against the couple under sections 323 (causing hurt), 342 (wrongful confinement), 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code, and provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act

and the Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The police have invoked POCSO Act's section 12, which pertains to punishment for "sexual harassment".

A team on Thursday conducted searches in Delhi for the placement agency through which the victim is said to have been hired for Rs 10,000 a month, police said.

Khattar, who is in police remand, claimed that he hired the girl five months ago for taking care of his daughter and got in touch with the placement agency online, SHO New Colony police station Inspector Dinkar said. While Khattar is a resident of Gurugram, his wife is a native of Ranchi.

"Our team searched for the agency today in Delhi. The accused also confessed that when the victim made a mistake, he got angry and used to beat her. Further probe is underway," he said.

On Kaur's job termination, the public relations agency tweeted: "We are shocked to learn about the human rights and child abuse allegations against Kamaljeet Kaur."

"As an organisation, we respect the Indian legal system and are strictly against any form of human rights abuse. The company has terminated her services with immediate effect," it said.

The insurance company, where Manish Khattar was employed, tweeted that it believes in upholding high levels of ethical and moral conduct at all times. "We have severed the employment of the individual with immediate effect," the company said.

'Judte-Judte JNU', MOSAIC to give varsity new image

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With campus walks, theatre performances, open mic and even a food festival, teachers of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) are striving to shed its 'tukde-tukde' image and highlight the 'real face and values' of the institution.

"Tukde-tukde" (pieces) is a term often used by right-wing parties for those it alleges want to break up the country. It was coined in the aftermath of a JNU protest in 2016. The aim of the four-day festival -- MOSAIC: Judte-Judte (unite) JNU! -- is to counter the 'tukde-tukde' narrative, Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA) Secretary Suchairta Sen said.

The festival that began on Thursday will have campus walks, theatre performances, open mic, academic discussions and a food festival, to thwart the "willful attempts to misrepresent the varsity," she said. "The name itself gives out the message.

Mosaic means a collection of images made up of small regular or irregular pieces. A narrative was set for several years about the image of JNU as 'tukde-tukde' gang. That is why we have used this name," Sen



explained. According to Sen, JNU has been going through challenging times for the last few years. "The values that the university community stands for have been tarnished in the public domain, ironically at a time when the university has continued to top the list of higher educational institutions in the country by its outstanding performance in teaching and research," she noted.

The depletion in JNU's vibrant campus life was exacerbated by the pandemic, which led to a very long lockdown of the campus, the JNUTA secretary highlighted.

"As the campus is now slowly returning to its full strength with the admission of students to various programmes this year, it's time to restore its vibrant energies.

The festival will show the real face of the university," she remarked.

A plethora of events have been planned over the four-day period where prominent people will come to deliver the message of diversity, solidarity and empathy, which are the foundation of the university, Sen said.

"This festival celebrates the spirit of this university with qualities of diversity, solidarity, empathy being foundational in making the university community exist within and outside the campus," she said. Sen said the JNUTA has planned several programmes on topics like gender, evolution of JNU, diversification, and inclusivity. According to the itinerary shared by the JNUTA, there will be a discussion on feminist perspectives: 'Home, Work, Law'.

Economist Jayati Ghosh, professor and writer Nivedita Menon and lawyer Vrinda Grover will share their views on the issue. "We will have academic sessions each morning with eminent scholars who have played a crucial role in creating the academic environment of this university, followed by cultural activities in the evening," Sen informed.

Delhi Police to recruit 3K women among 6,000 cops

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a meeting on women safety chaired by Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, the Delhi Police informed on Thursday that it will soon recruit nearly 6,000 personnel including 3,000 women to improve policing in the national capital. Saxena stressed the need for increasing the representation of women police personnel in the force.

The Lt Governor also instructed for enhanced and visible policing, expediting construction of buildings for fast-track courts dealing with women safety issues, and integrating street lights with 311 app, said a statement from the Raj Niwas.

On being informed that there were 1,406 dark spots in the city that are yet to be illuminated, Saxena directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to complete the work within one month.

Reviewing the matter of illumination of dark spots and timely repair of street lights, the Lt Governor expressed dismay that something as basic as street lights, repair and maintenance, that should happen in



normal course, was being discussed and decided at his level, according to the statement.

He was also apprised by the officials that the 32 judges were appointed in fast-track courts for women safety, but there was an "acute shortage" of courtrooms for functioning of the courts.

The Public Works Department (PWD) informed the LG that the matter related to construction of courtrooms was pending with the Delhi government, since 2017-18, and no decision has been taken in this regard till now, it said.

Saxena said he will take up with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal the issue along with delay in replacement of street lights with LEDs.

He emphasised the need to augment campaigns of sensitizing young and adolescent boys through gender workshops and amended curricula by the Education department.

'DJB making plan to provide better water supply in summer'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) is making key preparations to provide better water supply in the coming summer season. Two phases of meetings have been held with the MLAs of different constituencies so far to prepare the summer action plan. In this series, DJB Vice Chairman Saurabh Bhardwaj held the third phase of meetings with Delhi MLAs on Thursday.

According to Bhardwaj, a micro summer action plan for water will be prepared with the suggestion of the MLAs. In each phase, a meeting is held with 7 to 8 MLAs from different areas of Delhi to discuss the summer action plan.

In days to follow, meetings will take place in multiple phases with the MLAs of other regions as well that help the formulation of the summer action plan. A DJB team is making a



list of those areas with the help of the MLAs where residents face acute water shortage during summers. "DJB will make optimum use of available resources to ensure that water supply is better in summer. Efforts are also being made to increase the production of water. Optimal water management will improve the water supply, he added.

Shalimar Bagh MLA Bandana Kumari, Motinagar MLA Shiv Charan Goyal, Madipur MLA Girish Soni and representatives of Shakurbasti attended the meeting.

Shah agrees for regularisation of 4,500 Regular Muster Roll staff of NDMC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has agreed for regularisation of over 4500 Regular Muster Roll (RMR) employees of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said that the Union Home Minister has conveyed to him about the regularisation of NDMC's RMR employees after approving the draft recruitment rules of Group C posts.

Earlier, In a statement, NDMC Vice-Chairman Satish Upadhyay accused that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of playing "cheap politics of credit snatching" over his letter to Home Minister Amit Shah regarding the regularisation of over 4,500 employees.

Kejriwal, in a letter dated February 6, sought approval from Shah for draft recruitment rules of Group 'C' posts in the NDMC for grant of permanent status to regular muster roll (RMR) employees.

The chief minister mentioned that these are "very poor people" and many of them have been working in the NDMC for the 'last 20-25 years'.

The proposal for speedy approval for Recruitment Rules of Group 'C' posts has been sent several times, yet the demand for regularisation of employees has not yet been met by the Centre. Kejriwal also expressed gratitude to the Shah for regularising these employees.

Earlier in the day, addressing a delegation of the NDMC's daily wage workers who came to meet him, Upadhyay said the council is rapidly completing the regularisation process of about 4,500 RMR employees and their services will be regularised shortly.

It is a matter of regret that when Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal came to know that the NDMC is about to complete the regularisation process, he wrote to the Union Home minister to try to take credit, Upadhyay said. This is

Kejriwal's third term but he never raised this issue before and today, when the work is being done, the politics of snatching low credit is being done through correspondence, the NDMC vice-chairman added.

In his letter to Shah, Kejriwal had also said, "Because of them being not regularised, they are facing issues in running households with an ordinary income. So, I appeal that they are regularised on humanitarian grounds."

Employees in the NDMC have been regularised earlier too, so there won't be any legal issues, he had said. Hitting back, Upadhyay added, "Instead of doing cheap politics of credit snatching on NDMC employees' regularisation by writing a letter, Kejriwal should first pay attention to the regularisation of about 40,000 temporary and contract workers of the Delhi Jal Board and other departments of the Delhi government."

Pollution dips by around 20% in Anand Vihar

New Delhi: Particulate pollution at Anand Vihar, one of the 13 air pollution hotspots in Delhi, declined by around 20 per cent after the city government's Environment department inventorised and mapped point sources and took site-specific measures.

It is a first-of-its-kind project in Delhi. The pilot phase has been successful. It will now be replicated in all the 13 hotspots this year, an Environment department official said. The department inventorised and mapped around 470 major and minor air pollution sources in the area, especially in the region surrounding the continuous ambient air quality monitoring station.

Major point sources included the Regional Rapid Transit System construction site, a construction and demolition site behind the Anand Vihar Inter-State Bus Terminal, traffic congestion at the railway station exit, the Uttar Pradesh Roadways Bus Terminal at Kaushambi, an unpaved parking of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the Patparganj industrial area, among others.

The officials said the department took site-specific measures like road cleaning using mechanised sweeping machines, mobile and static anti-smog guns, sprinklers, etc. The intervention helped reduce PM2.5 and PM10 levels at Anand Vihar by 22 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, in November 2022 as compared to November 2021, the Environment department's data showed. **SR**

E-rickshaw drivers issued challans, 24 vehicles impounded

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has kicked off a drive against unregistered as well as illegally parked e-rickshaws in the national capital.

Between Wednesday and Thursday, 40 e-rickshaw drivers were issued challans and 24 vehicles impounded.

The Transport department's enforcement personnel are taking part in the crack-down, which began two days ago. The government has already taken action against 100 e-rickshaws, the official said.

"It has been seen that the e-rickshaws are parked outside Metro stations and they do not move till they are completely filled with passengers. This leads to traffic jams.

"There have also been issues pertaining to them being

illegally parked or plying on roads without even a valid registration," he said. The department started the drive to clear the roads.

"The problem of traffic jams has seen a spike in the last few days. In order to decongest Delhi, this drive has been launched across the national capital.

The enforcement teams are specifically targeting areas around markets and Metro stations where such crowding is a common phenomenon. There are nearly 70 teams involved in the exercise," the official said. The challans being issued range between Rs 10,000 and Rs 25,000, depending on the number of offences against the driver, and unregistered vehicles are being impounded. Since the drive kicked off, action has been taken against 100 e-rickshaws, he said.



RS adjourned after ruling, Opp MPs shout other down

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned for the day on Thursday as sloganeering by MPs from both Opposition and Treasury Benches continued during the discussion on the Union Budget 2023-24. The Upper House was earlier adjourned twice in the afternoon session when it took up the discussion on the Budget after Prime Minister Narendra Modi finished his speech on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address and the motion was passed. The House reassembled at 5:15 pm to resume proceedings, with Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, who had called a meeting of House leaders of the ruling and opposition parties, asking members to maintain order for the discussion to continue.

As Congress member Shaktisinh Gohil started his speech, the treasury bench started sloganeering, following which Dhankhar adjourned the House for the day.

Before this, when the House had assembled at 4:30 pm after a brief adjournment, Chairman Dhankhar had called Gohil for a discussion on the Union Budget 2023-24.

However, members of the BJP disrupted the House by raising "Modi, Modi" slogans. The BJP MPs were seeking an apology from the opposition, which had on Thursday disrupted the prime minister's address. Congress later recalled the BJP as opposition did not allow the then PM Manmohan Singh too to address the Motion of Thanks. "In June 2004, new Prime Minister Dr.



MPs of AAP and BRS stage a protest demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani Group following Hindenburg's report during the Budget Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Thursday PTI Photo

Manmohan Singh was not allowed by BJP to reply to the Motion of Thanks to President's Address in the Lok Sabha.

He was forced to lay it on the Table of the House. Today we heard long pravachans in the Rajya Sabha on decorum," Congress Rajya Sabha MP and also party chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said.

During Modi's address, several opposition parties were engaged in shouting slogans demanding a JPC probe into allegations against the Adani Group.

Gohil said his name would probably go down in history for being the member during whose debate speech the ruling party disrupted the House.

House can't subvert freedom of speech: Kharage

New Delhi: Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharage on Thursday asserted that any criticism of the Government and its policies can never be equated with the "dignity" of the Council of States.

In the backdrop of the Parliament Presiding Officers demanding authentication of the allegations/statements made by Parliamentarians on the floor of the House, Kharage stated that any direction or rule of the House cannot subvert the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech granted to Members of Parliament.

The remarks in a letter to

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar come after Kharage was asked repeatedly by the Chair to authenticate some allegations he levelled in the House while speaking on the motion of thanks on the President's address on Wednesday.

In his address, the Congress president targeted the government in the wake of the fraud-allegation-triggered rout in Adani Group company stocks.

Kharage said Article 105 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech for the members of Parliament and in consonance with this consti-

Dhankhar expunges parts of Kharage's speech; he didn't use unparliamentary words: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Thursday expressed annoyance to Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar for deletion of some portions of Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharage's speech from official records, saying he used no unparliamentary words and some of the expressions he employed were earlier used even by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Dhankhar however ruled out a review saying he has already taken a call. At the start of day's

proceedings in Rajya Sabha, Congress MPs were up on their feet questioning the rationale behind the expunging of remarks made on Wednesday, when similar ones were made by former prime ministers Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh in the House and which continue to be part of the proceedings. Kharage said that things said in the House as per rules and procedures during the discussion on the motion thanking the President for her address to the joint sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha at the start of the Budget session cannot be



expunged. "I neither used any unparliamentary word or language nor made any allegation on anyone. Yet you pick out some words... I won't say you misinterpreted them but if you had any doubt you could have sought clarification in a different fashion.

Instead, six different parts of speech were expunged," Kharage said referring to an expression he had used on Thursday to describe Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Dhankhar asked him not to do that.

But Kharage said these were the same words that were used in the House on previous occasions as well. "Vajpayee had used the same expression for (ex-Prime Minister) P V Narasimha Rao. It is still part of the record, you can see that." And when party leaders including chief whip Jairam Ramesh try to raise a point, they are cut short, alleged Kharage. "You say this is not right... You sit down... You should read. He (Ramesh) has been educated from Harvard University and knows Hindi, Kannada, English, which other language should he know.

And knows parliamentary language and yet you keep interrupting him. This is not right," Kharage asked requesting the chairman to look into the records. When Kharage said whoever comes to his defence is interrupted by chair, Dhankhar said ultimate defender of leader of opposition (LoP) is the chair. "But that is not happening. You are expunging," Kharage replied.

Earlier, Jairam Ramesh said Kharage had only used parliamentary words and language. "What is use of speaking when it is expunged? This is wrong... We can't accept this (ruling to expunge)." Dhankhar retorted back, "What do you mean by 'nahi man sakte' (can't accept)." "What do you mean by being so judgmental," he asked Ramesh. "I am surprised."

Pramod Tiwari said words that Kharage used to describe Prime Minister were previously spoken in Parliament as well as in state assemblies of Odisha and Karnataka.

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh had used the same words in Rajya Sabha previously and it is part of the House records, he said. Earlier, Dhankhar said he had rejected notices given by K Keshava Rao of BRS and Sanjay Singh of AAP as they were not in order. The two wanted suspension of the listed business to take up discussion on Adani Group.

Mission Antyodaya Survey to assess impact of dev schemes

New Delhi: Union Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Ministry on Thursday kicked off a Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23 to assess the outcome of its various development schemes being implemented in rural areas in the country.

A portal and a mobile application linked to the survey was also launched by Union Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Giriraj

Singh at an event here. The village-wise survey is expected to be conducted over a period of one month involving community resource persons (CRPs). The survey is being conducted to collect village-level data on 183 indicators under 216 data points of 21 sectors. The survey questions have been categorised into five strata - panchayat infrastructure, panchayat services, village infrastructure, village services, and village practices.

The Department of Rural Development has been conducting the Mission Antyodaya Survey across all gram panchayats in the country since 2017-18 to measure the outcomes through convergence of various schemes, said a statement issued here. This year's

survey holds importance given that Lok Sabha polls are slated next year and its outcome will reflect the functioning of the Ministry and hence Government's popularity.

Speaking on the occasion, Singh said the survey will prove to be the lifeline of development in India. "For central and state governments, ground data is important to formulate schemes. This survey will provide that important data," he said, and urged state governments and panchayats to ensure that the survey is completed in time.

The survey aims to lend support to the process of participatory planning for the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) which will improve service delivery, enhance citizenship, create pace for an alliance of people's institutions and groups, and improve governance at the local level, according to an official statement. PNS

Delhi HC grants bail to ex-NSE MD



New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Thursday granted bail to Chitra Ramkrishna in the money laundering case related to illegal phone tapping and snooping of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) employees. Justice Jasmeet Singh granted bail to the former NSE managing director on a personal bond of Rs one lakh and two sureties of the like amount.

"Prima facie there are reasonable grounds to believe that the applicant is not guilty of the offence and she is not likely to commit any offence while on bail...The application is allowed and the applicant is granted bail," the court said. Ramkrishna was in custody for almost 7 months. PNS

DRDO to showcase indigenously-developed products in Aero India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With an endeavour to integrate various stakeholders of Defence research and development ecosystem in the country, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has planned an enriching experience of indigenous Defence technologies and systems during the 14th Aero India in Bengaluru between February 13-17, 2023.

The DRDO will display a wide range of indigenously-developed products and technologies. It will provide numerous exhibits, flight displays and seminars, besides displaying its flagship products at the India Pavilion. This will include display of products on Aeronautical Systems, Missiles, Armaments, Electronics, Micro Electronic Devices and Computational Systems, Soldier Support Technologies, Life-sciences, Naval and Material Science amongst others, defence ministry officials said here on Thursday. The DRDO Pavilion will showcase

over 330 products categorised into 12 zones namely Combat Aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles(UAV), Missiles and Strategic Systems, Engine and Propulsion Systems, Airborne Surveillance Systems, Sensors Electronic Warfare and Communication Systems, Parachute and Drop Systems, Artificial Intelligence Machine Learning and Cyber Systems, Materials, Land Systems and Munitions, Life Support Services, and Industry and Academia Outreach.

The DRDO is also organising two seminars during the event. The 14th Biennial edition of Aero India International Seminar on the theme 'Aerospace and Defence Technologies - Way Forward' is being organised by CABS, DRDO in association with the Aeronautical Society of India on 12th February.

The second seminar is being organised by the Aeronautics Research and Development Board on 14th February. It will be inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

ED arrests ad firm brass in Excise policy PMLA case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested the director of an advertising company, who is alleged to have run the AAP campaign during the 2022 Goa Assembly polls, in connection with its money laundering probe in the Delhi excise policy scam.

The agency arrested Rajesh Joshi, the director of Chariot Productions Media Pvt. Ltd. on Wednesday under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

He was produced before a local court where the ED sought 10-day custody. The Special PMLA court on Thursday sent Joshi to ED's custody till Monday (February 13) for interrogation in a money laundering case linked to the excise policy scam. The links of the advertising company promoter for alleged diversion of "kickbacks" for the Goa Assembly polls in 2022 are under the scrutiny of the agency, they said.

In its charge sheet in the case, the ED has alleged that a part of the alleged Rs 100 crore "kickbacks" generated in the scrapped Delhi excise policy were "used" in the 2022 Goa Assembly election campaign of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

The agency alleged that out of the "bribe" amount of Rs 100 crore made by an entity called as the 'South Group' of liquor businessmen.



CBI raids CGST Commissioner, seizes ₹42 lakh cash, jewellery, foreign currencies

New Delhi: The CBI has booked an Assistant Commissioner of CGST and his wife in a disproportionate assets case and recovered Rs 42 lakh cash besides foreign currency, jewellery, watches and documents related to properties during searches.

The CBI registered a case on Wednesday against Assistant Commissioner, CGST, Gandhidham, Mahesh Chowdhary and his wife, on the allegations of disproportionate assets.

"It was alleged that the accused had accumulated disproportionate assets in the form of huge cash, bank balances, movable and immovable properties during the check period 2017 to 2021 in their names and in the names of family members, which was disproportionate to the tune of around Rs.3,71,12,499 (approximately 74 percent disproportionate asset)," CBI said in a statement. PNS

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Ram Aasre Bansal, Anand Swarup Bansal, Satish Chand Bansal, Lokes Chanc Bansal, Asha Rani Bansal, Gajiv Bansal, Shobhit Bansal, Deepak Bansal, Rekha Bansal, Kirti Gupta, Palak Bansal, Himank Bansal through Guardian and Mother Divya Bansal, Nakhsh Bansal through Guardian and Mother Divya Bansal, Divya Bansal (hereinafter called the Owner/s) claims to be owner and in possession of Prop. No. B-57, In Lohiya Nagar, Sector VIII (C/O. Ghazal) (hereinafter called the said property) being the only surviving legal heirs and beneficiaries of Late Virendra Pratap Bansal and Ratish Chand Bansal deceased and to be the said Prop. No. B-57, In Lohiya Nagar, Sector VIII (hereinafter called the said property) has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients IDFC First Bank Limited, ITD Branch, any persons having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
For Diwan and Company LLP
Advocates and Solicitors
House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi - 19
Mobile No. 9818399999

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Kamlesh Chawla claims to be owner and in possession of Basement and Ground Floor of Prop. No. 54, on Road No. 42, in Class-B, in West Punjab Bagh, New Delhi-110028 (hereinafter called the said property) by virtue of Sale Deeds dated 22.06.2022 regd. Vide Doc. No. 4226and Sale Deeds dated 29.07.1986, 10.01.1990, 23.12.2004, 23.12.2004, 21.04.2006, 16.04.2019, GPA dated 31.05.1988, Collaboration Agreement dated 26.12.2018 and Said Kamlesh Chawla has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients, Standard Chartered Bank, Express Building, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi.

Any person's coming in possession of aforesaid misplaced documents or having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
For Diwan and Company LLP
Advocates and Solicitors
House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi - 19
Mobile No. 9818399999

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Sumeet Chaudhary and Kanta Mukherjee claims to be owner and in possession of 3rd floor with roof, Prop. No. 675, Block D, in Govt. School Teachers CHS Ltd., Saraswati Vihar, Delhi (hereinafter called the said property), said Tara Rani Chaudhary and Kanta Mukherjee were the joint owners of said property vide sale Deed dated 28.11.2007 regd. Vide doc no. 12184 and thereafter the death of Tara Rani Chaudhary, her half share in the said property devolved upon Sumeet Chaudhary being her only surviving legal heir and said Sumeet Chaudhary and Kanta Mukherjee (jointly) has agreed to sell the said Property to Gaurav Raj Agnihotri and Aaditi Hoon and Said Gaurav Raj Agnihotri and Aaditi Hoon has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients Axis Bank Ltd., Janak Puri Branch, any person's having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
For Diwan and Company LLP
Advocates and Solicitors
House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi - 19
Mobile No. 9818399999

**FORM NO.5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road,
Near Hanuman Setu Mandir,
Lucknow- 226007
(Area of Jurisdiction-Part of
Uttar Pradesh)
Summons for Filing &
Appearance by Publication
O.A. No. 950/2022**

Date. 07-02-2023
(Summons to defendant under section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)

ICICI BANK LTD. ...Applicant
Versus
ASHU KUMAR AND OTHERS
...Defendants

To,
1. ASHU KUMAR S/o. SHER SINGH
R/o. 56, Brij Vihar Colony, Near Sports City Plot No. Gh-05, Sec. Adjoining Techzone-IV, Greater Noida, Noida- 201307, U.P.
2. M/S. PALM DEVELOPERS PVT. LTD.
Corporate Office at : 6th Floor, Matrix Tower B-4, Sector-132, Expressway, Noida- 201301, U.P.

In the above noted application, you are required to file in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly the authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 02/08/2023 at 10.30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decide in your absence.
**Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Lucknow**

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

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) R/w Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, (on underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the borrower, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower 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/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules in the below mentioned dates. The borrower 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 ICICI Bank Limited.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Number (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN) | Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession | Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.) | Name of Branch |
|---------|---|--|--|------------------|
| 1. | Baleshwari/ Rajkumari- (274000000668-QZBWD0005029301)- Vill Khoh, Post Manesar, Nr Int Laxmi Khol, Gurgaon, Haryana Gurgaon- 122001 | Flat No. P-108, 7th Floor, Trehan Hill View Garden, Tower P Thada, Bhiwadi, Rajasthan, Bhiwadi- 301707/ (February 07, 2023 | June 27, 2022 Rs. 16,15,939.00/- | Bhiwadi/ Gurgaon |

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

**Date : February 10, 2023
Place : Gurgaon**
**Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited**

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)
Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

| A) Fresh-Tender Work: | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| S. No. | Jobs No. | Name of the work | Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs) | |
| 1. | 46/DGM/SM(W C-2)/2022-23 | M/o Drain (Covering & Raising of drain in B Block Sector-31), Noida. | 61.96 | |
| 2. | 62/DGM/SM(W C - 1 0) / E T / 2022-23 | M/o & D/o Sector-145 to 147 (Paint & Repair of Central verge & Foot path of 45 mtr. Wide road in sector-145), Noida. | 39.93 | |
| 3. | 63/DGM/SM(W C - 1 0) / E T / 2022-23 | M/o & D/o Sector-150 (Paint & Repair of Central verge & Foot path of 75 mtr. 45 mtr. and 30 mtr. wide road in sector-150), Noida. | 40.39 | |

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 23.02.2023 upto 5:00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 24.02.2023 at 11:00 AM.

| B) Re-Tender Work: | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| S. No. | Jobs No. | Name of the work | Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs) | |
| 4. | 70/DGM/SM(WC -5)/2022-2023 | M/o Building (C/o Community Toilet 2 nos. near Play Ground & Tikona Parkin sector-71), Noida. | 42.42 | |

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 16.02.2023 upto 5:00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 17.02.2023 at 11:00 AM.

**Dy. General Manager
NOIDA
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

New Delhi: Even as average per capita consumption of alcohol has more than doubled from 2.4 litres to 5.7 litres between 2005 to 2016 in country, the Government is yet to wake up from its slumber to take note of this growing menace and take measures to regulate its intake at an individual level.

A report 'Policy measures to reduce per capita consumption of alcohol in India' released on Thursday flags the menace as it enlists several recommendations including policy measures aimed at disincentivizing consumption of high alcoholic beverages; and, creating consumer awareness to regulate intake at an individual level.

It comes days after WHO warned that there is no 'safe limit' to alcohol consumption, and even a small amount may increase the risk of cancer and other NCDs. "Between 2005 and 2016, India's per capita consumption of pure alcohol almost doubled from 2.4 liters to 5.7 liters.

Most of this consumption was from beverages with high alcohol-by-volume content or hard liquor such as whiskey, vodka, rum, gin, IMFLs and country liquor.

Sharing more details of study Sanyal said, "With alcohol consumption in India seeing its highest growth in 15-30 age group, we are concerned about excess per capita consumption of alcohol and its consequences.

PNS

HC green flags Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project in public interest

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train is a "dream project of this country and of national importance and in public interest", the Bombay High Court said on Thursday dismissing a petition filed by Godrej & Boyce company challenging acquisition proceedings initiated by the Maharashtra government and the NHSRCL in Mumbai's Vikhroli area for the project.

A division bench of Justices R D Dhanuka and M M Sathaye said the project was one-of-its-kind and collective interest would prevail over private interest.

The court said in cases of conflict on inter fundamental rights and intra fundamental rights, the court has to examine as to where lies the larger public interest while balancing the two conflicting rights.

"In our view the bullet train project is an infrastructural project of national importance, a large numbers of public would be benefited and would have saved other benefits for betterment of this country," the court said.

Of the total 508.17 kilometres of rail track between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, about 21 km is planned to be underground. One of the entry points to the underground tunnel falls on the land in Vikhroli (owned by Godrej).

The state government and the National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) had claimed the company was delaying the entire project which was of public importance.

The bench, in its judgment, said the provisions of the Fair Compensation Act empowers the government to take the acquisition proceed-

ings already initiated to its logical conclusion.

The court also refused to accept Godrej's contention that the compensation was initially decided to be Rs 572 crore but was reduced to Rs 264 crore when the final award was passed.

The authorities had told the HC the acquisition process of the entire line for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project was complete except the land owned by Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited in Vikhroli area.

The company and the government have been embroiled in a legal dispute over acquisition of the company-owned land in Vikhroli area of Mumbai for the bullet train project since 2019.

The state government had earlier informed the court it has already deposited the com-



pensation amount of Rs 264 crore awarded to the company in October last year.

The Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Co Ltd had filed a petition challenging an order of September 15, 2022 passed by the Maharashtra government awarding compensation to it for land acquisition for the bullet train project.

It had termed the land

acquisition proceedings initiated by the state government as "unlawful" and claimed there were "multiple and patent illegalities" in the same.

The HC bench, however, said it has not found any illegality in the compensation or proceedings initiated by the authorities. "We have not found any illegality in the compensation," it said.

PFI wanted to turn India into Islamic state by 2047: Maha ATS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad has claimed the Popular Front of India (PFI), banned by the Centre last year, aimed to establish the "rule of Islam" in India by 2047, and also had plans to obtain weapons and ammunition with the help of foreign countries or other organisations to achieve their targets.

The ATS stated this in its chargesheet filed in a local court last week against five PFI members who were arrested last year for allegedly indulging in unlawful activities and waging a war against the country.

The state ATS arrested the five PFI members - Mazhar Khan, Sadiq Shaikh, Mohammad Iqbal Khan, Momin Mistry and Aasif Hussain Khan - following raids my multiple agencies across various states in



September last year.

The accused have been charged under Indian Penal Code sections for promoting enmity between different groups and conspiring to commit certain offences against the state, as well as provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

In the chargesheet filed on February 2, the ATS claimed to have seized a document called "India 2047- towards rule of Islam in India".

The seized document, as per the ATS, provides a

roadmap for members of the group (PFI) to "overturn the government".

"We dream a 2047, where the political power has returned to the Muslim community from whom it was unjustly taken away by the British Raj. The roadmap towards this first starts with the socio-economic development of Muslim community for which a separate roadmap was already provided in the name of Empower India Foundation," the document said, as per the chargesheet.

Coal scam: ED seizes ₹1.4 crore from bizman, BJP seeks Didi's clarification

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Hours after the Enforcement Directorate investigating the multi-crore coal smuggling case raided the premises of a South Kolkata businessman and seized Rs 1.4 crore and some incriminating documents, Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Thursday demanded Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's clarifications as the said businessman had handled her campaign during the 2021 Bhabanipore Assembly by-elections.

After Wednesday's day-long raid at the premises of Gajraj group of companies the ED on Thursday issued a statement in which it claimed that the businessman had dealings with a Trinamool Congress minister.

The Agency further said that the seized cash was part of Rs 9 crore --- in black --- that had changed hands for pur-



chasing a guest house at up market Ballygunge area of South Kolkata. The ED got the wind of it when the property - worth Rs 12 crore --- was registered at Alipore registry office for an under-valued price of Rs 3 crore.

The ED officials later claimed that the raid and search operations were conducted following a "specific intelligence input that a highly influential political person was making an attempt to launder the proceeds of crime originating from coal smuggling, through his close confidant Manjit Singh Grewal aka Jitti Bhai."

According to sources Grewal who runs a famous restaurant is the TMC's chief of Hindi Cell in South Kolkata. Jitti Bhai was currently at large, sources said.

"The market value of this property is more than Rs 12 crore, however the deed value of the same is shown at around Rs 3 crore. This money was part of the agreed differential amount to be paid in cash from the proceeds generated from coal smuggling," ED said.

According to the ED officials the registry of the said property was done at an undervalued price and the cash was being handed over at the office of Vikram Sikaria of Gajraj Group. Sikaria was subsequently detained for further questioning.

"Preliminary analysis of material on record suggests a greater nexus and it appears that this person was also involved in handling illegal cash of a minister," ED said.

HC orders removal of 3,500 'fake' school staff

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In what could go down as a lshame in the administrative history of Bengal and might end up as a blot in the face of Mamata Banerjee Government more than 3,500 people working as teachers and menial staff in government schools would lose their jobs in one go on Friday.

The Calcutta High Court hearing multiple petitions regarding school level recruitment scam has ordered termination of 2,819 people allegedly appointed illegally through manipulation of optical mark recognition or OMR sheets.

Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay directed the School Service Commission to upload the list of these 2,819 Group D staff on its website within 24 hours and start the process of terminating their services.

The Court in the wake of an admission on the part of the



SSC that there were irregularities in the appointment of the 2819 employees directed the Commission to "First publish the names of these candidates on the website and then cancel their appointments. Complete the entire process within the next 24 hours."

This apart the Commission had also been directed to terminate the jobs of 820 secondary level teachers who had been given illegal appointments. These teachers were appointed through an examination held in 2016, sources said.

"It has been proved beyond doubt that the OMR sheets had been tampered ... rather the OMR sheets do not confirm the marks that were shown in the website ... so their jobs will go," one of the advocates in the matter, Shamin said, claiming there could be many more thousands of people who could lose their jobs.

Advocate Tarunjoyoti Tewari said "the number of illegal appointees could go beyond 20,000 ... the question is whether these people who had sold their lands and other assets to get their jobs by paying the TMC leaders and agents will then spare the Trinamool men."

The school level recruitment scam has seen senior ministers including former number two in the Mamata Banerjee cabinet Partha Chatterjee and MLAs besides a serving vice chancellor and school board chairmen going to jail.

Centre starving Bengal, spoiling public money

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Centre for putting national wealth at stake and starving the people of Bengal by refusing to release the funds due to the State.

Addressing a rally at Panchla in Howrah district Banerjee expressed concerns over how the people's investments with the LIC, post offices and banks were being loaned away to the private individuals.

"Someday, they will say wind up LIC, banks and post offices; so where will the people go?" Banerjee asked adding the people and their assets were in danger of being lost. She would not however name the BJP Government.

Referring to the alleged central deprivation Banerjee said, how the Centre had held up funds meant for MNREGA,



housing, and even PDS schemes. "They have not released funds meant for the poor people ... We are yet to get Rs 7,000 crore for the 100-days' work," Banerjee said urging the Centre not to deprive the funds meant for the poor people.

She also alleged that "funds for 11 lakh houses (under Prime Minister Awas Yojana) have also not been released," reminding the money did not belong to anyone else but the people of Bengal. "This is our money which they collect as taxes but refuse to pay us back."

Centre announces application process for 2nd CUET-UG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

To keep up with the natural academic session after two distorted sessions over pandemic, the Centre on Thursday announced the application process for second edition of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG which will remain open till March 12. University regulator - University Grants Commission (UGC)-announced scheduled for the exams to be conducted from May 21-31 which is also the timing for the declaration of board results of plus two including the CBSE and ICSE.

"Online submission of application form for CUET-UG

for admission to undergraduate programmes will start tonight. Last date for submission of applications is March 12, 2023. Announcement of the city of examination is on April 30. Downloading of Admit cards from the NTA website from second week of May, 2023," UGC Chairman M Jagadeesh Kumar said in a Press statement.

UGC last year announced that undergraduate admissions will be conducted in all central universities through a common entrance test and not on the basis of Class 12 marks. The undergraduate admission process in universities will be completed by July 2023 and the new academic session can begin on August 1.

Cong, Sena ties sour over quips on Patole quitting as Maha Speaker

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The relationship between the two major constituents of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) soured on Thursday, as the Congress took strong objection to Shiv Sena (UBT)'s criticism of its leader Nana Patole's resignation as the Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly in February 2021 and said that the Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena "should respect" the decision taken by its party ally.

Amid ongoing bickering within the State Congress between state party president Nana Patole and Legislature Party leader Balasaheb Thorat, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena's official mouth-piece "Saamana" precipitated the situation by dubbing Patole's

decision to resign from the Speaker's post as "hasty" and "immature" and said that had he continued in the post, the then ruling MVA would have avoided all the difficult political crises it faced later.

On its part, the Congress termed as "inappropriate" the Sena mouth-piece's criticism that Patole's resignation from his post as the Speaker was "hasty" and "immature" and the Sena-UBT "should respect" taken by it.

It may be recalled that on February 4, 2021, Patole had resigned from his post as the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker ahead of his appointment as the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president.

Reacting to the turmoil within the State Congress over the serious differences between Throat and Patole, the Sena

(UBT) mouth-piece "Saamana" - in an editorial published on Thursday-stated: "Patole's decision to resign from his post as the Assembly Speaker was not a prudent one. It was a hasty decision that resulted in a series of crises for the MVA. Had Patole continued in the post, the then ruling MVA would not have faced a political situation as it did".

"Had he continued as the Speaker, Patole would have disqualified the Eknath Shinde-led rebel Sena MLAs (whose exit from the parent party led to the fall of the MVA government in June last year). After Patole's resignation, the Governor did not allow the election of a new Speaker which proved to be an advantage for the rebel MLAs belonging to the Shinde-led and ruling BJP at the Centre. Hence,

the decision taken by Patole was an immature one," Saamana stated in its editorial.

Taking a strong objection to the Sena-UBT's criticism of Patole's decision to resign from the Speaker's post, Chief spokesperson of Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee Atul Londhe said: "The criticism in 'Saamana' on Nana Patole's from the post of Assembly Speaker is inappropriate. Nana Patole did not make a hasty decision. The decision to resign was taken on the advice of the then National President of the Congress, Sonijai Gandhi.

"The Shiv Sena should respect the decision of the ally party which is the basic rule of alliance," Londhe said.

"There is a decision-making process in the Congress party and decisions are taken



accordingly. The party President takes a decision that everyone in the party respects and implements it accordingly. It was a decision taken by Sonia Gandhi in the interest of the party after seeing the political situation at that time,

"The allegation that after the resignation of Nana Patole, the then MVA government

would not have faced a series of crises is baseless. 'If and then' has no meaning in politics. It is also not correct to say that the resignation of Nana Patole as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly was the only reason for the MVA government landing in trouble, there might have been other reasons for as well,"

Tripura BJP manifesto promises more autonomy for tribal council, sops for farmers

PTI ■ AGARTALA

The ruling BJP on Thursday unveiled an election manifesto for Tripura promising greater autonomy for the tribal council, as well as an increase in sops for farmers, women and girl-students.

However, the manifesto released by BJP President J P Nadda at a huge convention centre in front of its cadre instead of at the traditional press conference, remained silent about providing jobs to people or pension and dearness relief for the state's 1.9 lakh government employees.

Analysts saw the promises of greater autonomy to tribal areas as a bid to counter demands made by the newbie Tipra Motha party for a greater Tipraland and the sops as BJP's answer to promises made by TMC to bring in all benefits for farmers and women to Tripura.

Elections to the 60-member assembly in Tripura slated for February 16 are expected to be a three-cornered contest between the BJP, Tipra Motha and the Congress-CPI(M)

combine.

"We will take Tripura on the path of DTH - development, transformation and harmony," BJP president JP Nadda told a press conference after releasing the manifesto for the northeastern state.

The BJP also announced a Rs 5 meal scheme for all, named after religious guru Anukul Chandra, and setting up of a Regional Institute of Medical Sciences hospital in Agartala.

The manifesto said that the Balika Samridhhi bond of Rs 50,000 will be given to every girl child while the tribal language Kokborok will become subjects in CBSE and ICSE curricula.

Nadda said the party would give more legislative, executive and financial powers to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), constituting two third of the state's geographic areas and home to the tribals, who form one-third of the state's estimated 40 lakh population.

The BJP's promises for the



Tribal areas seemed to have been made in an apparent bid to counter the popularity of Tipra Motha, said political analysts.

Tipra Motha in its manifesto released on February 5 promised to fight for a 'Greater Tipraland' by carving out the tribal council area as well as areas elsewhere where Tiprasa tribals were in a majority as also a police force for the Council, 20,000 new jobs and a one-time package for militants who surrender. The opposition CPI(M)-led Left Front in Tripura had also promised 2.5 lakh new jobs, pension to poor senior citizens, and reintroduction of the old pension

scheme besides DA for government employees twice every year, if voted to power.

However, The BJP's manifesto remained silent about giving jobs or a hike in DA for its 1,88,494 government employees and pensioners, possibly keeping in mind the costs in involved and the unviability of the old pension scheme which has bloated government's outflow on its staff in both the centre and the states.

The saffron party, which stormed to power in 2018 by ending decades of Marxist rule, had promised to provide 2.5 lakh jobs in its five years rule, but it remained more or less a promise on paper.

CPM lashes out at BJP's 'Amrit kaal', calls it 'Jahar kaal'

PTI ■ AMARPUR

The CPI(M) on Thursday lashed out at BJP's slogan of 'Amrit kaal' (Golden age), and claimed that the right-wing party's term in office should be described as 'Jahar kaal' (Poison age).

The Left party which is locked in a keenly contested battle in the northeastern state with the BJP, also alleged that its rival had launched an attack on the country's constitution besides trying to use religion as a tool for political gain.

"Prime Minister Modi has said that his government has been giving free rations to the poor, but we find that the food subsidy in this year's budget has been slashed by Rs 90,000 crore... This is not Amrit kaal, it is Jahar Kaal," said CPI(M) politburo member Brinda

Karat at a rally in Amarpur, 70 kms south from state capital Agartala.

Amarpur, a mixed populated subdivision of Gomati district, has three Assembly constituencies, two of which - Birganj, Ampinagar - are set to witness triangular fights with all the three major political forces - Left-Congress alliance, Tipra Motha and BJP - contesting.

Interestingly, both BJP and its ally IPFT have fielded candidates in Ampinagar Assembly constituency, an ST-reserved seat.

"They are indulging in politics over religion. Their ideology of Hindutva has nothing to do with Hinduism as a religion. It is a political tool to divide our people for electoral gains," the firebrand Communist leader said.

14-16 cheetahs may be brought to India in next 3 months: Scindia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Thursday that as many as 14 to 16 cheetahs are expected to be brought to India in the next two-three months. Currently, the government is working on the second phase of Project Cheetah and has signed a pact with South Africa. Cheetahs will be translocated from South Africa.

Addressing a press conference about the government's initiatives for wildlife conservation over the last nearly nine years, Scindia said 14-16 more cheetahs are expected to be translocated to India in the coming months. While emphasising the importance of protecting nature for future generations, he also said there is no space for a linear economy now and "there is no place for Take, Make, Dispose model".

"Preserving wildlife and ensuring that it thrives is a very important part of our tradition as well as our treasure for us to maintain, develop and grow in a fiduciary role for the generations to come," Scindia said.

Under Project Cheetah, eight cheetahs were airlifted from Namibia and translocated to India. In September last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the first batch of cheetahs into the Kuno Palpur National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh.



Man vs wild

A leopard enters the Ghaziabad court and injures many people, including lawyers

A leopard in a court? This might have generated mirth and maybe some viral memes at the expense of lawyers had it not been the injuries several people suffered at the Ghaziabad court on Wednesday evening. The leopard suddenly appeared on the first floor of the court, triggering chaos and confusion. A few lawyers, a cop, and a cobbler were reportedly wounded by the leopard which attacked anyone it thought as a threat. Thankfully, though, no fatality or critical injuries have been reported. The episode also ended without harm to the beast which was tranquilised and handed over to the forest officials. This is not the first such incident; wild animals entering buildings, residential areas, factories, etc., are regularly reported in almost all parts of the country. So far, the authorities at various levels have been reactive rather than proactive in their approach towards incursions by the animals like leopards, panthers, and snakes. One need not be an environmental scientist to know the reason which is simple: human settlements are being built everywhere, even in forests and open spaces. Concomitantly, the habitats of jungle animals are shrinking; quite apart from pushing many species to the brink of extinction, these developments are forcing animals to intrude into the places where people live. This leads to man-animal confrontations. For instance, herds of elephants often rampage through farms.

It is not that the government and people are insouciant towards the imperatives of a clean environment and wildlife. Some concerted efforts have been made in the past — and are still being made — to protect forests, wildlife, and biodiversity, a shining example of which is Project Tiger. This year the results of the 2022 tiger census are likely to be released; the number of tigers is estimated to be more than 3,000. The rise is continuous, for there were 2,967 tigers in 2018 and 2,226 in 2014, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). Launched in 1973, Project Tiger has evidently been going from strength to strength. Other conservation measures are perhaps helping the growth of wildlife. But more tigers and other wild animals need more forests, which are decreasing in size. Therefore, more efforts are needed to not just minimise the man-animal conflicts but evolve a modus vivendi which lets them coexist without harm to either. Ecotourism and adventure tourism could play a big role in resolving the conflicts. It is heartening to note that the Government, cognisant of the role of ecotourism, is striving to promote it. In April 2022, the Ministry of Tourism unveiled the National Strategy for Ecotourism. Accepting that ecotourism is globally recognised as a powerful tool for the conservation of forests, biodiversity, wildlife, and scenic landscapes, it favoured the creation of sustainable alternative livelihoods for forest dependent communities and by generating conservation awareness among masses and decision makers. It is time such endeavours are taken up in earnest.



MSMEs in dire straits

There is a pressing need to bailout MSME sector which is languishing due to unfavourable policies

After all the big talk of the economy doing well, comes the reality check. And this should be the primary cause of concern for the Finance Minister. The MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) sector which accounts for 30% of the economy and 40% of employment is going through the worst period in several years. Many units have closed while others are on the verge of closure. A whopping 10,655 micro, small, and medium enterprises closed down in the financial year 2022-23 according to the govt data. This is the highest number of MSME closures in the last four years. In 2021-22 that number was 6,222, in 2020-21 it was far lower at 175, and in 2019-20 it was 400. So compared to 2019-20, it has shot up 25 times! Besides, the rate of starting new MSMEs is also slowing down rapidly. According to the data, the ratio of closures to new firms opening has also been worsening. There were over 11,000 new firms started for every one of the 175 that shut down in 2020-21, now in the current year it is just 167 firms open for every single closure.

The reasons are not very difficult to see and the government must address them as soon as possible so that the MSME sector could once again become a driving force of the Indian economy. The most prominent reason for the slowdown in the MSME sector is the demonetization from which it is yet to come out and second of course is the GST regime which stripped the MSMEs of their margins and made them deal with paperwork, delay in refunds and various other flaws in the system. The MSMEs are facing several other challenges as well that need to be addressed. Many MSMEs find it difficult to get loans from banks due to a lack of collateral, stringent loan requirements, and a lengthy loan approval process. The Govt must come up with an effective mechanism to help the sector. Besides, many MSMEs are located in areas where there is a lack of basic infrastructure like electricity, roads, and water supply, making it difficult for them to carry out their operations effectively. Moreover, MSME sector is highly fragmented and faces intense competition from large enterprises, which have advantages like economies of scale, access to better technology, and greater marketing power. The Govt should address this on priority and provide them with a level playing field. It is crucial for the Govt to revive the MSME sector as it is the backbone of the economy and provides jobs to millions of skilled and semi skilled job-seekers.

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India can be the global skill capital

India has the potential to become global supplier of skilled workforce . IISCs can do it by training the youth with skills in demand in the West.

Unemployment is a multi-faceted problem. A major challenge that currently our unemployed youth face is the mismatch between their skills and the needs of job providers. There are many jobs available on different platforms but there is no real way to establish the quality of job roles. Our technical institutes and universities do not synchronize their skill courses with overseas institutes and employers. Without matching global skill parameters, youths are being forced to do odd jobs abroad for survival. So India International Skill Centres (IISCs) — aimed at imparting international standard skill training to youth and enhancing overseas opportunities for them — have the potential to transform our country into the skill capital of the world.

In the Union Budget of 2023-24, Finance Minister and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman have announced the opening of 30 IISCs to bridge the global shortage of workforce in the coming years by reaping the demographic dividend of the young Indian workforce. These centers will provide skill training and certification benchmarked by international standards. IISCs will also have a wide network of partner organizations and overseas recruiters to facilitate the supply of skilled and certified workforce in other countries.

These partnering organizations will work with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) for aggregating demand from overseas markets. The centers will have services such as mobilization, counseling, skill training, pre-departure orientation, foreign language training, placement and immigration, and post-placement support. India has signed memorandums of understanding in the field of apprenticeship and skill training with Germany, Belarus, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Japan, and Qatar.

As a pilot project in 2018, 14 IISCs were likely to be set up across India through the NSDC including one at Bathinda in Punjab but not even a single cen-



ter did come up till March 2022. In April 2022, the country's first Skill India International Centre was inaugurated by Union Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in his home state Odisha. Indeed, IISCs should be a pan-India institution. Now after the announcement made in the Union Budget, the NSDC must take a call to set up 30 IISCs including one Punjab, in a public-private partnership to implement Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) for youth seeking global mobility for jobs. Unfortunately, there is a mismatch between the young skills and their desire to get better placements in countries like Canada, the US, and Australia. Wacky commitments by the immigration companies to encourage out-bound migration of youth without required skills are nothing but a cruel joke, which must be avoided and one should accept the challenge of unprecedented underemployment. Developing an overseas placement ecosystem should be prioritized and should be put within a legal framework so that our youths and their families are not cheated.

The need of the hour is to explore and ensure how well our youths can be equipped with skills of international



UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS A MISMATCH BETWEEN THE YOUNG SKILLS AND THEIR DESIRE TO GET BETTER PLACEMENTS IN COUNTRIES LIKE CANADA, THE US, AND AUSTRALIA

standards before they apply for work permits. It will not only help them become a part of the decent workforce abroad but will also open multiple avenues for them. From Punjab, maximum migration takes place every year. It has a very widespread Diaspora known for its hard work and entrepreneurship. Punjabis have established themselves in many countries of the world. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, around seven lakh people from Punjab left the country for employment in the last six years to fulfill their dreams of lucrative jobs.

Government jobs are limited in number in comparison to the growing demand for gainful employment. At present, the low business sentiment, growing inequalities, weak demand, and slow economic recovery are posing serious hurdles to the Indian job market. NSDC along with Ernst & Young (EY) has conducted the 'Global Skill Gap Study'. The study showcases an in-depth analysis of the global workforce markets with a prime focus on leveraging the opportunities to the benefit of the Indian workforce.

The study highlighted that several nations would face workforce shortages in the foreseeable future and mapped out the corresponding opportunities that these shortages

present for the Indian workforce. To tap these overseas opportunities for jobs of truck drivers, construction workers, nurses, wellness professionals, IT professionals, chefs, etc., the right skilling of youth should undoubtedly be a high priority.

Unfortunately, the government initiatives to improve or impart skills to our youths have not been very successful in the past. This hints at a systemic problem that affects the talent ecosystem. It is a common dilemma for many youths today. They have a strong desire to do better in their lives but they cannot get jobs for want of skills. India International Skill Centres and placement cells in every district of the states to facilitate the migration of youth through legal ways should be given a top priority. The States District Bureaus of Employment and Enterprise (SDBEEs) should be made more robust to handle the task. If such concerted efforts are made to create an ecosystem for overseas placement, things will change positively.

(The writer is a training partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Network Member, India International Skills Centres, an initiative of GoI. The views are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RISE IN MILK PRICES A BANE

Sir — The steady increase in milk prices has affected the common person's budget. Basically, milk has been a significant part of the diet of every Indian. Everyone is aware that large cooperative firms heavily intervene with the milk industry. The major players in this industry are now in charge of controlling prices. In such circumstances, many Indians find it challenging to buy milk. This was reportedly the fifth price hike in the previous year when Mother Dairy raised the cost of milk by ₹2 per litre in December. Then Amul, a significant cooperative milk manufacturer, raised the price by ₹3 per litre. Remember that this Gujarat-based company had also increased milk prices in November 2022.

It is estimated that milk and its products account for 20 per cent of the average Indian's monthly food expenditure. This cost rises due to a scarcity of milk in cities compared to villages. Despite the fact that consumption of milk and its byproducts has increased over the past 10 years across all societal segments, the supply has not kept pace. Milk producers have been continuously talking about fodder inflation but the Governments are not taking milk production and research seriously. Besides, the rising milk prices have cascading effect on various products made with milk and also punches a hole in the pocket of the common man.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

ALLEGATIONS WITHOUT EVIDENCE

Sir — Annoyed by allegations levelled by a Congress member without evidence, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has warned the members against making allegations without evidence. Politicians are generally loose cannons. It is not that they do not know that they are making baseless allegations; even when they come to know that there is no escape route, they do not easily apologise. For them, reputation matters the least. In the Rafale case, a Congress leader called Modi "chowkidar chor". He was forced to tender an

Online food in trains



If one good thing the Covid pandemic had offered to humans, it was the luxury of food delivery by aggregators at our doorstep. Now, train journeys are set to open the floodgates to these inexorable market forces. IRCTC has joined the game to provide travellers with e-catering services in the first phase, while the next phase will be AI-powered Chatbot that can cater to customers' all queries regarding their meals. The passengers will have the comfort of plac-

ing food orders from their seat in select trains and have it delivered along the journey by using their WhatsApp number. Ever since the first train was launched in 1853 between Mumbai and Thane, the services rendered by the railways both in terms of quality and quantity have come a long way.

With the onset of AI, the post-pandemic years are set to witness newer trends to cater to customer services that can even lead to the end of an era in railways. Who can forget the services the train pantry offered on the wheels, like soup served with breadsticks along with tea while reading morning newspapers? The restaurant food delivered on trains will be the next big thing to attract passengers. However, the specific genre of delicious food provided from the train pantry flavoured by happy memories of the past will see a nostalgic end.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Uttarakhand

apology in the Supreme Court for derogatory remarks.

But he found satisfaction that the apology was not tendered at the asking of anybody but at the direction of the Supreme Court. Baseless allegations are nothing but pure lies. Politicians firmly believe that a lie told hundreds of times becomes the truth.

Courts take cognisance of lies but delayed delivery of justice keeps politicians unfazed over the ongoing cases against them. Politics has been surviving on the pedestal of lies. Therefore even when politicians speak the truth, people refuse to believe them. Unsubstantiated allegations fly high. Political field is a fertile ground for lies and counter-lies.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

TEST CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGE

Sir — As the India-Australia Test caravan moves across Nagpur, Delhi, Dharamsala and Ahmedabad, a lot is at stake in this bilateral skirmish. The ICC Test Championship is heading towards its business end, with the final scheduled at

London's Oval from June 7 to 11. June right now may seem far but, for the Test cycle, there is not much time left as April and May are linked to the Indian Premier League T20 tournament. Australia with 75.56 percentage points leads the table ahead of India (58.93), Sri Lanka (53.33) and South Africa (48.72).

With one foot already in the final, Australia will sail through even with one draw and three losses against India. However, a 0-4 drubbing from India in tandem with Sri Lanka defeating New Zealand twice would mean that Cummins and gang will miss the final. Meanwhile, Rohit Sharma's men can keep their championship hopes alive by winning the series 4-0 or 3-1. It is a ding-dong battle and a test of Indian spinners versus Australian batsmen in a do-or-die Test series. It is a charge for the Test Championship race.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

UPA turned every opportunity into a crisis... the opposition of being so "immersed in despair" that they can't see the progress the country is making.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

Of course, there are shortcomings. The conditions are clear to see. It's not possible to be ready for a disaster like this.

Turkey President — Tayyip Erdogan

Yes, mixed reviews have come after the release because what we are seeing is out of our league. The film touched upon several issues, including the class system, racism, and the dark world in a society influenced by money.



Actor — Chandan K Anand

It's another challenge and makes touring over here even harder when you know the conditions are custom-

made for them. Australian skipper — Pat Cummins

Rahul Gandhi has proved that no matter how much you try to make him 'pappu', he has made you 'pappu'.



Congress leader — Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

FIRST COLUMN

CRUCIAL TRADE, TECH PACTS WITH US AND EU

iCET and TTC open a range of opportunities for India



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

This past week was marked by two important developments in India's new-age technology and trade partnerships with some of the most powerful geographies. The first was timeline bound, outcome-oriented framework, on emerging and critical technologies between India and the US. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval travelled to US for three days, discussing and cementing the high-level understanding announced first by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the Quad conference in Tokyo in May 2022. The Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) is a giant step for India-US strategic technology and defence partnership, after being on ice for several decades, due to each nation's domestic eco-political pivots.

A fact-sheet released post the meeting of Indian and US national security advisors stated, "The United States and India affirm that the ways in which technology is designed, developed, governed, and used should be shaped by our shared democratic values and respect for universal human rights. We are committed to fostering an open, accessible, and secure technology ecosystem, based on mutual trust and confidence, that will reinforce our democratic values and democratic institutions."



This is a first in India-US strategic ties, as both have in their own ways been singled by muscular China, trying to bare its fangs (not to mention fly balloons with spy craft) at the first opportunity. Both nations realise the need to join forces, find commonalities, and move ahead with a mutually acceptable framework for challenging the technology and military might of China. The iCET launched several outcome-driven bilateral initiatives under several areas of mutual interests, i.e., the innovations ecosystem, defence innovation and technology cooperation, resilient semiconductor supply chains, space, science & technology, engineering, and math talent and skilling, and next-generation telecommunications technology. All these areas are of critical importance in the new geopolitical strategic space. The US has promised to expedite the approval process for GE to start the technology transfer process. This has the potential of attracting heavy investments.

It also helps India gradually steer away from Russia aided defence equipment and technology, and be more in sync with the western allies. The other significant outcome was India and the US committing to increase cooperation, R&D in emerging telecommunications technology such as 5G and 6G and fostering global economies of scale in the sector. This is a clear signal from two democracies with fairly developed telecommunications networks, to further deepen and develop new standards, technology solutions, in a domain, which is currently dominated by China.

A similar language is reflected in the semiconductor space where both sides, while individually pushing for indigenous development, design and fabrication of semiconductors, have also vowed to work towards long term development of semiconductor ecosystems. The second key development in India's technology partnership came in the setting up of the new India-EU Technology and Trade Council (TTC), as a follow up to the announcement by the President of European Commission and PM Modi in the spring of 2022. In a marked departure from reluctance on both sides, EU and India agreed to work in a time-bound manner on areas of common interest such as security, prosperity and sustainable development related to connectivity, green technologies and resilient supply chains. This TTC with India is the second (after the US) such forum where the EU has got into a structured, regular dialogue with an important partner. Taken together the iCET and TTC with the EU open a whole new range of opportunities for India to truly arrive its centenary year celebrations with huge panache.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

The collegium system needs improvement

The basic structure theory cannot be viewed as an impediment or obstruction to the constituent power of Parliament



DEVENDER SINGH ASWAL

Inaugurating the 83rd All India Presiding Officers Conference, Jagdeep Dhankhar, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha (and the Vice President) observed that he did not agree with the restriction imposed by the top Court that Parliament cannot amend the 'basic structure' of the Constitution. A confessed 'solider of judiciary' and a professionally trained lawyer, Dhankhar made an appeal for "propriety, self-respect and commitment to the Constitution."


The Constitution, as adopted by the Constituent Assembly, only contained the procedure for amendment to the Constitution. Soon after becoming a republic, many land reform legislations enacted by States were challenged in various High Courts. Apprehending that the legislations might be struck down by the Courts as unconstitutional, the Provisional Parliament, passed the 1st Constitution Amendment in 1951 for abolition of zamindari, inserting the Ninth Schedule in the Constitution vide Article 31A, and made the land reforms legislation immune from judicial review. It was challenged by the zamindars on the ground that it abridged their fundamental right in *Shankari Prasad Singh Deo v. Union of India* (1951).

The Constitution Bench headed by the first Chief Justice HJ Kania declared Article 31C as valid observing: "To make a law which contravenes the Constitution constitutionally valid is a matter of constitutional amendment, and as such it falls within the exclusive power of Parliament". The Court held that the word "law" in clause (2) of Article 13 did not include a "law" made by Parliament under Article 368. When Parliament placed several new legislations in the Ninth Schedule vide the 17th Amendment, the matter was again challenged in *Sajjan Singh v. State of Rajasthan* (1965).

The interpretation in the *Shankari Prasad* case was reiterated in the *Sajjan Singh* case, though two of the judges, Hidayatullah and Mudholkar, in their separate but concurring judgments, doubted whether Fundamental Rights limited the power to amend the Constitution.

The *Golak Nath* case challenged the 17th Amendment which placed forty-three State Acts in the Ninth Schedule and also the 1st and the 4th Amendments for abridging the Fundamental Rights. Arguing for the petitioners, Nani Palkhiwala advocated the theory of "implied limitation" on the amending power of Parliament. The Supreme Court in their landmark judgement in *Golak Nath v. the State of Punjab* (1967), led by the Chief Justice Subba Rao, held, by a narrow majority of 6:5, that none of the Fundamental Rights was amendable under the amending power conferred by Article 368.

The court also considered the decisions in the earlier two cases as erroneous and to that extent, it held that the



impugned Amendments were not good law. However, the Court introduced "the doctrine of prospective overruling" which saved the 1st, 4th and the 17th Amendments. The Court declared that there was an implied limitation on the amending power of Parliament if there is infringement of Fundamental Rights.

Perturbed, Parliament asserted its power to amend any provision of the Constitution, including the Fundamental Rights. This led to the 24th Amendment which amended Article 368 providing for the power as well as the procedure for amendment. It also provided that when a Constitution Amendment Bill passed by both Houses of Parliament is presented to the President for his assent, he shall give his assent to the Bill. Further, Article 13 was amended by adding clause (4) making it explicit that when the Constitution is amended, such an amendment, even though inconsistent with Article 13, shall be valid.

When a bench of eleven judges of the apex court, with a lone dissent by Justice Ray, struck down the Bank Nationalisation Act in 1970, the 25th Amendment was enacted. It inserted new article 31C, providing that if any law is passed to give effect to the Directive Principles contained in clauses (b) and (c) of article 39, such a law shall not be deemed to be void on the ground that it takes away or abridges any of the rights contained in Articles 14, 19 or 31 and it shall not be questioned on the ground that it does not give effect to those principles. The

WHEN A BENCH OF ELEVEN JUDGES OF THE APEX COURT, WITH A LONE DISSENT BY JUSTICE RAY, STRUCK DOWN THE BANK NATIONALISATION ACT IN 1970, THE 25TH AMENDMENT WAS ENACTED

(The author, a Delhi-based advocate, is ex-Additional Secretary, Lok Sabha)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

INSTEAD OF A DYNASTY, I AM A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY OF 140 CRORE INDIANS. THEIR BLESSING IS MY SURAKSHA KAVACH.
— PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



I'M NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PM'S SPEECH. THERE WAS NO TALK OF SETTING UP AN INQUIRY (IN THE ALLEGED ADANI FRAUD CASE).
— CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

Budget has a lot for farmers, especially small ones

Govt lays emphasis on promoting the modernisation of agriculture so that farmers get comprehensive benefits in long run

Amid raging discussion over the budgetary allocations for schemes under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Budget 2023-24 has undoubtedly made several key provisions for the sector, which aim to achieve an inclusive and comprehensive development of farmers.

The Centre has tried to ensure that the small and marginal farmers are not left out in the process. It lays much emphasis on promoting the modernisation of the agriculture sector also by linking it with technology so that farmers get comprehensive benefits in the long run. Without a doubt, the incessant efforts made by the Centre to ameliorate the condition of farmers further



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

(The author is a senior journalist)

promise a lot of prosperity for them and other people dependent upon the rural economy. The budgetary allocations made for different segments of agriculture, sufficiently reflect how serious the government is about agriculture and farmers.

The total budgetary allocation for the ministry, including agricultural education and research is about Rs 1.25 lakh crore this time. Out of this, a provision of Rs. 60,000 crore has been made for the government's ambitious scheme - the 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan)'. Considering the fact that the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) has greatly benefitted the small farmers, who constitute around 86 per cent of the total

farmers, the government has allocated Rs. 23,000 crores to continue giving them opportunities to avail the scheme. Since animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries assure an increased income to the farmers, the agricultural loan target has been increased to Rs 20 lakh crore.

Provision of Rs 450 crore has been made for the Digital Agriculture Mission, and about Rs 600 crore has been allocated for the promotion of the agriculture sector through technology.

Owing to consistent efforts by government agencies, in recent years, natural farming is fast acquiring the shape of a mass movement, for which a provision of Rs 459 crore has been made. In the coming three years, one

crore farmers are expected to be benefiting from this additional focus on natural farming, for which 10,000 'Bio Input Research Centers' will be established.

Since small and medium farmers are the ones who need the maximum government support, a target has been set to provide them with facilities related to agricultural practices. Also, 10,000 new FPOs are being constituted for these farmers, as they are better organized through FPOs, which are intended to raise the standard of living of the intended group of farmers.

FPOs are proving to be revolutionary in this direction and now benefits are being seen to be percolating to these targeted farmers as well. To

maintain the same momentum in the days to come, a budgetary provision of Rs 955 crore has again been earmarked for the formation of new FPOs this year.

At the same time, the Agriculture Infra Fund and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, which have proved to be very beneficial for the farmers, are also being promoted through budget 2023. For food and nutritional security, the budgetary allocation has been hiked to Rs 1,623 crore. The Government of India is focusing a lot on startups related to agriculture. Budget 2023 has proposed to set up the Agriculture Accelerator Fund to encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs. Rs 500 crore has been allocated over a

period of 5 years for this purpose. Millets are already being promoted as a super food, which is sure to benefit many farmers and has been termed as Shri-Anna in the budget. In this process, the Indian Millets Research Centre, Hyderabad will be promoted as a Center of Excellence. The budget also gives a lot of importance to the horticulture sector with an increased allocation of Rs 2,200 crore.

The AIF is proving quite successful, which is a medium to long-term debt financing facility through interest subvention and credit guarantee support on loans for investment in projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets. This financing facility

is also meant to create post-harvest management infrastructure and community farm assets. Rs one lakh crore is to be disbursed by the financial year 2025-26 under it and the interest subvention of three per cent per year and credit guarantee assistance for loans up to Rs 2 crore to the eligible beneficiaries, will be given till the year 2032-33.

It is interesting that farmers, FPOs, PACS, marketing cooperative societies, SHGs, joint liability groups, multi-purpose cooperative societies, agri-entrepreneurs, start-ups and central and state agency or local body sponsored PPP projects can all avail benefits to create supply chain services. All these measures are sure to benefit farmers a lot, especially in the long run.

Turkey, Syria quake survivors struggle to stay warm, fed

AP ■ ANKARA

Thousands who lost their homes in a catastrophic earthquake huddled around campfires and clamoured for food and water in the bitter cold, three days after the tremor and series of aftershocks hit Türkiye and Syria, killing more than 19,300.

Rescuers continued their race to pull more people alive from the rubble, with the window closing to find trapped survivors.

While stories of miraculous rescues briefly buoyed spirits, the grim reality of the hardship facing tens of thousands who survived the disaster cast a pall. In the Turkish city of Antakya, dozens of people scrambled for aid in front of a truck distributing children's coats and other supplies.

Ahmet Tokgoz, a survivor, called for the government to evacuate people from the devastated region.

While many of the tens of thousands who have lost their homes have found shelter in tents, stadiums and other temporary accommodation, others have spent the nights outdoors since Monday's 7.8 magnitude quake.



TWITTER IMAGE VIA @adgpi ON THURSDAY: A Turkey citizen kisses an Indian Army personnel during rescue and relief operations in earthquake-hit Turkey (PTI photo)

"Especially in this cold, it is not possible to live here," he said. "People are warming up around campfires, but campfires can only warm you up so much. ... If people haven't died from being stuck under the rubble, they'll die from the cold."

Meanwhile, the first U.N. Aid trucks to enter rebel-held northwest Syria from Türkiye since the quake arrived Thursday morning.

Smaller aid organisations have sent in shipments, but the U.N. Is only authorised to deliver aid through one border

crossing and road damage has prevented that thus far.

Winter weather and damage to roads and airports from the quake have hampered the response throughout a region already contending with the repercussions of more than a decade of civil war in Syria.

That conflict displaced millions of people within Syria and left many reliant on humanitarian aid, while also sending millions more over the border into Türkiye to seek refuge.

Some in Türkiye have complained the response was too slow.

Any perception that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has mismanaged the crisis could hurt him at a time when he faces a tough battle for reelection in May.

Erdogan — who was scheduled to continue his tour of devastated areas on Thursday — has sought to play down the criticism.

Meanwhile, emergency crews on both sides of the border worked through the night to find survivors.

Experts said the survival window for those trapped under the rubble or otherwise unable to obtain basic necessities was closing rapidly.

At the same time, they said it was too soon to abandon hope. In the Turkish town of Elbistan, rescuers formed human chains as they dug through collapsed buildings, urging quiet in the hopes of hearing stifled pleas for help. But more and more often, they pulled out dead bodies from under the rubble.

The family of Havva Havam still hoped to see three of its members alive again, sitting by the fire opposite their former home, now the pile of debris.

Zelenskyy, in Brussels, urges EU to grant Ukraine membership

AP ■ BRUSSELS

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that "a Ukraine that is winning" should become a European Union member, arguing the bloc wouldn't be whole without his country being an integral part of the EU.

Zelenskyy made his comments during an address to the European Parliament on a rare trip outside Ukraine, which has been trying to repel a full-scale invasion by Russia for nearly a year. The Brussels visit came as Russia intensified its attacks in eastern Ukraine amid signs that a major new offensive by Moscow was underway before the February 24 anniversary of the war.

Zelenskyy, who also visited the UK and France on a whirlwind European tour that started on Wednesday, will already head home with heaps of goodwill and commitments of more military aid. He arrived to the European Parliament to rapturous applause, cheering and hoots from legislators, insisting in his plenary speech that Ukraine's fight against Russia was one fought for the freedom of Europe as a whole.

"A Ukraine that is winning is going to be member of the European Union," Zelenskyy



said to applause, building his address around the common destiny that Ukraine and the 27-nation bloc face in confronting Russia head-on.

"Europe will always be, and remain Europe as long as we ... Take care of the European way of life," he said.

Zelenskyy added that Russia wants to destroy the European way of life, but "we will not allow that."

He held up an EU flag after his address and the entire legislature stood in sombre silence as the Ukrainian national anthem and the European anthem "Ode to Joy" were played one after the other. Zelenskyy then headed to the urn-shaped Europa building, where the 27 EU leaders were meeting in a summit, to push those same points.

Before Zelenskyy spoke, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola said allies should consider "quickly, as a

next step, providing long-range systems" and fighter jets to Ukraine. Metsola said the response to Russian President Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine "must be proportional to the threat, and the threat is existential."

Metsola also told him that "we have your back. We were with you then, we are with you now, we will be with you for as long as it takes."

EU leaders were hoping to impress on Zelenskyy that the powerful bloc is steadfast in its support for Ukraine as Russia is feared to be making moves for a new offensive.

The latest draft of the summit conclusions seen by The Associated Press says "the European Union will stand by Ukraine with steadfast support for as long as it takes." Military analysts say Putin is hoping that Europe's support for Ukraine will wane.

Zelenskyy: Ukraine intercepted plans to destroy Moldova

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that his country has intercepted plans by Russian secret services to destroy Moldova.

Speaking to European Union leaders in Brussels, Zelenskyy said he recently told Moldovan President Maia Sandu about the alleged scheme.

"I have informed her that we have intercepted the plan of the destruction of Moldova by the Russian intelligence," Zelenskyy said through a translator.

Zelenskyy said the documents showed "who, when and how" the plan would "break the democracy of Moldova and establish control over Moldova."

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He alleged that the West backed the 2020 election of the pro-Western Sandu, claiming that she is eager to take the country into NATO, merge Moldova with Romania and "practically is ready for anything."

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
SSA-43017/6/2022-TT-SSA /I/17945/2023 Date : 07.02.2023
Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom , Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites following bids through GeM portal.
1. GEM/2023/B/3039031 Dated: 25.01.2023 for Geometry Box.
Interested bidder may visit GeM portal and submit their bid on GeM portal accordingly
Sd/-Mission Director
Samagra Shiksha, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19
Janasanyog/CF/4326/22

PUBLIC NOTICE
General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Savita W/o. Mr. Manoj Kumar is owner of residential builtup property bearing part of property no. d-194-a, area measuring 41.80 sq. mtrs., out of khasra no. 329 min, situated at in the area of village ghonda gujan khedar, in the abadi of d-block, gali no. 13, gamri extn, Bhajanpura, illaga Shandara, Delhi vide sale gift deed dt. 06.07.2020 as duly reg in sro-iv-Seelampur, doc no. 587, vol no. 5131, pages-159-169, book no. 1, dated-06.07.2020 and intend to sell Mr. Shashi Kant and Mrs. Ramwati to be financed by M/s. Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited, branch Noida. If any person has any claim on the aforesaid property, then kindly contact the undersigned along with original property documents, within 07 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.
Mrs. Preeton Lata, Advocate
SG Associates (LLP Firm)
Unit No 7, Basement, Plot No C 78, Sector 2, Noida UP 201301. E-MAIL:- sgassociates@gmail.com Ph: 701172764, 813020837

UNITED LEASING & INDUSTRIES LIMITED
Regd office: Plot No.66, Sector-34, EHTP, Gurgaon -122001 (Haryana)
Phone: 0124-4200274E-mail:investorrelations@uliltd.com, website: www.uliltd.com (CIN: L17100HR1983PLC033460)

NOTICE OF EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT AN 02nd EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF UNITED LEASING & INDUSTRIES LIMITED WILL BE HELDON FRIDAY 03rd DAY Of March 2023 AT 1:00 PM AT 14KMS, GURUGRAM PATAUDI ROAD, VILLAGE JHUND SARAI VEERAN, DISTT. GURUGRAM, SECTOR-95, GURUGRAM HARYANA 122001, TOTRANSACTTHE FOLLOWINGBUSINESS:

The EGM is being convened in due compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act"), the Rules made there under read with the MCA's General Circulars numbered 14/2020, 17/2020, 20/2020, 02/2021, 2/2022 dated April 8, 2020, April 13, 2020, May 5, 2020, January 13, 2021 and May 5, 2022 respectively and SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("SEBI Listing Regulations") read with the SEBI Circular numbered SEBI/HO/CFD/ CM01/CIR/P/2020/79 dated May 12, 2020.

The Company pursuant to Section 108 of the Act. and in compliance with the above circulars. has completed dispatch of the Notice of the EGM, only by email on 08 February 2023, to all those Members, whose email addresses are registered with the Company/! Company's Registrar & Share Transtar Agent (RTA) ie. M/s Link Intime India Private Limited or with their respective Depository Participants (Depository*), The notice of the EGM is also available on the Company's website at www.Uliltd.com

The Company pursuant to Section 108 of the Act read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 44 of the SEBI Listing Regulations, has provided remota e-voting facility for voting by electronic means (evoting) to all Members for enabling them to cast their votes electronically on the resolutions proposed at the EGM, The Company has engaged services of National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) and Central Depository Service Limited (CDSL) for providing such e-voting facility and the details as required pursuant to Rula 20 (4)(v) of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 are given here under.

Day and Date of EGM: Friday, 03rd March, 2023 Time:01:00 pm
Venue:14 Kms, Gurgaon Pataudi Road, Village Jhund Sarai Veeran, Distt. Gurgaon, Haryana
E-Voting Period:28th February, 2023 (9.00 a.m.) and ends on 02nd March, 2023 (5.00 p.m.) Cut - off Date 24th February, 2023

Members holding shares in physical form may communicate these details to RTA having address at Link IntimeIndia Pvt. Ltd., Noble Heights, 1st Floor, Plot No. NH 2, LSC, C-1 Block, Near Savitri Market, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058. Phone No: 011-41410592-93-9 Fax:011-41410591Email:delhi@linkintime.co.in before Friday 17th,February, 2023 by quoting the reference folio number and attaching photocopy of the cheque leaf of their active bank account and a self-attested copy of their PAN card.Shareholders facing any technical issue in login may contact Link Intime INSTAVOTE helpdesk by sending a request at enotices@linkintime.co.in or contact on: - Tel: 022- 4918 6000.

By Order of the Board
United Leasing and Industries Limited
Sd/-
Shashi Shekhar
Company Secretary

ASHNOOR TEXTILE MILLS LIMITED
Registered Office : Behrampur Road, Khandsa Village, Gurugram, Haryana- 122001, India, Tel: +91 (0124) - 4809756
CIN: UL17226HR1984PLC033384 | E mail: atml_delhi@yahoo.com | Website : www.ashnoortex.com

| Statement of Standalone Financial Results for the Quarter and Nine Months Ended 31st December 2022 | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| Sl. No. | Particulars | Three Months Ended | | Nine Months Ended | |
| | | 31-12-2022 | 30-09-2022 | 31-12-2022 | 31-12-2022 |
| | | (Unaudited) | (Unaudited) | (Unaudited) | (Audited) |
| 1 | Total Income from Operations (Net) | 2,354.92 | 4,462.15 | 14,192.36 | 26,232.20 |
| 2 | Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items) | 50.04 | 106.04 | 365.19 | 1,206.50 |
| 3 | Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items) | 50.04 | 106.04 | 365.19 | 1,202.05 |
| 4 | Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items) | 35.17 | 108.56 | 300.56 | 757.09 |
| 5 | Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)) | 35.17 | 108.56 | 300.56 | 895.55 |
| 6 | Paid Up Equity Share Capital | 1,273.95 | 1,273.95 | 1,273.95 | 1,273.95 |
| 7 | Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year | - | - | - | 3,775.58 |
| 8 | Securities Premium Account | 240.00 | 240.00 | 240.00 | 240.00 |
| 9 | Net Worth | 5,350.12 | 5,240.72 | 5,350.12 | 5,049.54 |
| 10 | Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt | 7,011.65 | 9,020.01 | 7,011.65 | 12,114.70 |
| 11 | Outstanding Redeemable Perferences Shares | - | - | - | - |
| 12 | Debt Equity Ratio | 1.31 | 1.70 | 1.31 | 2.07 |
| 13 | Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (before and after extraordinary items) | | | | |
| 1 | Basic: | 0.28 | 0.85 | 2.36 | 5.94 |
| 2 | Diluted: | 0.28 | 0.85 | 2.36 | 5.94 |
| 14 | Capital Redemption Reserve | - | - | - | - |
| 15 | Debtenture Redemption Reserve | - | - | - | - |
| 16 | Debt Service Coverage Ratio | 0.68 | 1.23 | 0.99 | 4.56 |
| 17 | Interest Service coverage Ratio | 1.58 | 2.01 | 2.11 | 5.91 |
| Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Bombay Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the websites of the Bombay Stock Exchange i.e. www.bseindia.in and on web site of the Company i.e. www.ashnoortex.com | | | | | |
| By Order of the Board of Directors For Ashnoor Textile Mills Limited Sd/- Suneel Gupta Managing Director DIN - 00052084 | | | | | |
| Place : Gurugram, Haryana Date : 09-02-2023 | | | | | |

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia-US relations are in a state of "unprecedented crisis" without any sign of improvement, a senior Russian diplomat said Thursday.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov argued that the White House's emphasis on

increasing weapons supplies to Ukraine to ensure Russia's defeat leaves no room for diplomacy.

"I don't see any prospect for a productive political and diplomatic process," Ryabkov said at a briefing. "We have a very deep and unprecedented crisis in Russia-US relations. The Biden administration has driven them



into a deadlock."

Ryabkov warned that the US and its allies must carefully assess the risks stemming from supplying increasingly powerful Western weapons to Ukraine.

"The Americans need to thoroughly and deeply weigh the risks linked to their unabashed

ly cavalier course," he said.

Ryabkov noted that Moscow doesn't trust Western statements about self-imposed restrictions on a range of weapons supplied to Ukraine in order to avoid escalation, adding that such assurances in the past have served as cover for a steady

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client i.e. ICICI Bank Ltd. that Mr. Sunil Goel and Mrs. Nisha Goel are joint owners of Entire Upper Ground Floor, without roof rights, (the said floor), of Property bearing No. 123, area measuring 200 sq. yds. Situated in the layout plan of Harsh Vihar CHBS Ltd. Presently known as Harsh Vihar, Pitam Pura Delhi., vide a registered sale Deeds dated 05.09.2021, executed by Nirmal Chandra Dogra who was owner of the said floor by virtue of partition deed dated 26.04.2018. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owners want to take a Loan from ICICI Bank Ltd. against the said floor. If any-body has any objection upon the ownership of Mr. Sunil Goel and Mrs. Nisha Goel in respect of the said floor its Sale/Mortgage/Litigation, and any kind of dispute, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.
Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 1st Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15 Ph: 011-41192526, kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public Notice is hereby given that the partnership heretofore subsisting between Mr. Amit Chandra and Mr. Puneet Chandra carrying on the business of Manufacturing of noise / sound measuring instrumentation and associated equipment and services etc. at Khasra No. 681/2 Extended Abadi, Bijwasan, South West Delhi, Delhi-110061 and C-106, Anand Vihar, Delhi-110092 under the name and style of "Cygnat Systems" stands dissolved as w.e.f 28th December 2022. Henceforth any person and/ or person dealing with the above firm shall do it at his or her own risk and consequences.
Amit Chandra & Puneet Chandra
Partners (Cygnat Systems)
Dated: 9.02.2023

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the Public that Original Share Certificate of PLAT NO.609, MATRI C.G.H.S. LTD., PLOT No. 17, SECTOR-10, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-110075, has been lost/misplaced by its owner HARPREET SINGH S/o LATE SHRI SOHAN SINGH and to this effect an NCR/FIR has already lodged on online portal of Delhi Police vide LR No. 131357/2023 dated 08/02/2023. The said property is not mortgage, but free from all encumbrances. Founder kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 15 days from this present thereafter the user/holder of lost/misplaced/ missing documents/article shall be responsible for the use of the same.
PREM PRAKASH (Advocate)
Legal Aid Consultant Lawyers L.L.P.
207, Plot-1, MLU Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 (Phone:9871268399)

IN THE COURT OF Shri Vikash
Judicial Magistrate - Ist Class, Gurugram
W's India Infoline Finance Limited
VS
NARENDER BANSAL
CIS No - 84542018
CMR No. HRGR03-019353-2018
Next Date:- 28-02-2023
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO:
NARENDER BANSAL :-
Address: 8355/26 KATRA GAURI SHANKAR RANI JHANSI ROAD SADAR BAZAR DELHI ALSO AT FLAT 005 TOWER NO 3 E BHARAT CITY LONI GHAZIABAD UP 201010
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on 28-02-2023 at 10.00 a.m.
For details login to <https://highcourtcdh.gov.in/> ts=districtnotice&district=Gurugram
Judicial Magistrate, Ist Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of 03-02-2023

MEYER APPAREL LIMITED
CIN: L1610HR1993PLC030219
Regd. Office No. 3 & 4, Musaffi No. 19, Killa No.- 5 Opposite Tata Consultancy N.H.-8, Village Narsinghpur, Gurugram- 122004 Haryana, India
NOTICE
Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 and in continuation to our prior notice dt 2nd February, 2023 published on 3rd February, 2023, It is hereby informed that the meeting of Board of Directors of the Company which was scheduled to be held on Friday, 10th February, 2023 at 12:30 PM has been rescheduled to Tuesday, 14th February, 2023 at 5:30 PM through video conferencing facility, inter-alia to consider and approve the Un-Audited Financial Results for the quarter/nine months ended 31st December, 2022 and amongst other items. This notice is also available on the website of the company <https://www.meyerapparel.com> and on the website of BSE Ltd <https://www.bseindia.com>, where the company's shares are listed.
For Meyer Apparel Limited
Sd/-
Charu Sharma
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer
Place: Gurugram
Date: February 09, 2023

AP ■ BEIRUT

For years, the people of Aleppo bore the brunt of bombardment and fighting when their city, once Syria's largest and most cosmopolitan, was among the civil war's fiercest battle zones. Even that didn't prepare them for the new devastation and terror wreaked by this week's earthquake.

The natural disaster piled on many human-made ones, multiplying the suffering in Aleppo and Syria more broadly.

Fighting largely halted in Aleppo in 2016, but only a small number of the numerous damaged and destroyed buildings had been rebuilt. The population has also more recently struggled with Syria's economic downside, which has sent food prices soaring and residents thrown into poverty.

The shock of the quake is all too much. Hovig Shehrian said that during the worst of the war in Aleppo, in 2014, he and his parents fled their home in a front-line area because of the shelling and sniper fire. For years, they moved from neighborhood to neighborhood to avoid the fighting.

"It was part of our daily routine. Whenever we heard a sound, we left, we knew who to call and what to do," the 24-year-

old said.

"But ... we didn't know what to do with the earthquake. I was worried we were going to die."

Monday's pre-dawn 7.8-magnitude quake, centered about 70 miles (112 kilometers) away in Turkey, jolted Aleppans awake and sent them fleeing into the street under a cold winter rain. Dozens of buildings across the city collapsed. More than 360 people were killed in the city and hundreds of others were injured. Workers were still digging three days later through the rubble, looking for the dead and the survivors. Across southern Turkey and northern Syria, more than 11,000 were killed.

Even those whose buildings still stood remain afraid to return. Many are sheltering in schools. A Maronite Christian monastery took in more than 800 people, particularly women, children and the elderly, crammed into every room.

"Until now we are not sleeping in our homes. Some people are sleeping in their cars," said Imad al-Khal, the secretary-general of Christian denominations in Aleppo, who was helping organize shelters.

For many, the earthquake was a new sort of terror — a shock even after what they endured during the war.



Earthquake stuns Syria's Aleppo even after war's horrors

Turkish leader acknowledges 'shortcomings' in quake response



AP ■ GAZIANTEP, TURKEY

The president of Turkey on Wednesday acknowledged "shortcomings" in his country's response to the world's deadliest earthquake in more than a decade as hope dwindled that more survivors would emerge from the rubble of thousands of toppled buildings.

With the confirmed death toll approaching 12,000, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited the especially hard-hit Hatay province, where more than 3,300 people died and entire neighborhoods were destroyed. Residents there have criticized the government's efforts, saying rescuers were slow to arrive.

Erdogan, who faces a tough battle for reelection in May, reacted to the mounting frustration by acknowledging problems with the emergency response to Monday's 7.8-magnitude quake but said the winter weather had been a factor. The earthquake also destroyed the runway at Hatay's airport, further disrupting the response.

"It is not possible to be prepared for such a disaster," Erdogan said. "We will not leave any of our citizens uncared for." He also hit back at critics, saying "dishonorable people" were spreading "lies and slander" about the government's actions.

Turkish authorities said they were targeting disinformation, and an internet monitoring group said access to Twitter was restricted despite it being used by survivors to alert rescuers.

Sensex rises over 140 points to close at 60,806

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the second straight session, equity benchmark Sensex climbed 142 points on Thursday following buying in IT and finance stocks amid a higher opening in European markets.

After a see-saw session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 142.43 points or 0.23 per cent higher at 60,806.22. During the day, the index witnessed a high of 60,863.63 and a low of 60,472.81.

The broader NSE Nifty advanced 21.75 points or 0.12 per cent to finish at 17,893.45.

Bajaj Finserv topped the Sensex gainers' chart, rising 2.30 per cent, followed by Asian Paints, IndusInd Bank, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, L&T and TCS.

In contrast, Bharti Airtel, UltraTech Cement, Tata Motors and Sun Pharma were



among the laggards, shedding up to 1.03 per cent.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge slipped 0.01 per cent and the smallcap index dipped 0.15 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended with gains, while Tokyo settled in the red.

However, equity exchanges in Europe were trading in the positive territory in the afternoon session.

Wall Street had ended lower in the overnight session.

The rupee closed flat at 82.54 against the US dollar on Thursday. International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.29 per cent higher at USD 85.34 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in capital markets as they offloaded shares worth Rs 736.82 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

PNB, BoB raise lending rates by up to 25 bps

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading public sector lenders Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bank of Baroda (BoB) have raised their lending rates by up to 25 basis points following the interest rate hike by Reserve Bank earlier this week.

PNB in a regulatory filing said it has effected a 25 basis point increase in the Repo Linked Lending Rate (RLLR) from 8.75 per cent to 9 per cent effective from Thursday.

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday hiked the benchmark policy rate by 25 basis points to 6.5 per cent, citing sticky core inflation.

It was the sixth time the interest rate has been hiked by

the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) since May last year, taking the total quantum of increase to 250 basis points.

BoB increased its Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate (MCLR) by 5 basis points across all tenures. The new rates are effective from February 12, BoB said in a regulatory filing. After the latest revision, its MCLR has risen from 7.85 per cent to 7.90 per cent for the overnight tenure.

The MCLR for one month has been raised from 8.15 per cent to 8.20 per cent.

The MCLR for three-month tenure has climbed from 8.25 per cent to 8.30 per cent while that for the one-year tenure has been hiked from 8.5 per cent to 8.55 per cent, it said.

Rupee settles flat at 82.54 against US dollar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rupee pared initial losses and settled on a flat note at 82.54 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, supported by a rebound in domestic equities.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.59 against the American currency and touched a low of 82.66 and a high of 82.48 intra-day.

It finally settled at 82.54 against the greenback, unchanged from its previous close.

In the previous session on Wednesday, the rupee had appreciated 16 paise after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) hiked the repo rate by 25 basis points.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined 0.36 per cent to 103.03.

FM urges IMF to develop globally coordinated approach to crypto asset regulations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday held a discussion with IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva and urged the multi-lateral funding agency to develop a globally coordinated approach to the regulation of crypto assets.

The Finance Minister held a virtual conversation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) MD to discuss the upcoming G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting, scheduled to be held in Bengaluru later this month.

Sitharaman also thanked IMF for the support that it had been providing to the G20 Indian presidency on various work streams under the G20 FinanceTrack.

The Finance Ministry in a series of tweets said Georgieva



congratulated India on its strong economic performance in challenging global times and its role at the forefront of digitalisation of the economy, especially in the area of digital payments.

Both leaders expressed solidarity with those affected by the devastation in Turkey and Syria, the ministry said in a tweet.

"FM conveyed India's immediate support extended by Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi through deployment of NDRF @NDRFHQ and medical teams under #OperationDost," as per another tweet.

Adani Group cos resume slide

Adani Enterprises tumbles 11% on MSCI review decision

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After recovering for two straight sessions, shares of Adani Group companies resumed their slide on Thursday, with flagship Adani Enterprises slumping nearly 11 per cent as index provider MSCI Inc decided to review the weightage of the conglomerate's stocks in its indices.

Shares of nine of the 10 group firms closed in the red on the BSE even as the benchmark Sensex rose more than 142 points.



Manish Chowdhury, Head of Research at brokerage Stoxbox, said the group's stocks have lost around Rs 9.4 lakh crore or about 49 per cent of their combined market capitalisation since January 24.

Adani Enterprises plummeted 10.72 per cent to settle at Rs 1,927.30 per piece on the BSE. The flagship company's market valuation dived Rs 26,373.92 crore to stand at Rs 2.19 lakh crore.

Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities, said after rising for the previous two trading sessions, the market capitalisation of the Adani Group companies fell following the MSCI's decision to review the free float weight of the group companies in its indices.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone slipped 2.90 per cent to end at Rs 582.05 and the company's market capitalisation

fell Rs 3,758.64 crore to Rs 1.25 lakh crore.

Adani Power settled lower at Rs 172.90, Adani Transmission at Rs 1,248.55, Adani Green Energy at Rs 761.95 and Adani Total Gas at Rs 1,324.45. The shares of these companies declined 5 per cent each and their closing levels touched the respective lower price bands on the exchange. During the day, shares of Adani Green Energy and Adani Total Gas also touched their 52-week lows of Rs 761.95 and Rs 1,324.45, respectively.

Besides, stock of Ambuja Cements dropped 6.86 per cent to close at Rs 358, NDTV fell 4.98 per cent to settle at Rs 216.40 and ACC slumped 2.91 per cent to end at Rs 1,915.95 on the BSE.

On the other hand, one Adani group company ended in the green — Adani Wilmar, which climbed 5 per cent to

close at its upper price band of Rs 440.30 on the BSE.

"Markets feared that if MSCI lowers the weightings of Adani Group stocks, it may increase the selling pressure on these stocks, as some ETFs and index funds which use MSCI as the benchmark may resort to selling in order to adjust their portfolios," Chowdhury said.

After US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research came out with an adverse report about the Adani Group on January 24, shares of the group companies have taken a beating on the bourses.

In a statement on Thursday, MSCI Inc said it has received feedback from a range of market participants concerning the eligibility and free float determination of specific securities associated with the Adani Group for the MSCI Global Investable Market Indexes (GIMI).

HPCL reports ₹172 cr profit in Q3 as oil prices fall

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After two consecutive quarters of losses, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) on Thursday reported a net profit of Rs 172.43 crore in October-December 2022 as a fall in oil prices helped it recoup some of the losses on sale of petrol and diesel.

Standalone net profit of Rs 172.43 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal compared with Rs 868.86 crore profit in the same period a year back, according to a stock exchange filing by the company.

HPCL and other state-owned fuel retailers did not revise petrol and diesel prices when international oil prices touched multi-year high last year. That led to them booking losses in two back-to-back



quarters.

However, rates softened in the third quarter. This should have warranted a reduction in petrol and diesel prices but the oil companies held on to retail prices to recoup the losses they had booked in the previous six months.

Revenue from operations rose to Rs 1.15 lakh crore from Rs 1.03 lakh crore in October-December 2021.

The company processed 4.83 million tonnes of crude oil

in the quarter, up from 4.24 million tonnes in the previous year.

HPCL said it earned USD 11.40 on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel during April-December 2022 as against a gross refining margin of USD 4.50 per barrel.

"This is before factoring the impact of special additional excise duty (windfall tax) and road and infrastructure cess levied on export of select petroleum products, effective July 1, 2022," it said. "During this period, due to the suppressed marketing margins on certain petroleum products, the profitability is impacted."

Also, the company booked a foreign exchange loss of Rs 1,951.64 crore during April to December as compared to a gain of Rs 183.01 crore a year back.

India's sugar exports at 27.83 lakh tonnes in 2022-23 so far: AISTA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has exported 27.83 lakh tonnes of sugar till February 9 of the ongoing 2022-23 marketing year, with Bangladesh and Indonesia being the top markets, trade body AISTA said on Thursday.

Among other nations, India has exported 2.47 lakh tonnes of the sweetener to Djibouti, 2.46 lakh tonnes to Somalia and 2.06 lakh tonnes to the UAE during October-February 9 of the current marketing year, the All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA) said in a statement.

The sugar marketing year runs from October to September. The government



has allowed export of 60 lakh tonnes till May of the 2022-23 marketing year.

According to AISTA, mills have exported a total of 27,83,536 tonnes of sugar from October 1, 2022 to February 9 this year. About 4.24 lakh tonne is under loading, while 3.79

lakh tonne of sugar has been delivered to refineries, considered to be deemed export in the said period, it added.

Sugar exports from India, the world's major sugar producing nation, stood at 112 lakh tonnes in the 2021-22 marketing year.

Funding important to make decarbonisation affordable: Ruia

PTI ■ BENGALURU

As countries chart out decarbonisation plans, an Essar group executive said funding for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and improving technologies was essential to make it affordable.

"The single biggest opportunity for us is to transition and decarbonise existing infrastructure, and simultaneously build future-centric clean fuel capacities," said Prashant Ruia, Director, Essar Capital.

He was speaking at a leadership panel at the India Energy Week on transitioning to a low-carbon energy mix.

With the world's focus on energy transition and decarbonisation, technology improvements will be faster, he said. "We are already seeing

evolving trends in solar and wind power, and expect similar progress for hydrogen, making it more affordable and accessible."

Decarbonisation is the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions through the use of low-carbon power sources, achieving a lower output of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere.

Ruia said the government is playing a key role in this transition.

"I do believe we now have requisite policy initiatives all around the world and are providing a supportive infrastructure," he said. "It would be important to be able to finance and fund some of these expensive solutions and in improving technologies so that the cost of these decarbonisation

and future fuels come down..."

The recent announcement of a hydrogen policy has positioned the fuel with zero emission as the nation's future fuel. India has an ambitious target of 5 million tonnes of hydrogen capacity by 2030, he said.

"Building and manufacturing hydrogen in India is possible at competitive costs due to abundant renewable power. But one must also focus on building consumption to ensure sustainable operations," he said.

Ruia said it is not easy to replace all of the existing infrastructure with blue or green technology -- it is something that will take a lot of time.

"Technology is something that is evolving in this pace, something which is moving



very fast but with the world focus on energy transition

and decarbonisation, the improvement in the technologies will be very quick and rapid as we have seen already in solar and wind power supply and we have to see the same in hydrogen, the cost of hydrogen and all of these areas

but in the next few years we will see rapid progress."

Essar, he said, is buying a blue hydrogen project in the UK and planning a green ammonia project in India.

While projects have been announced, consumption of hydrogen too has to be in place.

Will meet Adani Group top mgmt soon: LIC head

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The LIC management will soon meet the top management of the crisis-ridden Adani Group and seek clarification on the crisis being faced by the diversified conglomerate, chairman M R Kumar said here on Thursday.

LIC's investment into Adani group firms' stock has come under criticism by the opposition parties as well as investors after US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations against the Gautam Adani-led group, saying its companies manage and manipulate share prices, run offshore shell companies for round-tripping and lacking in corporate governance practices.

"Though our investor team has already sought clarifications from the Adanis, our top management could contact them yet as we have been busy preparing the

results.

"We are soon going to call them to meet us and explain. We want to understand what is happening in the market and in the group," the chairman told reporters at the earnings conference on Thursday.

"We'll be calling them in sometime soon to know how are they managing the whole crisis," Kumar added.

Kumar, however, refused to give a timeline of the meeting between LIC and Adani group officials.

LIC, which is the nation's largest institutional investor, is the second largest shareholder in most of the listed Adani group companies, with a cumulative investment of Rs 36,474.78 crore as of January 27, which in percentage terms is 4.23 per cent of the total public holding in those companies. But for LIC's Rs 44.76 lakh crore investment asset under management, this is only 0.97 per cent.

Digital credit to be rolled out this year

NRIs in 10 countries to get UPI service

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government will roll out digital credit service this year which will enable even small street vendors to avail credit from large banks, Telecom and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday. Speaking at 'Digital Payments Utsav', Vaishnaw said it will be rolled out like UPI service and will be a big achievement under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Digital India'.

"This year we will be rolling out digital credit and NPCI will take a big lead in that over a period of next 10-12 months. A good construct of digital credit will be created," Vaishnaw said. At the event, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) unveiled a prototype of voice-based payment system for UPI. The minister said people



will soon be able to make payments by speaking on the phone in their local language.

He said the service will be available in 18 Indian languages. Speaking at the event, MeitY Secretary Alkesh Kumar Sharma said now UPI should become a global payments product for which the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has already started partnering with Nepal, Singapore, Bhutan, UK and the UAE where the UPI model is being promoted. "UPI services will now be enabled to NRIs in 10 countries - Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, UAE, UK and USA," he said.

The IT Secretary further said integration of India's UPI with Singapore's PayNow system is going on which will soon enable real time cross-border payments.

Suzlon Energy net profit more than doubles to ₹78 crore in Q3



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Suzlon Energy Limited on Thursday said its consolidated net profit more than doubled to Rs 78.28 crore during the December 2022 quarter, mainly due to reduced expenses. The company had clocked a net profit of Rs 36.77 crore during the October-December quarter of preceding fiscal, Suzlon Energy said in a regulatory filing.

Its total income however fell to Rs 1,464 crore from Rs 1,615 crore a year ago.

The expenses stood at Rs 1,386 crore in the quarter under review as against Rs 1,573 crore in the year ago quarter.

In a separate statement, Girish Tanti, Vice Chairman,

Suzlon Group, said: "The beginning of 2023 has been highly encouraging for the wind energy sector with a slew of crucial policy announcements. Indian wind energy is equipped and on track to contribute substantially towards India's energy transition roadmap."

Ashwani Kumar, Chief Executive Officer, Suzlon Group, said: "Q3 has been a stable quarter for us. Our service business continues to do well, and our focus remains on executing our order book. We commissioned the first machine of our largest wind turbine series, the S144-3.X MW at Sankaneri, Tamil Nadu, in December 2022, and the early performance reports are very encouraging."

Powergrid provides ambulance, medical equipment under CSR

PNS ■ JAMMU

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna PSU under Ministry of Power, Government of India, has provided one AC Critical Care Ambulance along with one portable ECG 12 Channel Machine, Biochemistry Semi Auto Analyser and one Automatic Biochemistry Analyser to Directorate of health services, Jammu for strengthening the medical infrastructure of Jammu District.

Sebi clarifies in respect of compliance with rules by first time issuers of debt securities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Thursday provided clarity to first-time issuers, who are in the process of preparing for their first listed debt securities, with regards to compliance with rules pertaining to Articles of Association (AoA).

This comes after Sebi received representations from first-time issuers, who are in the process of preparing for their first listed privately placed or public issue of NCDs.

Such issuers requested the regulator to provide a time



frame, as already given to listed issuers, to amend their AoA since to give effect to the amendments requires formalities like approval from shareholders and conducting board and general meetings.

They also told the regulator that due to the imminent financial year end, there is a spree of borrowing or fund raising activities and the new requirement will dissuade many issuers from approaching the market.



Can, Reus see Dortmund into German Cup QF

AP ■ DORTMUND

Emre Can scored from the halfway line while skipper Marco Reus grabbed a late winner as Borussia Dortmund defeated neighbouring Bochum 2-1 on Wednesday to qualify for the German Cup quarter-finals.

The five-time German Cup winners were made to work for their victory, taking on a team who had won five from five at home since manager Thomas Letsch took over in late September. Dortmund took the lead thanks to Can's quick thinking on the stroke of half-time.

Bochum goalkeeper Manuel Riemann ran well outside his box to thwart a Dortmund attack, but his clearance fell to Can inside the centre circle.

The former Liverpool and Juventus midfielder took one touch to control the ball before punting a long-range effort past the retreating Riemann and into

the net for a 1-0 lead at the break.

"I actually didn't hit it that well" Can told Sky Germany.

"But in the end it was in. It was a beautiful goal."

English teenager Jamie Bynoe-Gittens, handed a rare start by Dortmund manager Edin Terzic, leapt to meet a cross in the 59th minute but the ball connected with his elbow.

After a VAR review which took several minutes, Bochum were awarded a penalty and Austrian midfielder Kevin Stoeger rifled his shot down the middle to level the scores.

Terzic brought on captain Reus just three minutes later and the two-time German Cup winner scored three minutes after that, guiding a perfect pass from Jude Bellingham into an empty net.

Terzic, who won the Cup as Dortmund's caretaker manager in 2020-21, praised his side for emerging victorious in a "huge

Cup fight, it was intense, as (we) expected."

After losing his first home game as Bochum manager, Letsch told German TV "we have to put a line through that one now, but we can leave the pitch with our heads held high."

Dortmund join Bayern Munich, RB Leipzig, Stuttgart, Union Berlin, Freiburg, Eintracht Frankfurt and second division Nuremberg, who won earlier on Wednesday, in the quarter finals.

Nuremberg also qualified for the last-eight by beating Fortuna Duesseeldorf on penalties after scoring an injury-time equaliser in a 1-1 draw.

Only five teams — Bayern Munich, Werder Bremen, Schalke, Borussia Dortmund and Eintracht Frankfurt — have won more German Cup titles than Nuremberg's four.

The draw for the next round will take place on Sunday.

REAL MADRID IN CLUB WORLD CUP FINAL

AP ■ RABAT

Real Madrid reached the Club World Cup final with a 4-1 win over Egypt's Al Ahly on Wednesday in Morocco, thanks to Vinicius Junior, Fede Valverde, Rodrygo and Sergio Arribas's goals.

The European champions took the lead just before half-time with a Vinicius chip and then Valverde smashed in the second soon after the break.

Madrid endured a nervier spell than they would have liked after Ali Maaloul earned the 10-time African Champions League winners a foothold in the game from the penalty spot.

Luka Modric missed a late penalty for Los Blancos, perhaps distracted by laser pointers shone at his face from the stands, with Mohamed El Shenawy saving his effort.

Rodrygo added a cool finish in stoppage time after a slick combination with Dani Ceballos and youngster Arribas wrapped up the win.

Madrid will face Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal, who beat Copa Libertadores winners Flamengo, in Saturday's final.

"I thank my team-mates who are helping me in this moment, which is not so good," said Valverde, who is reported to be suffering some personal problems away from the game.

"They are always there to give me some words of encouragement."

"It was very special to score the goal and celebrate with



them, now we have to rest and work well to win the final."

Carlo Ancelotti's side, record four-time Club World Cup champions, hoped the tournament would be a welcome distraction from their domestic struggles. On Sunday they fell eight points behind La Liga leaders Barcelona, suffering a 1-0 defeat at Real Mallorca.

However the Spanish giants struggled to get going at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat, without injured stars Karim Benzema and

Thibaut Courtois among others.

Ancelotti was able to start defender David Alaba for the first time since injury.

Al Ahly, who beat MLS side Seattle Sounders and Auckland City on the way to the semi-finals, stayed tight at the back and Madrid toiled to break them down. Vinicius fired wide from a tight angle and Rodrygo hit the post with a dinked effort after pressing well to win the ball back.

Just when it seemed like former Austria coach Marcel Kol-

ler's side were poised to reach half-time with honours even, Mahmoud Metwaly miskicked, allowing Vinicius to rob him and run through on goal.

The Brazilian carefully lofted the ball over El Shenawy to break the deadlock, welcome respite after his hounding by Mallorca players at the weekend and suffering further racist abuse.

PAYING THE PRICE

Valverde doubled Madrid's lead at the start of the second

half, taking one fine touch to control a loose ball in the box and then blasting home with his second.

The Uruguayan has not been playing well since returning from the World Cup and Madrid will hope his first goal since November can help him find the rich vein of form he was enjoying before the tournament.

Madrid were denied a penalty to wrap the game up when Vinicius was felled in the area but VAR did not correct the referee's decision to award a corner.

Then Eduardo Camavinga, playing at left-back again, was penalised for tripping Hussein El Shahat in the box at the other end and Maaloul sent Andriy Lunin the wrong way from the spot.

Afsha should have levelled for the underdogs but powered a golden chance over the bar after receiving a cut-back in the middle of the box.

Al Ahly, unbeaten all season in the Egyptian Premier League, were made to pay when Rodrygo and substitute Arribas struck in stoppage time to seal Madrid's victory.

After dropping away from Barcelona in La Liga and losing in the Spanish Super Cup against their eternal rivals in January, Madrid took a step away from crisis talk with this victory.

Their next goal is lifting the second trophy of their season on Saturday against Al-Hilal, having won the European Super Cup in August.

Marseille secure 1st home win over PSG in 12 years

AP ■ MARSEILLE

Ruslan Malinovskyi scored an excellent second-half winner as Marseille beat rivals Paris Saint-Germain at home for the first time since 2011 on Wednesday, winning 2-1 to reach the French Cup quarter-finals.

Alexis Sanchez gave Marseille the lead just after the half-hour mark from the penalty spot, before Sergio Ramos equalised on the stroke of half-time.

But Ukraine international Malinovskyi blasted the hosts back in front and they held on to end their long wait for a victory over PSG at Stade Velodrome.

"We know that our supporters have been waiting for that victory for a long time. We are happy to share this with them," Marseille captain Valentin Rongier told France 3 after only his side's second win in their last 27 meetings with PSG.

It was a second straight early Cup exit for record 14-time winners PSG after last season's last-16 loss to Nice.

"We made a few mistakes



that cost us dearly," said PSG skipper Marquinhos.

"It's a defeat that hurts because it's a Cup match against our great rivals. We wanted to come back to Paris with victory and qualification.

"We have to do better, keep

working and move forward."

Igor Tudor's Marseille will now be among the favourites to lift the trophy for an 11th time but first since 1989.

Marseille, who slipped eight points behind leaders PSG on Sunday after a 3-1 home loss to

Nice, started slowly.

But they grew into the game after goalkeeper Pau Lopez had denied Nuno Mendes an early opener, with Matteo Guendouzi's shot excellently saved by Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Ramos was the culprit as

Marseille forged ahead, clumsily fouling Cengiz Under just inside the area.

Sanchez stepped up to send Donnarumma the wrong way and score his 11th goal of a productive first season since joining OM from Inter Milan.

Lionel Messi, with a free-kick, and Neymar both came close to levelling, before Ramos did just that by steering a header into the far corner from a Neymar set-piece in first-half stoppage time.

Marseille restored their lead in the 57th minute as a loose ball broke to Malinovskyi on the edge of the box and the on-loan Atalanta midfielder hammered a left-footed strike into the top corner.

PSG rarely carried a threat but almost forced a penalty shootout when Neymar set Messi in the clear, only for the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner to fire off target.

Ramos had an injury-time effort chalked off for a clear offside and headed a good chance straight at Lopez as Marseille clung on.

Indian Wells entries include injured Nadal & Djokovic

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS

Two of the biggest names on the men's entry list for the BNP Paribas Open are unlikely to play in the Southern California tournament.

Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal were injured during the Australian Open last month, and Djokovic's COVID-19 vaccination status also is still an issue for the tournament that runs March 6-19 at Indian Wells.

Djokovic, a five-time winner in the desert, missed last year's tournament because of his vaccination status. The US is set to end its COVID emergency declarations on May 11, long after the tournament concludes.

Djokovic won the Australian Open last month for his 22nd career major despite being bothered by a left hamstring injury. He returned to No. 1 in the world rankings. Nadal injured his hip during a second-round loss at the Australian Open and could be out up to two months.

Second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz, who reached the semifinals last year, is set to return to Indian Wells after missing the Australian Open because of injury. Also entered are No. 3 Stefanos Tsitsipas, No. 4 Casper Ruud and No. 5 Andrey Rublev. American Taylor Fritz is back to defend his title.

Also among the men's entries is No. 7 Felix Auger-Aliassime, No. 9 Holger Rune and No. 10



Hubert Hurkacz. Nick Kyrgios and Andy Murray are in the field as well.

On the women's side, top-ranked Iga Swiatek is back to defend her title from last year. She'll be joined by Australian Open winner and second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka.

Also in the field is No. 3 Ons Jabeur, No. 4 Jessica Pegula, No. 5 Caroline Garcia and No. 6 Coco Gauff.

The remaining spots in the draws will be filled by winners of the qualifying tournament and wild card recipients, who will be announced in the coming weeks.

McCullum plots to topple his native New Zealand



AP ■ WELLINGTON

Former Black Caps captain Brendon McCullum thinks patriotic cricket fans will forgive him for coaching England against New Zealand, as long as the two sides deliver an entertaining clash.

"I guess so," he told reporters in Hamilton on Thursday when asked if it felt odd to wear England's cricket kit in his native New Zealand, "but it's nice to be here".

"We're looking forward to the challenge in front of us with New Zealand."

The 41-year-old retired

from Test cricket in 2016 having scored nearly 6,500 runs for New Zealand in 101 Tests, including 12 centuries.

Born in Dunedin at the bottom of New Zealand's South Island, McCullum has enjoyed a dream start since taking over as England coach last May.

He helped engineer a home series win against South Africa plus a clean sweep of three Tests in Pakistan.

There was also a famous Test win against India at Edgbaston last July, when England chased down a record 378 while losing just three wickets -- as well as a 3-0 series win

over New Zealand on English soil last June.

"It's been a good start, definitely. Results have been great," McCullum said.

Next up is his first tour in New Zealand as England coach with two Tests against the Black Caps, starting at Mount Maunganui next Thursday before a second in Wellington the following week.

McCullum, once one of the game's most entertaining players, does not expect a hostile reception from the Kiwi crowds.

"It should be alright, I would think. Obviously people are patriotic.

"Even if sometimes your own team doesn't win, you still walk away knowing you have had a hell of a day out.

"Hopefully that will be the case during this series."

New Zealand host England with new captain Tim Southee taking charge in his first home series since Kane Williamson stood down as skipper.

Williamson will go head to head with England captain Ben Stokes in a highly anticipated clash between two of the world's best batsmen.

The Black Caps drew two Tests against Pakistan in January, but managed only one victory from six limited-overs games against India earlier this year.

Leeds hold Man Utd for 2-2 draw

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag criticised his side's "unacceptable" start to Wednesday's 2-2 draw with managerless Leeds, despite battling back from 2-0 down.

Leeds sacked Jesse Marsch on Monday following a run of seven league games without a win.

Caretaker manager Michael Skubala had just one 20-minute training session to prepare for the trip across The Pennines, but the visitors had been on course for a first victory over United since 2010.

Wilfried Gnonto gave Leeds the perfect start after just a minute and Raphael Varane's own goal doubled their advantage early in the second half.

Marcus Rashford's 20th goal of the season sparked the United fightback before Jadon Sancho's first goal since September stretched the Red Devils unbeaten run at home to 16 games.

"You can say we won a point because when you are in a derby and come back from 2-0 down it is good," said Ten Hag after the first of two Premier League clashes in five days between the sides.

"But on the other hand when you start a derby like we did it's unacceptable. You have to be ready to fight and we weren't ready for the battle."

A point leaves third-placed United still seven points adrift of leaders Arsenal, having played



two games more.

The draw is more valuable to Leeds, who edge one point clear of the relegation zone.

United badly missed the presence of the suspended Casemiro in midfield, which allowed Leeds to counter-attack at will.

Gnonto has been a consistent bright spark of an otherwise sad season for Leeds and exploded the game into life after just 60 seconds as he found the bottom corner for his fourth goal in seven games.

United should have been level by half-time as Alejandro Garnacho fired just wide and then saw a shot cleared off the line by Max Woeber after the Argentine had rounded Illan

Meslier.

However, the home side were slow out of the blocks after the break and were punished.

Gnonto was at the heart of the move again as he released Crysencio Summerville down the left and his cross was turned into his own net by Raphael Varane.

Ten Hag turned to his bench for solutions and found them in Sancho and Facundo Pellistri to replace the ineffectual Wout Weghorst and Garnacho.

Weghorst's withdrawal put Rashford through the middle and within minutes he rose highest to meet Diogo Dalot's cross for his 12th goal in 14 games since the World Cup.

Leeds were inches away

Red Devils 'in talks' with Qatari investors over sale

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United have reportedly opened talks with Qatari investors as speculation intensifies over the future ownership of the Premier League giants ahead of a deadline for bids.

The American Glazer family, who completed their takeover of the 20-times English champions in 2005, announced in November that they were open to a sale or investment.

British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe's Ineos company officially joined the race to buy the club last month — the only bidder to publicly declare an interest so far.

Potential buyers are understood to have until February 17 to table offers.

The Daily Mail said a group of private investors from Qatar want to buy United and talks have taken place with the

club's hierarchy, confident that theirs would be the strongest bid.

The Guardian reported that Qatar's ruler, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, was interested in buying United, just weeks after the energy-rich Gulf state hosted the World Cup.

But the emir bought French champions Paris Saint-Germain in 2011 through Qatar Sports Investments (QSI) — meaning a full buyout of United would not be permitted under current UEFA regulations.

Britain's Press Association said QSI was considering the purchase of a minority stake in United or another Premier League club.

The organisation is a subsidiary of the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the country's sovereign wealth fund, which has assets worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

from restoring their two-goal lead almost immediately when Brenden Aaronson's free-kick came back off the post.

But their advantage was soon wiped out completely 20 minutes from time.

Sancho's fitness struggles have sidelined him for most of

the season, but his return to action has been a timely boost with United still involved in four competitions and short on attacking options.

The England international collected Luke Shaw's deflected cross and his low strike caught out Meslier low to his left.

JADEJA TROUBLES AUSTRALIA WITH FIFER

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Ravindra Jadeja marked his return to international cricket with a five-wicket haul that knocked the stuffing out of Australian middle order and put India firmly in the driver's seat on the opening day of the first Test, here Thursday.

Jadeja did bulk of the bowling on the Jamtha dustbowl, earning his 11th fifer (5/47) in 22 overs that helped India skittle Australia out for a paltry 177 after the visitors decided to take the first strike in the series-opener. Ravichandran Ashwin, who probably dominated the Aussie mind space more than his spin colleague, got 3/42 in 15.5 overs and in the process completed 450 wickets in Test cricket.

At stumps, Rohit Sharma's counter-attacking 56 not out put India in complete command with hosts ending the day at 77 for one and trailing by 100 runs.

KI. Rahul's lean patch continued as he was caught and bowled by Australian debutant Todd Murphy after making a 20-run contribution from 71 balls.

With pitch set to deteriorate further, Indian skipper's decision to attack Nathan Lyon did pay dividends in the final hour.

Two of his shots off Lyon stamped his class and authority: a forward defensive jab that rocketed to the fence between bowler and mid-off and a down the ground six.

There were also cover driven fours off deliveries that were over-pitched.

On this track, one cannot survive with a defensive mindset and the decision to score quickly seemed to be the right call.

But no accolades will be enough for Jadeja, inarguably the 'MVP' (Most Valuable Player) in the Indian Test set-up. The iconic Sachin Tendulkar has termed him as complete 'package'.

When India plays abroad, he becomes a batting all-rounder, often failing the team out at No.6 and when it comes to Indian dustbowls, he is just lethal.

On the day he showed that a knee surgery and five month lay-off hasn't taken away anything from his armoury.

The Australians prepared for Ashwin's guile and variations but perhaps forgot to factor in Jadeja's impact on tracks that offer above average turn.



Hayden, Waugh express shock at Head's axing

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Former Australian captains Matthew Hayden and Steve Waugh have been left shell-shocked by the axing of Travis Head for the first Test against India, with the former saying the player himself was in disbelief after knowing his fate.

The Australian team management chose right-handed batter Peter Handscomb ahead of the 2021-22 Ashes "Player of the Series" Head,

probably because the 29-year-old is a left-hander.

The pre-match talk revolved around India preparing the Nagpur track to unsettle the Australian side packed with left-handers and that could have played a role in visitors' choice of players.

"I can't believe it (Head's axing), Mark Waugh actually was right next to him, and nor could Travis Head in that brief conversation,"

Hayden was quoted as saying on Fox Cricket after the play-

ing XI for the match was announced on Thursday.

"For me he was player of the summer. Totally different conditions I know in Brisbane at the Gabba but his 90 in Brisbane (against South Africa) was just so damn good. He made it like it was flat and it wasn't. It was an absolute raging green top.

"But his mindset and his ability to be able to score quickly ... I'm just speechless," added Hayden.

Waugh felt the Cricket

Australia chairman of selectors George Bailey and head coach Andrew McDonald perhaps overanalysed the chatter around the wicket.

"Hard to believe we can drop the number 4 ranked test batsman in the world and probably our best batsman in the last 12 months plus he bowls better than average off spin - let's wait and see - maybe the Aussie selectors are genius! #gamble #over-analysing? #waitandsee," Waugh wrote on Instagram.

On turners, the spinners who don't try too much trickery with their fingers and just let the ball land on the cracks and let the pitch do the rest, are more dangerous than others.

Jadeja is a perfect exponent of that art of keeping things simple.

There is no denying the fact that there is considerable turn and bounce on offer but Australian batters too were guilty of playing some bad shots. It seemed they got too much messed up in their heads and tried to tackle the track more than the bowler.

Save Marnus Labuschagne (49), who got an unplayable delivery from Jadeja, the others either played rank bad shots or erred in judgement.

Labuschagne got a delivery that was tossed up to draw him forward. It hit one of the dry cracks to rear up as well as deviate past his bat. As he was drawn forward, debutant Kona Bharat effected his first official dismissal showing smart reflexes while effecting that stumping.

What was admirable about Bharat was his change of stance after he struggled to collect a couple of Jadeja deliveries in the first session. Both deliveries turned and jumped.

Instead of crouching too low which he does with domestic spinners, he stayed on his haunches and could easily gather deliveries on his waistline in the post lunch session.

Once Labuschagne was dismissed after an 82-run stand with Steve Smith, floodgates opened as left-handed Matt Renshaw fell prey to a Jadeja delivery that hit the same spot and turned back sharply to find him plumb in-front.

Smith (37), who hit a few boundaries, was dismissed when he played the wrong line to an arm-ball from Jadeja and was bowled bat-pad.

From 84 for 2, it soon became 109 for 5 and although Peter Handscomb (29) and the counter-attacking Alex Carey (36) got quick runs to get the team past 150-run mark.

Ashwin, who primarily bowled from round the wicket, induced a false shot from Carey who went for a non-existent reverse sweep while Pat Cummins became Ashwin's second victim when he offered a regulation catch to Virat Kohli at slips.

Nagpur pitch 'tricked' us: Handscomb

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Australia batter Peter Handscomb on Thursday admitted that the Nagpur track "tricked" the visiting side as it did a lot less than what they had feared in the opening Test of the four-match series.

"It definitely wasn't easy out there. It's tough because when the pitch is playing tricks that starts to play with your mind a little bit as well," Handscomb said at the press conference after the opening day's play.

"The ball that doesn't do as much you expect to do a little bit more and that's where you can come undone with the ball that goes straight on, rather than the big turners we saw out there as well."

Handscomb, who scored 31 in the Australian innings, said the Indian team bowled really well as a unit and didn't give away easy runs.

"It's tough out there, Jadeja was obviously bowling very well, not really giving our batsmen a lot to hit and I found him tough to score (against)," the 31-year-old right-handed batter said.

For Handscomb, it was a comeback to the Test team after four years and he said he was feeling nice to play again in the longest format.

"I've worked really hard on a lot of things on my game, mentally, tactically and on my technique as well.

"To work that hard and get the rewards to come back in, it's a really, really nice feeling. I'm just grateful to be out there and give it a crack at time."

Australia aim for record-extending sixth Women's T20 World Cup trophy

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

The much-envied hegemony of Australia is likely to continue but a host of teams, led by India and England, will harbour hopes of breaking it when the ICC Women's T20 World Cup begins here Friday.

Packed with proven performers, Australia have lifted the trophy five times in seven editions. They have hardly been challenged in the format since winning the last T20 World Cup in 2020.

In the last 22 months, they have lost just one T20 and that defeat came against India away from home via a Super Over.

The defending champions will no doubt start as favourites once again and will aim for a second hat-trick of titles, which will be a record-extending sixth trophy.

The return of skipper Meg Lanning after a break is a massive boost for the holders. Star wicketkeeper batter Alyssa Healy, who is back after a calf injury, also seems to have shrugged off the rust which makes the side even more dangerous.

The team's biggest strength is its depth in batting with plenty of big hitters like Lanning, Healy, Ellyse Perry and Tahlia McGrath adorning the line-up.

Experienced pacer Megan Schutt will spearhead the bowling department which has plenty of spinners to choose from.



All-rounder Ashleigh Gardner has also been in stellar form. A power-hitter down the order, the 25-year-old is the go-to person for skipper Lanning when Australia are in need of a wicket.

However, the hard-fought series against India and the loss in the warm up match against Ireland shows that Australia too can be defeated and the likes of India, England and New Zealand would fancy their chances.

Runners up in the last edition, India will be keen to go

The defending champions will no doubt start as favourites once again and will aim for a second hat-trick of titles, which will be a record-extending sixth trophy

one step ahead and claim the title that has eluded them thus far.

However, a lot will depend on the Indian batting unit, especially the top order comprising the likes of elegant Smriti Mandhana, big-hitting Shafali Verma and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur.

The 'Women in Blue' had enjoyed a stellar run at the 2020 edition before the final ended in disappointment.

Shafali, had been the breakout star, ending the tournament as India's leading run

scorer. Pumped up after the U19 World Cup win in South Africa a few days ago, the flamboyant opener will be keen to carry on the momentum.

India have found a much-needed finisher in U19 World Cup-winning young Richa Ghosh and that will give the top order the freedom to the top order to go all guns blazing from the start.

India have a good mix of spin and pace options but bowling has been their achilles heel. The pace department, barring veteran Shikha Pandey, is relatively inexperienced. They will have to rise to the challenge.

The ever-reliable Deepti Sharma has been a match winner for India on several occasions, and with spinners sparkling in the warm-up matches, she will once again be a key player.

India have been clubbed alongside England, Pakistan, West Indies and Ireland in Group B. England, who have been a consistent force in the format for years, will be a strong contender.

The opening encounter will be between hosts South Africa and Sri Lanka on Friday. The tournament will take place in two stages. The 10 teams are divided into two groups of five sides each.

In the first round, the teams will compete in round-robin format with the top two teams from each group progressing to the knockout stage.

Pitch isn't a rank turner, needed to use crease to confuse batters: Jadeja



PTI ■ NAGPUR

Ravindra Jadeja used the crease intelligently to create a variety of angles which confused the Australian batters, and clearly showed his exploits on Thursday were not the result of so-called "rank turner" as is being banded around by some.

Jadeja took 5 for 47 on his international comeback with the prized scalps of Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith as Australia managed only 177 in their first innings on the opening day of the Border-Gavaskar series.

"This wasn't a rank turner. Compared to other pitches, it was slow and had low bounce. I felt defending wasn't very difficult today but as the game progresses, it (defending) will become increasingly difficult. But that's the nature of Test cricket," Jadeja said at the end of day's play.

He then explained how he

"I USED THE CREASE AS NOT EVERY DELIVERY WAS TURNING. AND, AS I SAID, THE BOUNCE WAS LOW, SO TRYING (I TRIED) TO CREATE DOUBTS IN THE MINDS OF THE BATTERS"

there would always be a chance. Luckily, he (Marnus Labuschagne) stepped out (and) that one (delivery) turned after pitching. And for (Steve) Smith, the ball went straight from that same spot from where I delivered the earlier (Marnus) delivery," said the man, who is now three shy of 250 Test wickets.

The idea was to keep the Aussies guessing about which delivery would turn and which one would come straight with the angle, and it worked to perfection for the wily spinner.

"Yes, there was natural variation from the wicket, but I tried to mix up the angles, so that there was doubt in the batter's mind," he said.

Jadeja also said the aim was to bowl stump to stump on a low-bounce track. The spinner added that he was happy with his rhythm, having played a quality Ranji Trophy match for Saurashtra against Tamil Nadu last month.

Jadeja had taken seven second-innings wickets in the first-class match on return from a five-month injury lay-off.

"I loved the rhythm with which I bowled (today) and the ball came out of my hand quite well, line and length was also accurate, since there is no bounce off the track.

"I preferred bowling stump to stump. On a low-bounce track, there are more chances of leg before and bowled, and luckily, I got a few leg-before and bowled, so that makes me happy," he said.

"I was going wide off the crease and coming close to the stumps and some deliveries if they stepped out and it turned,

played mind games with the batters and got the better of them.

"I used the crease as not every delivery was turning. And, as I said, the bounce was low, so trying (I tried) to create doubts in the minds of the batters," he explained.

"I was going wide off the crease and coming close to the stumps and some deliveries if they stepped out and it turned,

played mind games with the batters and got the better of them.

"I used the crease as not every delivery was turning. And, as I said, the bounce was low, so trying (I tried) to create doubts in the minds of the batters," he explained.

"I was going wide off the crease and coming close to the stumps and some deliveries if they stepped out and it turned,

Agarwal hits double ton to give Karnataka edge over Saurashtra

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Skipper Mayank Agarwal hit a double century to help Karnataka post 407 in their first innings and take the upper hand over Saurashtra in their Ranji Trophy semifinal here on Thursday.

Resuming his innings at 110, Agarwal carried on his good form and played with more intent on the second day to score 249 off 429 balls. He struck an astounding 28 boundaries and six sixes during his marathon knock.

Karnataka added 178 runs in 46.3 overs after resuming their innings at the overnight score of 229 for 5.

Agarwal's overnight part-

ner, wicketkeeper Srinivas Sharath (66) added just six runs to his score before being trapped LBW by Chetan Sakariya five overs into the second day's proceedings.

Krishnappa Gowtham and Vijaykumar Vyshak failed to trouble the scorers much, departing in quick succession before Vidwath Kaverappa (15) lent Agarwal some support.

It was a complete Agarwal show on the second day as the confident right-hander played his shots to all parts of the ground to take Karnataka forward.

Sakariya (3/73) and Kushang Patel (3/109) picked up three wickets apiece for

Saurashtra.

In reply, Saurashtra scored 76 for 2 in 30 overs at the close of play, still trailing Karnataka by 331 runs with three days play remaining in the match.

Wicket-keeper Harvik Desai and Sheldon Jackson were unbeaten on 27 each.

While Desai held one end up, Jackson looked in attacking mood, accumulating his runs off just 31 balls with the help of six boundaries.

Snell Patel and Vishvaraj Jadeja (22) were the two Saurashtra batsmen who got out on Thursday.

Right-arm fast bowler Vidwath Kaverappa (2/24) accounted for the two Saurashtra batsmen, cleaning



up both.

MP 56/2 IN REPLY TO BENGAL'S 438

Indore: Young wicketkeeper Abishek Porel hit a half-century before Bengal bowlers struck twice towards the end of Day 2 to find themselves in a commanding position against defending champions Madhya Pradesh in their semifinal.

Resuming the second day at 307 for 4, Bengal added 131 runs from 54.3 overs on the second day to be all out for 438, thanks mainly to the 78-run sixth-wicket stand between the 20-year-old Porel (51) and captain Manoj Tiwary (42).

In reply, MP ended the day at 56 for 2 in their first innings, still trailing by 382 runs.

Tiwary added 37 runs to his overnight 5 as he consumed 129 balls in total from which he hit five boundaries to take Bengal past the 400-run mark.

But once Tiwary was out for the team total of 401, wickets fell in a heap.

Porel was the next Bengal batter to be dismissed, nine overs later, as he was run out. His 102-ball knock had eight fours.

The last four wickets managed 37 runs for Bengal.

For MP, Kumar Kartikeya was the most successful

bowler on the day, grabbing three wickets, including that of Tiwary, for 95 runs.

MP struggled in reply with the opening pair of Yash Dubey (12) and wicketkeeper Himanshu Mantri (23) sharing just 27 runs.

Akash Deep (1/10) removed Dubey in the 18th over and Mantri feel to Ishan Porel (1/4) seven overs later.

Saransh Jain and Anubhav Agarwal were batting on 17 and 4 respectively at stumps.

On the first day on Wednesday, Anustup Majumdar (120) and young Sudip Gharani (112) had slammed a century each to set up Bengal's big first innings total.