

OPINION 6

EXEMPT NEPALESE
FROM AGNIVEER

WORLD 9

GERMAN CHANCELLOR WARNS CHINA
NOT TO SEND ARMS TO RUSSIA

MONEY 10

FIND LESS COSTLY WAYS TO ADDRESS
PENSION CONCERNS: RAGHURAM

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Self-reliance in health Centre's priority: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that India's health sector was marred by a lack of integrated approach and long-term vision for decades after Independence but his Government has not confined it to the Health Ministry alone and has dealt with it with the "whole of Government" outlook as well as consistently tried to minimise country's dependence on foreign countries for medicines and vaccines.

Addressing a post-Budget webinar on "Health and Medical Research", Modi said that life-savers like medicines, vaccines and medical devices were weaponised when the Covid-19 pandemic was at its peak, and asserted that his Government has been consistently trying to minimise India's dependence on foreign countries in the health sector.

"Our entrepreneurs should ensure India doesn't have to import any technology and becomes self-reliant," he said, highlighting various measures taken by his Government to boost entrepreneurship in the field.

"Today the market size of the pharma sector is 4 lakh crore. It can be worth 10 lakh crore with proper coordination between the private sector and



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a post-Budget webinar on 'Health and Medical Research' on Monday

PTI

the academia," he said.

Noting that the pandemic tested even prosperous nations, he said as the pandemic focused global attention on health, India went a step further and focused on wellness.

"That is why we have put forward a vision before the world — 'One Earth One Health'. This involves holistic healthcare for all creatures — humans, animals or plants," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said "making treatment affordable has been a top priority of our Government" and through the

Ayushman Bharat scheme about ₹80,000 crore of poor patients were saved.

Noting that March 7 is observed as Jan Aushadhi Diwas, the Prime Minister pointed out that affordable medicines through 9,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras have saved about ₹20,000 crore of the poor and middle class families. These two schemes have saved ₹1 lakh crore of citizens, he observed.

Underlining the importance of a strong health infrastructure for the treatment of serious ailments, he said more than 1.5 lakh health centres are

being developed in close proximity of residential areas. Facilities for screening serious ailments like diabetes, cancer and heart-related issues will also be available at these centres, Modi added.

The Prime Minister said critical health infrastructure is being made accessible in small towns and villages across the country under the PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission which is not only giving rise to new hospitals but it is also creating a new and complete health ecosystem.

Continued on Page 2

Aus: Respect for Indian sovereignty unwavering

**Envoy slams Hindu
temple vandals, says
Khalistan referendum
call has no legal
standing in Australia**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

As Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is about to begin his visit to India from March 9, his Government on Monday strongly criticised the recent incidents of vandalism at Hindu temples in Australia by alleged Khalistani supporters and said respect for Indian "sovereignty is unwavering".

As the Adani group is embroiled in a controversy, Australia also said the business house is "still significant investor in Australia, its investment fully functional".

"Adani investment is fully functioning in Australia. I have seen no reports from Australia of any effect on business. He is still a significant investor," High Commissioner to New Delhi Barry O'Farrell said here.

Making these assertions, O'Farrell said so-called Khalistan referendum call has no legal standing in Australia. His observations came against the backdrop of a spate of acts of vandalism targeting Hindu temples there in the last two months with the latest incident reported from Brisbane on



Saturday last week.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had flagged the issue during his talks with his Australian counterpart Penny Wong during his visit to Sydney last month. So far, four such incidents have taken place in the last two months.

Assuring India that the Australian police was actively pursuing the cases, O'Farrell said, "In relation to the incidents of vandalism that we have seen in Australia, Australians are horrified at any vandalism at any religious place of worship."

"Respect for Indian sovereignty is unwavering. So-called Khalistan referendum call has no legal standing in Australia, he said, adding "most appalled to see temples being targeted, police are active and continue to be active to deal with those responsible," the envoy said.

As regards the Australian Prime Minister's visit, the

envoy said Anthony Albanese and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be in Ahmedabad on March 9 to jointly see the fourth and final cricket test match between the two countries.

"They (Prime Ministers of Australia and India) are in Ahmedabad on the 1st day of 4th Test is indication of strong connection between Australia and India but I can tell citizens the real benefit of Prime Ministers visiting each other's countries is that both countries win," the envoy said.

Albanese will arrive in Ahmedabad on the evening of Holi, and O'Farrell said, "I expect him to take part in those celebrations". One of the things that bind both countries is Cricket and it will be great to see the leaders of India and Australia on day one of the match in Ahmedabad, the envoy said.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

**9 COPS KILLED IN SUICIDE
ATTACK IN BALOCHISTAN**

Karachi: At least nine policemen were killed and 13 others injured on Monday when a suicide bomber rammed his motorcycle into a police van in the restive Balochistan, in the latest attack on the security personnel in Pakistan. P8

**SP WON'T LEAVE AMETHI
FOR CONG: AKHILESH**

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday indicated his party could field a candidate in the next election from the high-profile Amethi seat, which it used to leave for the Congress. Yadav, who visited Amethi on Sunday gave the indication in a tweet in Hindi. P2

**KHUSHBU: WAS ABUSED
BY FATHER AT AGE OF 8**

Chennai/Jaipur: Actor and National Commission for Women (NCW) member Khushbu Sundar has said she was sexually abused by her father at the age of 8, which she described as the "toughest" thing. When she was 15 years old, she started revolting against her father who then left the family in the lurch, the actor-politician said at the "We The Women" town hall organised by Mojo Story in Jaipur recently.

**IRANIAN BOAT WITH ₹425
CR DRUGS HELD IN GUJ**

Ahmedabad: Based on a specific intelligence input by ATS, the Indian Coast Guard has apprehended an Iranian boat with five Iranian crew members allegedly carrying 61 kilograms of heroin worth ₹425 crore off the Gujarat coast near Okha in Kutch district, an official said on Monday.

Modi to attend oath events in NE States as BJP part of all 3 Govts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to attend the swearing-in ceremonies of the new Chief Ministers and their ministers in Meghalaya and Nagaland on Tuesday. The next day, he will be in Tripura where the Bharatiya Janata Party would be forming its second consecutive Government under Manik Saha.

Conrad Sangma and Neiphiu Rio are set to be the CMs of Meghalaya and Nagaland, respectively.

In a repeat, the BJP would continue to be part of all three newly-elected governments in the North East. In Nagaland, the NDPP-BJP would be the ruling coalition and in Meghalaya, the NPP-PDP-BJP. Saha was named as the next Chief Minister of the northeastern State at a meeting of the BJP legislative party held in Agartala on Monday.

A spokesperson of the BJP informed reporters after the meeting that the selection was



Tripura BJP president Rajib Bhattacharjee presents a bouquet to BJP leader Manik Saha after the latter was named as the next Chief Minister of Tripura at a meeting of the BJP legislative party in Agartala on Monday

PTI

"unanimously endorsed" by all MLAs of the party.

Earlier, there was speculation that Saha, who was made the CM last year in a renewal exercise replacing Biplab Kumar Deb, may make way for Union Minister Pratima Bhowmik as Chief Minister of the sensitive border State.

Speculation was rife in the last few days that Bhowmik, who won from the Dhanur

Assembly constituency, a Marxist stronghold, may be chosen as the first woman CM of the State.

Home Minister Amit Shah BJP president JP Nadda and Union Ministers from the North-East will attend oath-taking events in the three State capitals. Several Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States are also expected to join the swearing-in ceremonies.

No talks held with Cong on Opp's letter to PM on agencies' misuse: Pawar

PTI ■ PUNE

With the Congress and Left parties not being signatories to a letter written by some Opposition parties to Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging "blatant misuse" of Central agencies, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Monday said he hadn't spoken with these parties in this regard.

Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray are the signatories from the Opposition bloc in Maharashtra to the letter written by Arvind Kejriwal of AAP and eight other parties. Speaking to reporters, Pawar said he was the first signatory to the letter and hope the Prime Minister would take cognizance.

Asked about the Congress and Left parties not being signatories and whether he had spoken to these parties, Pawar said no talks took place. "With all 5-10 people I spoke to, their signatures were there in the



letter. With those, I didn't speak with, their signatures are not there," he said.

Asked about his view on the need for unity among Opposition parties and the role of Congress, the veteran politician said it is important to have Congress in the opposition bloc. "Congress is an important party in the country. Leave aside its success and failures but today the party has its workers in every village in every State. The way Congress is important, similarly, Mamata Banerjee (TMC) is also important besides other leaders. We will have to speak to everyone and we will start the process," he said.

CBI quizzes Rabri at Patna home in land-for-jobs scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday examined former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi at her residence in Patna in connection with its ongoing probe in the land for jobs scam case.

The agency has issued notice to her husband and former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad in connection with the case, officials said, clarifying that there was no search or raid taking place.

They said the CBI had issued notice to Rabri following which she showed her availability on Monday following which a team of investigators visited her residence to question her.

Likewise, a notice has been issued to RJD supremo and former Bihar Chief Minister Prasad, the officials said without giving the date of his questioning.

The agency has already filed a charge-sheet in the case. The special court summoned the accused, including Prasad



Bihar Minister and RJD MLA Tej Pratap at the residence of former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi during a visit of CBI officials in connection with further probe in the land-for-jobs scam case, in Patna on Monday

PTI

and his family members and others, for appearance before it on March 15.

As per the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), the CBI has kept the probe open in the alleged scam and the new round of questioning of Prasad family members is part of "further investi-

gation" in the case, they said.

During the quizzing of the Prasad family, the agency is likely to seek some additional documents related to the case of alleged land transfer to them in exchange for appointments in Group D posts in railways during 2004-2009.

Continued on Page 2

Sharpshooter who fired first bullet at Umesh Pal shot in police encounter

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ/LUCKNOW

Vijay Chaudhary, alias Usman, the sharpshooter of the Atiq gang who fired the first shot at Umesh Pal, a key witness in the killing of former Bahujan Samaj Party legislator Raju Pal, was gunned down by the Special Operation Group (SOG) team in an encounter in Lalapur village in Prayagraj early on Monday.

On a tip-off, the SOG had reached Lalapur and asked Usman to surrender, but he opened fire at the team which retaliated in which Usman received gunshot. He suffered bullet injuries in his neck, chest and thigh during the encounter. He was rushed to SRN Hospital of Moti Lal Nehru Medical College, where he succumbed to his injuries.

Continued on Page 2

Revisit Delhi Metro Act to ensure none of its assets attached: Min to officials

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA) Ministry has directed its officials to revisit a Metro Railways Act provision to ensure no properties or bank accounts of the metro are attached ever.

The noting was made by HUA Minister Hardeep Singh Puri in the document attached in an additional affidavit filed by the Ministry in the Delhi High Court on March 3. The Minister has refused to give permission to attach the properties of Delhi Metro, saying it has become the lifeline of Delhi and the National Capital Region with the livelihood of lakhs of people depending on it.

This comes days after the



Delhi High Court asked the Centre to decide on the issue of granting sanction for attaching movable and immovable assets of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) for paying the unpaid amount of arbitral award to Reliance Infrastructure-promoted Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Limited (DAMEPL).

Continued on Page 2

HC quashes trial court's order to book Shahnawaz, bro in rape case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has set aside a trial court order for registration of an FIR against BJP leader Shahnawaz Hussain and his brother over several alleged offences, including rape, and directed that the matter be considered afresh by the lower court.

Justice Amit Mahajan said the trial court should have given the suspects an opportunity to present their case before rejecting a magisterial court's order refusing to direct registration of an FIR.

In the present case, the complainant, who claimed to be running an NGO, alleged she was raped by Shahnawaz Hussain and later Shahnawaz Hussain asked her not highlight the matter.

Continued on Page 2



Residents heave a sigh of relief as Ashram Flyover extension opens: Opening of the flyover extension in South Delhi will not only ease traffic congestion in the area but will also help people reach markets and hospitals in less time. People will now be able to reach Delhi from Noida in 20 minutes, bringing AIIMS closer

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Sisodia sent to Tihar Jail till March 20

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has been shifted to jail number 1 in Tihar Jail after a special CBI court sent him to 14-day judicial custody till March 20 in the alleged excise policy scam case.

This means Sisodia will spend Holi in jail where party colleague Satyendra Jain is also lodged in a money laundering case. The CBI said it did not require Sisodia's custody at present. His regular bail plea hearing is expected to come up on March 10. The court has also allowed Sisodia to keep a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, a diary and pen to prison, in addition to spectacles and some prescribed medicines.

Continued on Page 2

SP won't leave Amethi for Cong in 2024: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday indicated his party could field a candidate in the next election from the high-profile Amethi seat, which it used to leave for the Congress.

Yadav, who visited Amethi on Sunday for the wedding of influential party leader and former Uttar Pradesh minister Gayatri Prasad Prajapati's daughter, gave the indication in a tweet in Hindi.

"I was deeply saddened to see the plight of poor women in Amethi. VIPs have always won and lost here, yet the condition is like this here so what to say about the rest of the state," he tweeted, along with two photographs of women sitting on the ground during his visit.

"Next time Amethi will not elect big people but people with big hearts. SP takes a pledge to eradicate poverty from Amethi," he added.

The Amethi parliamentary seat, which was considered a Congress pocket borough, is

currently represented by BJP leader Smriti Irani, who defeated Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the 2019 parliamentary elections.

State Congress leader Ajay Rai had recently said Gandhi would contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Amethi again. Rai had made the comment during a recent visit to drum up support for Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra'.

"The Gandhi-Nehru family has old relations with Amethi...No one can weaken it. Rahul Gandhi will contest from Amethi in 2024," Rai had said.

The Congress has constantly been shrinking in the politically crucial state which sends the highest number of 80 MPs to Lok Sabha. In the previous general election, the Congress managed to win only the Rae Bareilly seat of Sonia Gandhi. In the Uttar Pradesh assembly election last year, the Congress failed to win any of the assembly seats in the Rae Bareilly and the Amethi parliamentary segments.

In the Amethi assembly seat in 2022, the SP's Maharaji



Prajapati won, defeating the BJP's Sanjay Singh. The Congress' Ashish Shukla stood a distant third.

The Congress also drew a blank in the five assembly seats in Rae Bareilly last time.

On Sunday too, Yadav hit out at the BJP. Without taking the name of Union minister Irani, he asked the people of the constituency to defeat her in the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

"The 'cylinder waali' is the MP from this place. Definitely defeat her," he said.

"Earlier, the BJP people used to carry a cylinder on their head. Today, inflation is at

4-day interim bail for Olympian Sushil for father's last rites

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Monday granted four-day interim bail to Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar, the main accused in the murder case of junior national wrestling champion Sagar Dhankar, on humanitarian grounds for performing the last rites of his father.

Kumar has been in judicial custody since June 2, 2021.

"Keeping in view the fact that the father of the accused expired and his last rites are to be carried out, on humanitarian grounds, the applicant or accused be released on interim bail from March 6 to March 9 only on furnishing personal bonds of the sum of Rs 1 lakh with two sureties of the like amount," Additional Sessions Judge Shivaji Anand said.

The judge further said that keeping in view the threat perception of the witnesses and also considering the safety and security of Kumar, at least two security personnel have to accompany him

round the clock.

"The entire expenditure of deployment of security persons or policemen for keeping surveillance and security of the applicant shall be borne by his family members," the court said.

The amount has to be deposited in advance with the concerned jail superintendent as per the prison rules, it said.

"Applicant is directed to surrender before the Jail Superintendent concerned after expiry of interim bail period i.e., on March 10," the court said.

The other conditions for the interim relief include Kumar not threatening the prosecution witnesses, tampering with evidence or indulging in any crime and sharing his phone's live location as and when required by the investigating officer (IO).

"In case it is prima facie brought to the notice of the court that the applicant is violating the said conditions, the interim bail granted to him shall be liable to be cancelled," the court said.



It said that a copy of its order should be sent to the concerned jail superintendent for "information and compliance". During the hearing, Kumar's advocate sought interim bail on the ground that the applicant's presence as the eldest son was required at the cremation of his father on Monday afternoon and the ashes would be immersed only on March 9 as Tuesday and Wednesday were inauspicious according to Hindu beliefs.

The advocate told the court that Kumar's father passed away late on Sunday

MP CM launches 'Ladli Behna Sena'

PNS ■ BHOPAL



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday reached out to women in the BJP-ruled State by launching a scheme to provide Rs 1,000 monthly aid and slammed the previous Congress Government for "stopping" welfare measures meant for women, months ahead of the Assembly polls. Chouhan, who is celebrating his 65th birthday on Sunday, appealed to women to continue to support the State Government and listed various schemes launched for their welfare.

Addressing a gathering of women at Jamboree Maidan in the MP capital, the Chief Minister knelt before the audience with folded hands and said, "Pranam and Namaskar... you mean Durga, Laxmi and Saraswati to me", and announced

that "Ladli Behna Sena" will be formed to straighten wrongdoers.

He rolled out the 'Mukhyamantri Ladli Behna Yojana' by unveiling the plaque of the scheme with remote control and filling out an application form for a woman. Under this scheme, women will be given Rs 1,000 assistance per month with certain riders, including that they are not Income Tax payees and their families' annual income was below Rs 2.50 lakh annually. The Kamal Nath Government [of Congress] stopped the 'Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah Yojana' for 15 months after coming to power in the State in December 2018," Chouhan said.

Iranian boat with ₹425 cr drugs caught off Guj coast; 5 held

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has apprehended an Iranian boat with five Iranian crew members allegedly carrying 61 kilograms of heroin worth Rs 425 crore off the Gujarat coast near Okha in Kutch district, an official said on Monday.

A release by the Defence PRO on Monday night said, based on a specific intelligence input shared by the Gujarat Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS), the Indian Coast Guard deployed its two fast patrol class of ships ICGS Meera Behn and ICGS Abheek for patrolling in the Arabian Sea.

"During the night, a boat was observed moving suspiciously in Indian waters around 340 kilometres off Okha coast.

On being challenged by ICG ships, the boat started evasive manoeuvring. The boat was then chased and forced to stop by ICG ships," it said.

Self-reliance...

From Page 1

As a result, Modi noted, many opportunities are being created for health entrepreneurs, investors and professionals.

On human resources in the sector, he said more than 260 new medical colleges have been opened in the last few years, doubling the medical seats in graduate and postgraduate medical courses as compared to 2014.

The Prime Minister also spoke about the emphasis on the nursing field in this year's budget.

Opening 157 nursing colleges in the vicinity of medical colleges is a huge step in the direction of medical human resources. This may be useful in fulfilling global demand, not just the domestic need", he added.

Modi also highlighted the role of technology in constantly making medical services accessible and affordable and elaborated on the government's focus on implementation of technology in the sector.

While giving details of new schemes in the medical device sector, he spoke about bulk

drug parks, medical device parks, more than Rs 30,000 crore incentives on PLI schemes, and said the last few years have witnessed 12-14 per cent growth in the medical devices sector.

Highlighting the growing confidence of the world in India's pharma sector, he said there was a need to capitalise on this and work towards protecting this image. He also suggested that the pharma sector identifies important areas for investment.

While noting the impact of the Government's efforts on preventive healthcare, he listed Swachh Bharat Abhiyan for cleanliness, Ujjwala Scheme for smoke-related diseases, Jal Jeevan Mission for tackling waterborne diseases and National POSHAN Mission for addressing anaemia and malnutrition. He also highlighted the role of millets in the International Year of Millets.

Noting the establishment of the global centre for traditional medicine under the aegis of WHO in India, he said efforts should be made for evidence-based research in Ayurveda.

HC quashes trial court's order to book Shahnawaz, bro in rape...

From Page 1

"The impugned judgment dated 31.05.2022 is set aside.

The Criminal Revision No. 254/2018 is restored and is remanded back to the concerned court for a decision afresh after giving an opportunity of hearing to the petitioners," said the high court in an order on a plea by the two brothers.

The complainant claimed that although Shabbaz Hussain promised to marry her, she subsequently found he was already married.

Before the high court, the counsel for the petitioners argued that the allegations did not disclose commission of any cognizable offence and no notice was issued to them by the trial court while hearing a challenge to the magisterial court order.

Sharpshooter who...

From Page 1

Usman was hit by bullets in and collapsed on the ground.

A police constable, Narendra, too was injured in the exchange of fire with Usmaan.

He has been admitted to the local community health centre, Additional Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar told reporters.

The encounter took place between Gothi and Belwa under Kaundhiyara police station area around 5.30 am, according to Dhoomanganj Station House Officer Rajesh

Kumar Maurya.

Usman was seen firing the first bullet from his pistol aiming at Umesh Pal in the CCTV footage, and a reward of Rs 50,000 had been announced on him

A video of the killing of Umesh Pal in broad daylight had gone viral on social media and raised questions about law and order in Uttar Pradesh.

Following the incident, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath vowed in the State Assembly that he would destroy the mafia raj in the State.

Kavitha's ex-CA gets bail in Delhi excise case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A CBI Court in Rouse Avenue, Delhi, on Monday granted bail to Butchibabu Gorantla, a former chartered accountant of K Kavitha, leader of the Bharat Rashtira Samithi and daughter of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhu Naidu. Gorantla had been arrested by the CBI in February in connection with the investigation into the Delhi liquor case.



CHANGE OF NAME

I, Jitendra Prakash Alias Jitendra Prakash Singhal S/o Prem Chandra Gupta R/o 27B, Nilgiri 1, Block-C72, Sector-34, Noida (201301), declare that Jitendra Prakash and Jitendra Prakash Singhal both names are mine.

PD(90291)A

I, Kavita Gupta Alias Kavita Singhal W/o Jitendra Prakash R/o 27B, Nilgiri 1, Block-C72, Sector-34, Noida(201301), declare that Kavita Gupta and Kavita Singhal both names are mine.

PD(90292)A

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Mr. Mamchand S/o Sh. Sukhdev R/o H.No.216, Village Sadarpur, Sector-45, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) who is the original allottee of property No. Plot No. 96D, Block-SD, Sector-45, Noida (U.P.) & his share to the above said property & who is Expired on dated 29.01.2022.

That executed a WILL in my favour which is registered in Sub Registrar-III, Noida on dated 30.01.2021. So it is informed to all concern that the above said property is going to be transferred in favour of Mrs. Shashibala Garg W/o Sh. Devendra R/o H.No. 103, Garhi Shahdara, Sector-141, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) If any one has/her any objection he/she may file his/her objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.

(Mrs. Shashibala Garg)

From Page 1

Elaborating upon the Quad alliance between Australia, Japan, India, and the US, he said "Quad is not turning into Indo-Pacific NATO". This reaction came in the backdrop of China terming the Quad grouping an "exclusionary bloc" aimed at containing

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Raj Narindra was the owner of the Property Bearing No. F-17, area measuring 183 Sq. Yds., Situated at Jangpura Extension, Delhi, by virtue of Conveyance Deed dated 08.01.1997, regd. at doc. No. 221, and the same is to be financed & mortgaged with my client i.e. Axis Finance Limited and the only legal heirs of Late Raj Narindra namely Ms. Seerat Narindra. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 7 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.

Raghav Tiwari, Advocate
Ct. 630, Paliata House Courts,
New Delhi - 110001
Mob.: +91-9076186328

China's rise. Jaishankar had hosted a Quad Foreign Ministers' meet here last week attended by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi.

Moreover, Russian foreign Sergey Lavrov last week had criticized the Quad and AUKUS (Australia, UK, US) groupings after the Quad meeting here on Friday and claimed the two groupings were used by the West to drive a wedge between Russia and other countries.

Slamming the AUKUS and Quad, Lavrov accused the US and the West of seeking to drive a wedge between Russia and other countries by using these mechanisms. He was in the national Capital to participate in the G-20 Foreign Ministers' conclave.

"This is unfortunately what is being tried by some other outside players in the context of so-called Indo-Pacific strategies, in the context of AUKUS, in the context of using Quad, not for economic purposes but trying to militarise Quad," he said.

"The idea promoted by our American friends of ASEAN plus Quad is openly aimed at ruining the East Asia Summit. In other words, it would be East Asia Summit minus China and Russia. These are the questions I believe you should address more openly and honestly," Lavrov said while participating in the Raisina Dialogue.

Sisodia sent to Tihar jail till March 20

From Page 1

The court also directed prison authorities to consider his request to be kept in the Vipassana meditation cell.

The Congress, which has largely kept its distance from the arrest of Sisodia, however, said its stand on the misuse of Central agencies is clear that they are used against the Opposition in most of the cases. Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate told reporters that the Congress was "not at all confused" about its stance on Sisodia's arrest and that its stand is clear. She also said the AAP does not utter a word

when Central agencies act against other Opposition leaders, be it from those in Congress, those in Bihar or Maharashtra.

Sisodia was produced before special judge MK Nagpal earlier on Monday on the expiry of his seven-day CBI custody. During the hearing, the counsel for CBI submitted before the court that the investigative agency was not seeking his custody right now. The CBI accused the AAP supporters of "politicizing" the matter. The CBI claimed the witnesses yet to be confronted are "terrified" by

conduct of the accused. "They are giving political colour to this. Entire arguments are running in the media even before the court order is passed," the CBI counsel told the court.

The submission was contested by senior advocates Mohit Mathur and Siddharth Aggarwal, who said on behalf of Sisodia that the CBI "should put their house in order". "From 10 in the morning, the CBI will be asking for judicial custody. That information I cannot give," Mathur said, prompting the court to tell the CBI, "There must be some-

thing on your source."

Meanwhile, the AAP said the CBI had no grounds to seek Sisodia's further interrogation in the excise policy case. "Everyone knows that he likes to write. He has also written a book 'Shiksha' that is widely popular and is read by people to know about Delhi's education revolution. He has been a practitioner of Vipassana and the court has asked the jail superintendent to consider his request. It is a good time to work on oneself," Bharadwaj said. He said the court will hear Sisodia's bail plea on March 10.

CBI quizzes...

From Page 1

The FIR has alleged that some persons, although residents of Patna in Bihar, were appointed as substitutes in Group-D posts during the period 2004-2009 in different zones of the railways located in Mumbai, Jabalpur, Kolkata, Jaipur, and Hajipur.

In lieu of the jobs, the individuals themselves or their family members transferred their land in the name of family members of Prasad and a company, AK Infosystems Private Limited, which was subsequently taken over by family members of Prasad, it alleged.

It was also alleged that about 1,05,292 sq. ft. of land in Patna was acquired by the family members of the former

Railway Minister from these persons through five sale deeds and two gift deeds and in most of the sale deeds, payment to the sellers was mentioned to be paid in cash.

As per the existing circle rate, the land's value was about Rs 4.39 crore.

The land was directly purchased by the family members of Prasad from the sellers at a rate lower than the prevalent circle rate. The prevalent market value of the land was way too higher than the circle rate.

Due procedure and guidelines issued by the railway authority for the appointment of substitutes were not followed and, later on, their services had also been regularized, according to the allegations in the FIR.

Rivist Delhi Metro Act...

From Page 1

The Minister said the Delhi Metro meets the commuting needs of almost 60 lakh people of Delhi-NCR on a daily basis. "The Central Government is being asked to give sanction to attach the properties of DMRC to pay a company which abandoned/deserted the services of the airport metro line in the first few years of a 30-year contract," the Minister said.

He said that any adverse outcome leading to a situation where the public utility grinds to a standstill could lead to a serious law-and-order problem across the length of the metro network of nearly 400 kilometres. "I also direct the division to revisit section 89 of the Metro Act, 2002, and amend the same to make it absolute, so that no attachment of its prop-

erties or bank accounts or any assets or operations can ever be carried out," Puri said.

In his separate noting in the document attached to the affidavit, HUA Secretary Manoj Joshi said, "Given the background of the case and in view of public interest, we should not agree for sanction attachment of assets of DMRC."

On February 27, the court had asked the Centre to decide on whether it proposes to grant sanction for the attachment of movable and immovable assets of DMRC for paying the arbitral award. Earlier, the court had noted the total amount of the award with interest till February 14, 2022, was Rs 8,009.38 crore. Out of this, a sum of Rs 1,678.42 crore has been paid so far by the DMRC and Rs 6,330.96 crore is still due.

Probe found no ghost teachers in Delhi Govt schools: Edu Min

LG’s office should apologise over allegations, demands AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Education Minister Raaj Kumar Anand on Monday said that no irregularities were detected in the engagement of guest teachers in Delhi Government schools during the probe ordered by Lieutenant- Governor (LG) VK Saxena. The Minister said that according to the probe report, there was no 'ghost teacher' and the documents of only 109 guest teachers were "incomplete."

They have been asked to submit the proper documents in the stipulated time. No immediate reaction was available from the LG's office. After investigating 109 cases of alleged irregularities highlighted by district education officers the Directorate of Education (DoE) verified the documents in 106 cases and



found them to be in order. Sources said in the three remaining cases too, there was no embezzlement of funds or existence of 'ghost teachers', as highlighted by the LG's office. "In September 2022, the LG had ordered an internal inquiry into alleged irregularities in the engagement of guest teachers in Delhi Government schools and embezzlement of funds through payment of salaries to 'ghost teachers'."

Following the LG's order the department examined the records of 16,174 guest teachers working in over 1,000 Government schools. Following the examination, the records of all teachers were found in place, their attendance recorded online and the payment of their salaries also made online. No case of 'ghost teachers teacher' was found," the official said.

Addressing a press conference, Anand said that the LG's probe report found nothing such as 'ghost teacher in Delhi Government schools. Every teacher has been coming to school on time and marking biometric attendance every day. "Only the documents of 109 guest teachers were incomplete and they have been notified about the same," he added.

The Minister further said the report did not mention any

"embezzlement of funds" in the payment of salaries to "ghost teachers". "The LG describing teachers as 'ghost teachers' is an insult to those working in this noble profession.

This is also an insult to our honest administration. Around 16,609 guest teachers are there in Delhi Government schools. All of their documents were checked and it was all fine," he said. "LG's allegations are completely fabricated and baseless, the inquiry confirmed that not even a single rupee was used illegally in the entire process," Anand added. Taking to Twitter, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had, earlier in the day, said, "What can one achieve by ordering such bogus enquiries and by putting obstacles in every work?"

At a press conference, AAP national spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj demanded that the

LG's office should apologise for alleging "ghost teachers" were working in Government schools.

"Alleging corruption and embezzlement of funds, the LG formed a panel to probe the matter. They were trying to end the practice of hiring guest teachers. It is very unfortunate," he said. The senior AAP leader said the LG should take positive steps rather than making sensational claims. "He has ordered inquiries in transport, PWD, electricity, and health departments.

All this is being done to obstruct the work of the Delhi Government. If the officers are called for an inquiry, they will not be able to take administrative decisions," he said. Noting that the L-G is not a politician, he said his office should issue an apology over the matter.

15 projects to ease Delhi's traffic woes in pipeline, says Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ashram flyover extension opened



built over a period of 65 years before our Government came to power," he said. Kejriwal said that several flyover projects are currently underway in various parts of Delhi, which will help alleviate traffic congestion in the city. Currently, 15 mega projects related to flyovers or their expansion or doubling are in the pipeline, he said.

Providing details of these projects, he said that a six-lane flyover is being constructed at Punjabi Bagh, which is expected to be completed by December 31 this year.

The ongoing work of doubling the flyover at Sarai Kale Khan is expected to be completed by July 31 this year while the construction of a flyover near Anand Vihar Road No. 56 will be done by August 31, the CM said.

A flyover is being built at Gagan Cinema on Mangal Pandey Marg, he said. "Doubling of flyover at Savitri Cinema, Nehru Place is in the process. Flyovers are also coming up at Rotary Act in Shalimar Bagh, Najafgarh-Phirni Road, East-West corridor, North-South corridor, and Elevated Road from Wazirabad Signature Bridge to DND Flyway.

Besides, the work on Maa Anandamayi flyover, Tripolia Gate-Rani Jhansi flyover, and extension of Nehru Place flyover till Modi Mill flyover, among others, is on," he said.

The Delhi CM further said that there are plans to beautify all the roads in the city by regularly cleaning and washing them, as well as using mechanical sucking machines to remove mud. The first phase of the project will involve cleaning 1,480 km of PWD roads that are more than 60 feet wide.

"There have already been significant improvements to the city's appearance, with many areas now featuring flower strips and beautiful lights. The Delhi government will continue beautifying and maintaining the streets of Delhi and more roads will undergo similar transformations," he said.

Saxena lauds progress of op to clean Qudsia Ghat

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (LG) VK Saxena on Monday inspected the cleaning operations of Yamuna at Qudsia Ghat near Kashmere Gate, ISBT and lauded the officials for a massive turn-around of the Ghat, in terms of garbage removal and water quality, in just over two weeks, after the cleaning operations was launched February 16, this year.

"Apart from putting in place an innovative "Drain BOD Reducing" technique, the water has been completely cleaned of all garbage, hyacinth and plastic waste using floating booms and a mechanized Conveyor Machine installed along the river bank.

As a result, the stink, which was earlier unbearable for even 10-minutes, has reduced significantly. BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand) is the amount of dissolved oxygen that microorganisms like bacteria need to oxidize and hence is significant for water quality," the Raj Niwas said in a statement.

An artificial wetland system comprising Root Treatment Plants namely Canna Indica and Vetivar Grass has been created to clean the sewage water coming in



Lt Governor VK Saxena inspects and reviews the progress of cleaning operations on the Yamuna floodplains and interacts with the media at Qudsia Ghat in New Delhi on Monday

from Qudsia Drain and riverine grasses have been planted to stabilize the banks of the drain. A monitoring Hut made of Bamboo has been set up at the Ghat.

The statement further reads that in order to treat the drains falling into Yamuna, an innovative "Drain BOD Reducing" technique has been adopted under which various contraptions in the form of lime and alum box and improvised stone weir have been installed in Qudsia drain.

"Further, floating debris catcher net, floating boom and mechanical aerator system (fountain) have been put in place. The trial of the "Drain BOD Reducing" technique is

not only being done for the first time on Qudsia Drain but also in the Yamuna. Gradually, it will be replicated at other locations," it said.

The Territorial Army provided by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMC), is ensuring that the cleaned stretches of the flood plains are not polluted or encroached upon again.

A large number of students from Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical for Women (IGDTUW) and B.R. Ambedkar University, who were earlier called by the LG to witness the pathetic condition of Yamuna, were amazed to see the transformation of the river in such a short span of time.

BJP, Cong step up attack on CM with posters, Holika dahan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP and the Delhi Congress on Monday stepped up their pressure on the AAP and its convener Arvind Kejriwal. Intensifying its attack on the ruling AAP, the BJP on Monday burnt effigies of "corruption" and "liquor scam" near Hanuman Mandir, as it reiterated its demand for resignation of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over alleged corruption in the now-scraped liquor policy while the Delhi Congress has come up with a poster showing Satyendra Jain and Manish Sisodia behind bars with the slogan "The corrupt are in jail".

The Delhi BJP likened the effigy-burning to torching of a 'Holika', and burnt the effigies at various locations, spanning all 70 Assembly constituencies.

Delhi BJP working president Virendra Sachdeva said AAP supreme Kejriwal comes to this Hanuman Mandir, near Connaught Place, to seek blessings of the Almighty before his endeavours in any election.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri also slammed the AAP and alleged a "massive corruption" in the formulation and implementation of the liquor policy for 2021-22. On March 1, the Delhi BJP had



and schools, and incentivised consumption of alcohol," he said in his address, soon before the burning of the effigies near the temple. Delhi BJP workers will burn effigies of "corruption" and "liquor scam" in all Assembly constituencies on Monday, he said.

"We chose this site to burn the effigies, as Kejriwal visits this temple before beginning his electoral campaigns, and from this very place, we make the resolve of finishing his corruption. We won't wait till 2025, Kejriwal will have to resign. He will have to answer questions related to this liquid scam," Sachdeva said.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri also slammed the AAP and alleged a "massive corruption" in the formulation and implementation of the liquor policy for 2021-22. On March 1, the Delhi BJP had

staged protests at various places here, demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Kejriwal in the wake of resignations by two Delhi ministers facing corruption charges.

The BJP had also taken its protest online, running a series of tweets with the hashtag "#Thekedar_Kejriwal_Istifa_D" in Hindi. The BJP earlier had termed the resignation of Manish Sisodia and Satyendra Jain from the Delhi Cabinet amid corruption allegations a "victory of truth and that of the party workers" while claiming that the chief minister would have to resign as well.

Hours before the news of the two ministers' resignations hit the headlines, the BJP had said that it would raise awareness on the "conspiracy" that was hatched to "toy" with the future of youths in Delhi by allowing the "proliferation" of liquor vends.

Power discoms, PWD prepare for summer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi PWD Minister Kailash Gahlot on Monday chaired a series of separate meetings with the Public Works Department (PWD) and reviewed the 'Summer Action Plan' with the DISCOMS and the Power department. Senior officers from Bombay Suburban Electric Supply (BSES) Rajdhani Power Ltd (BRPL) and Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL), TATA Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL), Delhi Transco Limited (DTL) and Power Department were part of the meeting.

During the meeting, DTL highlighted the peak load of 7695 MW reached in Delhi in June 2022 while the expected peak load of 2023 is nearly 8000 MW to occur in late June or early July 2023.

Delhi needs to be fully prepared for the same to provide uninterrupted electricity supply to its citizens during this specific time and across the year too. A detailed plan was provided by three DISCOMS presenting expected peak loads in their areas and their preparations for the same.

Gahlot also reviewed PWD projects with officials such as Barapullah Flyover Ph-3, additional flyover at Sarai Kale Khan T-junction, Pragati Maidan Corridor development and Flyover between Anand Vihar & Apsara Border were discussed.

2 killed, 2 injured in road accidents

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two people were killed and as many injured in separate road accidents in the national Capital. In the first incident, a 30-year-old man, Pulkit Chawla, was injured after his scooter collided with a motorcycle in west Delhi's Subhash Nagar area on Sunday night.

Chawla, a resident of Hari Nagar who ran a tent business, was taken to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, Deputy Commissioner of Police (west) Ghanshyam Bansal said. The motorcyclist, Azad Singh (19), a resident of

Ranhola Vihar, suffered minor injuries in the accident, he said. A case under sections 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered in the matter. CCTV footage is being checked to ascertain the cause of the accident, the DCP said.

In the second incident, a man riding pillion on a motorcycle was killed after the driver rammed it into a tree, the police said. On the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, three people, in their mid-20s, were going from Inderlok to Kanhaiya Nagar metro station on a motorcycle.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of Shab-e-Baraat and Holi this week, Delhi Police Monday said it has made elaborate arrangements for the safety of motorists and pedestrians while ensuring smooth traffic flow and preventing rash driving or stunts on two-wheelers.

More than 150 company security personnel other than police, 800 traffic police personnel and 9,000 local police will be deployed for Shab-e-Baraat, which will be observed on the intervening night of March 7 and 8. During Shab-e-Baraat, people belonging to the Muslim community offer prayers beside grave of their ancestors and also at mosques. According to police, more than



600 pickets and 1,300 motorcycle patrolling teams will be deployed across the national capital. Also, 759 traffic officers will be deployed at 283 strategic locations. Since the date of Holi and Shab-e-Baraat coincide this year, special teams of traffic police along with PCR and local police will be stationed on various roads to

check drunken driving and traffic rule violations, the Delhi Police advisory stated. Radar guns will also be deployed to check incidences of over-speeding, it said. According to the advisory, special teams comprising 2,033 officers will be deployed at 287 major intersections and 233 drunken and vulnerable points for Holi.



"Further, as per the directions of Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety, in cases of drunken driving, red-light jumping, using mobile phone while driving, dangerous driving and over-speeding, driving license will also be seized and will be liable for suspension for a period of minimum three months. "Action shall also be

initiated against the registered owners of vehicles whose vehicles are found to be driven by minors/unauthorized persons, performing stunts, driving without a license, etc," it said.

Public is advised to obey traffic rules and not to drink and drive, the advisory stated. "Observe prescribed speed limits. Obey traffic signals. Not to indulge in racing or competition with other vehicles. Especially two-wheeler drivers and riders to wear helmets and avoid triple riding," it added.

The Delhi Traffic Police has appealed to all motorists to avoid traffic violations, especially drunken driving, over-speeding, triple riding, riding without a helmet and driving in wrong carriage.

2022-2023 cleanest for Delhi-NCR since 2018, reveals CSE

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The winter of 2022-2023 was the cleanest for Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) since 2018. According to a latest analysis of air pollution levels by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the concentration of air pollutants in Delhi stood at 160 micrograms per cubic meter for the October-January period, which is the lowest level recorded since wide-scale monitoring started in 2018-19. "The PM2.5 level, computed by averaging monitoring data from 36 Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations



(CAAQMS) stations located in the city was 17 per cent lower compared to the seasonal average of 2018-19 winter. Based on the subset of the 10 oldest stations, there is an

improvement of almost 20 per cent," the CSE report said. It also said that the number of days with severe or severe-plus air quality was the lowest in the last five years. "This winter,

around 10 days had a city-wide average in 'severe' or worse AQI category, which is much lower compared to 24 such days in the previous winter and 33 in the 2018-19 winter," the report said.

According to CSE, the city also recorded five days of good air this year which is an improvement over the last winter which had recorded one "good" AQI day, whereas, earlier winters did not record any "good" air quality days.

Farm stubble fires this winter were about half of the last winter as the total count of stubble fires reported this year from Punjab, Haryana and

Delhi in October and November stood at 55,846 (according to NASA's VIIRS satellite) and 12,158 (according to MODIS satellite) respectively. "These are respectively 36 per cent and 40 per cent lower than the figures for October-January in 2021-22.

If the FRP (fire radiative power which is the measure of the intensity of fire) is taken into account in addition to the number of fires, it becomes clear that not only were the fires lesser in count, but also lower in intensity compared to the previous two years," the CSE report said. It also said that fires have been lower between

October 2022 and January 2023, both in count and intensity, compared to the previous two seasons, but are marginally higher compared to the 2019-20 season. "The spike seen in the fires since the beginning of the pandemic has ended and the situation has reverted to a pre-pandemic scenario.

This is a relatively better scenario, but we are still far from attaining our clean air objectives," the report said. The quantity of smoke from farm stubble fires affecting Delhi is dependent upon two major factors - quantity and intensity of farm stubble fires

and meteorological conditions conducive for transportation of the smoke to Delhi. This winter, not only the quantity and intensity of farm stubble fires have been low, but also the meteorological conditions have been less conducive for the transport of the smoke and as a result, the total smoke that fell upon Delhi in the form of PM2.5 has been considerably less.

The CSE estimates that about 4.1 tonnes of PM2.5 affected Delhi this winter in form of smoke, which is 37 per cent less than the 6.4 tonnes last year and almost half of 2020-21 winter figure.

We need to be ready for future conflict: Rajnath



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt, Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar and other Naval officers during the Naval Commanders' Conference, aboard aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, on Monday. PTI Photo

Must develop futuristic capabilities, says Def Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sounding a note of caution that future conflicts will be “unpredictable,” Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said “we need to be ready.” He made this observation in his address to Naval Commanders’ meet onboard the country’s first indigenous built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant off Goa. The warship was commissioned into the Navy in September last year by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In his address, Rajnath also called for futuristic capability development to deal with

emerging maritime security challenges and said the Indian Navy is standing firm in protecting national interests and strengthened India’s position as ‘Preferred Security Partner’ in the Indian Ocean Region. He reviewed the operational capabilities of the Indian Navy during the Naval Commanders’ Conference. The minister also witnessed the operational demonstrations at sea, highlighting the Navy’s capability to undertake multi-dimensional missions towards safeguarding the maritime interests of the country.

Elaborating upon the emerging challenges, Rajnath said “Future conflicts will be unpredictable. The constantly-evolving world order has forced everyone to re-strategise. Constant vigil on the Northern and Western borders as well as the entire coastline must be maintained. We need to be

ready to deal with all future challenges.” He described secured borders as the first requirement to ensure social and economic progress, asserting that India, under Prime Minister Modi’s leadership, is moving forward in ‘Amrit Kaal’ with renewed thrust and zeal to achieve this objective. Emphasising that economic prosperity and security scenario go hand-in-hand, he pointed out that the defence sector has emerged as a major demand creator, which has been boosting the economy and ensuring the country’s development.

“In the next 5-10 years, orders worth over \$100 billion are expected to be placed through the defence sector and it will become a major partner in the economic development of the country. Today, our defence sector is on the runway, soon when it takes off, it will

transform the country’s economy. If we want to see India among the top economic powers of the world by the end of ‘Amrit Kaal’, we need to take bold steps towards becoming a defence superpower,” the defence minister said.

He reiterated the need for a huge country like India to be completely self-reliant and not dependant on others for its security.

Rajnath commended the Navy for being at forefront of indigenisation and innovation through inductions of ships and submarines and development of niche technologies, in consonance with ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ vision.

On the commissioning of INS Vikrant, he said it further reinforced the belief that India’s naval designing and development is at a promising stage and more progress will be made in times to come.

Youth Cong to conduct ‘Youth Jodo, Booth Jodo’ campaigns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

After yet another dismal performance in recently concluded Assembly elections soon after the South to North India ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’, the youth wing of the Congress has now planned multiple outreach programmes even as the grand old party is designing its model of the East to West Yatra.

The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) will conduct “Youth Jodo, Booth Jodo”, “Youth Connect Program”, and “Ek Booth Paanch Youth” keeping in mind for forthcoming assembly elections in various states. During a three-day national executive meeting organised on March 3 in Bengaluru, the party discussed strategies for the forthcoming assembly election in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana.

The grand old is already undertaking party Haath se Haath Jodo campaign to connect directly to the people across the country while the major, East to West Yatra similar to the Rahul Gandhi led 3500 km Kanyakumari to Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra spanning for about four months, has been announced by the party at the last week’s Congress Plenary in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

“The message of the Congress party has to be conveyed to the masses. In the forthcoming assembly elections and 2024 Lok Sabha elections, we will connect with all the youngsters of the country,” said IYC national president Srinivas BV said. As the Karnataka Assembly elections are around the corner, several leaders including



Karnataka Congress president D K Shivakumar, vice president Suraj Hegde, Karnataka MLA Krishna Byre Gowda, All India Congress Committee (AICC) In-charge Dinesh Gundu Rao and senior Congress leader K J George also attended the meeting.

Shivakumar said that the leaders of the Congress party have “sacrificed power” and considered “serving the country as their religion”. “Corruption is increasing day by day under the BJP ruled Karnataka due to people have been suffering.

The Congress party will form a government here in the coming days and will work for the welfare of the people,” he said. Exuding confidence amongst the party workers in winning the forthcoming polls, Dinesh Gundu Rao said that the Congress will “emerge victorious with full majority.”

Srinivas said the declining economy, rising inflation, unemployment, hatred, violence and other problems were also discussed in the meeting and several resolutions were also passed by the party members.

BJP washing machine running at full speed: Cong on NPP tie



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Monday took a swipe at the BJP for supporting a Government led by NPP chief Conrad Sangma in Meghalaya, saying that a few days back his dispensation was considered the “most corrupt” by the top BJP leadership now “in a fit of amnesia”, the party is joining hands with him.

The Opposition party also said that the “BJP washing machine” is now running full speed. National People’s Party president Sangma on Friday called on Meghalaya Governor Phagu Chauhan and submitted to him the letter of support of 32 MLAs, while staking claim to form the Government in the northeastern State. Sangma, the outgoing Chief Minister,

Meghalaya Governor Phagu Chauhan receives the letter of support from National People’s Party (NPP) leader Conrad Sangma to form Government in Meghalaya in alliance with UDP and PDF, in Shillong, on Monday PTI Photo

said he has the support of BJP, Hill State People’s Democratic Party (HSPDP) and two independent MLAs, while asserting the tally may go up in the coming days as he is in touch with other parties as well.

“A few days back Conrad Sangma’s government in Meghalaya was the MOST corrupt in the country according to both PM & HM. Now of course, BJP in a fit of amnesia I suppose, is joining hands with him. Meghalaya deserves better,” Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a tweet. “I should have added that

CPM blames BJP for Tripura’s post-election violence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) polit bureau on Monday blamed BJP for “unleashing post-poll violence in Tripura” by murders and destruction of homes. In a statement, the party has asked its cadres to stage protests across India against the violence unleashed by BJP and asked state administration to provide protection and financial, medical relief to the victims.

“As the results were being declared on March 2 and the BJP was inching towards a majority, an orgy of violence

marking the daylight murder of democracy in Tripura was unleashed. Unwilling to accept that it won a wafer thin majority losing over 10 per cent of its vote share and the coalition losing 11 of its sitting seats, the BJP is mounting such orgy of violence.

“Out of a total of more than thousand incidents, in which so far three lives have been lost, details of 668 cases have been submitted to the state administration as the Governor remained unavailable to meet the CPI(M) and Left Front delegation, said CPI(M) in statement. CITU general secretary Tapan Sen

urged the State Government to protect the life and property of victims, facing the attacks from BJP. “More than 1000 incidents of attacks, violence, arson and loot, extortion on the people, opposition offices, the leaders and cadres is reported throughout the state till yesterday.

The Trade Union offices, leaders, cadres and supporters are also being attacked by the BJP hoodlums. The Trade union offices built upon by hard earned money of workers are being attacked and burnt down in many places in Tripura including in Agartala, said Sen.

state on Thursday, bagging 26 seats out of the 59 constituencies that went to polls on February 27.

As the party fell short of the magic figure of 31 in the 60-member assembly, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Sangma sought the support of Shah in forming the new government. The United

Democratic Party (UDP), which was NPP’s ally in the Sangma government, emerged as the second-largest party, winning 11 constituencies. It had won only six seats in the 2018 polls. Congress and the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC won five seats each, while the BJP won two assembly segments.

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Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, 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 on 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/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Parul Sethi/ Anju Sethi/ LBVGR00004957994	Plot No.7-B, New House No.395, Bearing Mincipal Permanent Property Id No.111C192U48, Kalyan Nagar Jagadhri Yamunanagar Haryana/ March 03, 2023	September 27, 2022 Rs. 27,28,151/-	Gurgaon / Yamuna-nagar

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 : March 07, 2023
Place : Gurgaon

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Modi to open third session of disaster risk reduction platform

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the third Session of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) here on March 10 on the theme “Building Local Resilience in a Changing Climate”.

The theme of the conference is in line with the 10-point agenda outlined by the Prime Minister to build local capacities, especially in the context of a rapidly changing disaster risk scenario in the wake of climate change.

The conference is likely to discuss the issue of landslides of Joshimath in Uttarakhand and also to share the perspectives of the National Disaster Response Force’s team, which undertook a rescue operation in Turkey recently, officials said.

The event will be attended by over 1,000 guests including Union ministers, ministers of disaster management from States, parliamentarians, representatives of local bodies, heads of specialized disaster management agencies, academicians, representatives from private sector organizations, media and civil society organizations.

The NPDRR, chaired by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, is a multi-stakeholders “National Platform” which is characterized by a process, where all stakeholders get together to share knowledge, experiences, views and ideas, and discuss the latest developments and trends in disaster risk reduction (DRR), identify gaps, make recommendations, and forge partnerships to further accelerate disaster risk reduction efforts.

Indian, French armies to hold maiden drill in Kerala today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The maiden joint military exercise FRINJEX-23 between Indian Army and French Army will be conducted at Pangode Military Station, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on Tuesday and Wednesday. The drill will further strengthen defence cooperation with France which is a key aspect of the overall Indo-France strategic partnership.

It is for the first time armies of both nations are engaging in this format with each contingent comprising of a Company Group each from Thiruvananthapuram based Indian Army troops and French 6th Light Armoured Brigade, officials said here on Monday.

The exercise is aimed at enhancing inter-operability, coordination and cooperation between both forces at tactical level.

War of words continues over Rahul’s lecture



New Delhi: The slugfest between the BJP and the Congress on Rahul Gandhi’s lectures abroad continued on Monday with the Union Minister Anurag Thakur again taking on the Congress leader and asking him “not to betray the nation.” “Don’t betray India, Rahul Gandhi ji. The objections to India’s foreign policy is an evidence of your scant understanding of the issue. No one will believe the lies you spread about India from foreign soil,” Thakur told reporters here.

“His party had done it earlier, when it took local issues to the United Nations, and now to ask other countries to intervene in India. They have not yet come out of the thought of slavery,” the Information and Broadcasting Minister said. **PNS**

India ready to help Dhaka in modernisation of Def forces: Envoy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/DHAKA

With the objective to forge closer ties with its neighbour, India is ready to help Bangladesh with its defence modernisation efforts and has identified defence industry cooperation with Dhaka, Indian envoy there has said. He also underlined it as an emerging focus area of the bilateral partnership, including joint development and production. This point was enunciated during a seminar organized by the Indian High Commission in Dhaka on Sunday on Indian defence equipment to promote defence industry cooperation between the two nations.

Speaking at the event, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma identified defence industry cooperation between the two countries as an emerging focus area of their defence partnership, a press release by the High Commission said.

Verma highlighted the accomplishments of Indian’s defence industry over the last decade driven by the “Make in India, Make for the World” vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The High Commissioner invited Bangladesh Armed Forces to benefit from India’s cost-effective, high-quality defence equipment and technology and proposed joint development and production. He expressed Delhi’s readiness to partner with Dhaka in its defence modernisation through the USD 500 million Defence Line of Credit extended by the Indian government to the Bangladeshi government and urged the defence industry on both sides to take full advantage of this arrangement.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/Freight, Delhi Division, Northern Railway, in terms of Railway Board letter no. 2022/TC(FM)/10/04 dated 13.06.2022, invites bids through **E-Auction (www.ireps.gov.in)** for leasing of parcel space of **SLR compartments and Parcel Vans** (on round trip basis) for a period of **two years** as per detail and schedule given below:-

S. No.	Date & time of e-Auction	Assets to be auctioned
1	09.03.2023 at 11:30 am	12191 (F1 & F2), 12918 (F1), 14208 (F1), 14316 (F1), 15035 (F1, F2 & R1), 22463 (F1), 22485 (F1)
2	10.03.2023 at 10:30 am	12457 (F1, F2 & R1), 12646 (R1), 14507 (F1, F2 & R1), 19338 (F1), 20914 (F1, F2 & R1), 20946 (F1), 22429 (F1), 22479 (F1) 22654 (F1)
3	13.03.2023 at 10:30 am	12036 (F1), 12066 (F1), 14011 (F1 & R1), 14731 (F1 & R1), 15060 (F1 & R1), 20409 (F1), 20473 (F1 & R1), 22168 (F1, F2 & R1), 22450 (F1), 22950 (F1), 22986 (F1)
4	14.03.2023 at 10:30 am	12005 (F1), 12038 (F1), 12148 (R1), 12274 (F1), 12481 (F1, F2 & R1), 12646 (F1 & F2), 14812 (F1), 22421 (F1, F2 & R1), 22482 (F1, F2 & R1)
5	15.03.2023 at 10:30 am	01 LVPH (24 tonnes) on round trip basis in each train - 12226/12225, 12236/12235, 12264/12263, 12284/12283, 12425/12426, 12432/12431, 12438/12437, 12442/12441, 12445/12446, 12454/12453, 12468/12467, 14033/14034, 20408/20407, 22412/22411, 22414/22413, 22420/22419, 22428/22427, 22429/22430, 22434/22433, 22460/22459 & 01 VP (23 tonnes) on round trip basis in train number - 22418/22417
6	16.03.2023 at 10:30 am	12314 (F1), 12506 (F1), 14303 (F1 & R1), 14305 (F1 & R1), 14331 (F1, F2 & R1), 14545 (F1, F2 & R1) 15484 (F1), 20488 (F1, F2 & R1), 15058 (F1), 12034 (F1), 14038 (F1)
7	17.03.2023 at 10:30 am	12011 (F1), 12017 (F1), 12148 (F1 & F2), 12432 (F1), 12644 (F1, F2 & R1), 22418 (F2), 14553 (F2)
8	21.03.2023 at 10:30 am	12029 (F1), 12040 (F1), 12455 (F1), 14041 (F1), 14521 (F1, F2 & R1), 22404 (F1), 22454 (F1, F2, & R1)
9	22.03.2023 at 10:30 am	12013 (F1), 12015 (F1), 12031 (F1), 12448 (F1), 12459 (F1), 12463 (F1), 12986 (F1), 15280 (F1), 22210 (F1), 22414 (F1), 22472 (F1, F2 & R1)
10	23.03.2023 10:30 am	12045 (F1), 12963 (F1), 14152 (F1), 14164 (F1, F2 & R1), 14681 (F1), 20938 (F1 & R1), 22401 (F1)

Joint Parcel Product (JPP) trains

S. No.	Date & time of e-Auction	Assets to be auctioned
11	20.03.2023 at 10:30 am	5 VPs (23 tonnes) on round trip basis in JPP Train number - 00444/00443 5 VPs (23 tonnes) on round trip basis in JPP Train number - 00442/00441

Important notes:
1. For more information, requirement and various aspects regarding these e-Auctions, interested bidders are advised to visit https://www.ireps.gov.in/html/helpdesk/learning_centre.html. (e-Auction leasing section).
2. **Earnest Money Deposit (EMD):** 5% of the total contractual bid value to be deposited online during the auction. EMD of the successful bidder will be retained as Security Deposit.
3. Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute rights to short terminate these contracts at any point of time and/or for taking any decision regarding the discontinuation/continuation of these contracts with modified/additional terms and conditions depending upon the continuation/discontinuation of these trains or commencement of new train services.
708/2023

Serving Customers with a Smile

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a ray of hope to several patients afflicted with kidney diseases which are on the rise in the country as in the world, researchers from Jamia Hamdard has found that Neeri KFT, an Indian traditional ayurvedic polyherbal formulation, is effective in regulating the functions of at least six genes variants causing dysfunction to the vital organ.

Ahead of the World Kidney Day on March 9, the researchers said that though the herbal drug, manufactured by AIML Pharma, is already known for its therapeutic properties, a trial was conducted for



the first time to investigate nephroprotective action of the drug against genes related to kidney dysfunction using in-silico, in-vitro and in-vivo approaches.

The results were encouraging in all the categories. The researchers explained that six

genes — CASP, IEL, AKT, ACE-2, AGTR-1 and SOD-1 — are responsible for regulating the functioning of the kidney. In other words, proteins associated with these genes help in ensuring the health of this vital organ. Any variation in these molecules can complicate or damage the kidney structure.

The study published in the journal Biomedicines found that the compounds such as gallic acid, caffeic acid and ferulic acid were the major constituents of Neeri KFT, while network pharmacology analysis indicated a strong interaction between polyphenols and the genes involved in the pathophysiology of kidney dis-

ease. Similarly, the in-vivo study showed a significant ameliorative effect of the herbal drug on biochemical markers and antioxidant enzymes and it regulated inflammatory cytokine expression in kidney tissues.

Sanchit Sharma from AIML Pharma pointed out that the herbal formulation based on time-tested phytoconstituents of extracts of medicinal plants like punarnava, giloy, gokhru, palash and varuna has been developed after intensive scientific research. He was of the view that evidence-based research in the Ayush systems of medicine will only help strengthen their acceptance among people.

‘CBI never raids Cong as it’s BJP’s A team’

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Fresh from her party’s loss in Sagardighi Assembly by-elections where the Congress and the Left teamed up to rout the Trinamool Congress and push the BJP to a distant third position, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday launched a frontal attack against the three parties for joining hands at the cost of their respective ideologies.

Raising the issue of Sunday’s CBI raid at former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi’s Patna residence, and linking the Agency action to a joint letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi — questioning political use of ED and CBI — signed by senior Opposition leaders including herself and Tejaswi Yadav the Bihar Deputy Chief Minister, Banerjee asked “why does the CBI does not raid the houses of the Congress leaders ... this is because the Congress is the BJP’s A Team and the CPI(M) is its B Team.”

Unholy alliances featuring the BJP, Congress and Left would not be able to cow her



down Banerjee said, adding, “I will continue to fight the mischievous designs of BJP-Congress-Left alone ... they should not think that by striking a deal in a single election they will be able to get the better of me.”

On the continued agitation by a large part of the State Government employees demanding dearness allowances on par with their Central Government counterparts, Banerjee said she would not be able to give DA beyond the six percent that has already been announced due to lack of funds.

“I have given so much ...

how much more do you want ... I cannot give more than 6 percent DA,” Banerjee said accusing the CPI(M) of provoking the government servants against her. Attacking the Centre for not releasing funds required for various welfare schemes --- that incidentally had been her electoral mainstay in the past two elections --- Banerjee said, “I have to run a whole lot of social welfare schemes ... I cannot stop them ... the government staff are threatening strike and cease work but they are not asking the Centre to release the funds that have been withheld by them.”

Why inaction on Saradha scamsters, rues Suwendu

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Barely a couple of days after a team of Opposition leaders including Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, former UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejaswi Yadav and others shot off a joint letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi questioning the injudicious use of central agencies against Opposition parties, Bengal Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari on Monday wrote a letter to the Prime Minister “expressing concern” over CBI inaction against senior politicians involved in the multi-crore Saradha chit fund scam.

Alleging that the Chief Minister was the “biggest beneficiary” the Opposition Leader said wondered whether it was the “high post” that was mak-



ing the central agency hesitant to act against her.

He said that though the CBI was given the responsibility of the investigation, because it was a scam involving thousands of crores collected from the public who stepped into the trap because of the “patronage of people occupying high positions in the system.”

Alleging that the chit fund scam started when Banerjee was the Railway Minister in the UPA II government, Adhikari wondered whether the CBI was afraid of the high posts involved in the scam.

Incidentally Kunal Ghosh --- who too was arrested for his alleged involvement in the scam and who is presently the TMC spokesperson --- had on several occasions said that the “biggest beneficiary of the chit fund scam was none other than Mamata Banerjee herself.”

Judge seeks Chief Justice’s help as Kochi chokes due to unabated blaze

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

In an unprecedented incident on Monday, Devan Ramachandran, a judge of the Kerala High Court wrote to S Manikumar, the Chief Justice of the court, seeking urgent intervention in the massive fire that broke out at a waste treatment plant near Kochi which continues unabated and has engulfed the whole metropolis in poisonous smoke.

It is widely believed that the Central Pollution Control Board’s report that the poison content in the atmospheric air in Kochi has crossed all safety levels that prompted Justice Devan Ramachandran to write to the Chief Justice. The CPCB’s findings is that the atmospheric oxygen in Kochi has a PM 2.5 value of 441 which is highly dangerous.

The term P.M denotes Particulate Matter or the micro molecules that constitute the atmospheric oxygen.



A Government of Kerala medical officer based in Ernakulam told *The Pioneer* that it was not advisable for people from other States or countries to undertake a trip to Kochi as on date.

Though the fire was broke out last week, the authorities have failed to bring it under control while tons of garbage including plastic waste continue to burn emitting poisonous gas. The fire that engulfed the tons of garbage that have been dumped into the waste yard has caused breathlessness and cough to hundreds of people

across the metropolis and hospitals were lined up with those who were affected by the poisonous smoke.

While the Kerala Government deployed the services of fire engines and helicopters from the Naval Base at Kochi to drowse the flames, the result proved to be worse than the cure as the fire became more intensive. The district administration asked people in Ernakulam city and suburbs to stay indoors on Sunday while all educational institutions remained partially shut on Monday.

MVA will contest Assembly, LS polls together, says Pawar

PTI ■ PUNE

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Monday said the people in Maharashtra are looking for a change and he will ensure that constituents of Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) contest the upcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha elections together.

Pawar was speaking to reporters after the newly-elected Congress MLA from Kasba Peth Assembly constituency in Pune city, Ravindra Dhanekar, visited the NCP chief at his residence here.

He said Dhanekar was elected by common people in the bypoll in Kasba Peth, a BJP



bastion, as he has been working for them for the last several years. Queried whether a formula of contesting elections jointly will be repeated by MVA in the upcoming civic elections, Pawar said his colleagues in NCP are looking into this aspect. “However, my efforts will be to ensure that the constituents of MVA remain together, take joint decisions,

and face the state Assembly and Lok Sabha elections together,” he said. The former Union minister also said the people in Maharashtra are looking for a change.

“I am roaming in the state and the people are telling me that they want a change. They want us (the Opposition) to come together. These are people’s sentiments,” he said.

Promise made in Parl on PoJK will soon be fulfilled: Sinha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Manoj Sinha on Monday said that the commitment made in Parliament regarding Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoJK) will soon be fulfilled. Sinha said his administration will take up with the Centre the issue of over 5,000 displaced families of PoJK who failed to avail the ‘one-time central assistance’ timely.

He said, “PoJK is an integral part of India. The development of new J&K is incomplete without complete integration of PoJK displaced persons in the mainstream development. “We are committed to ensuring the welfare and well-



being of all so they can realize their true potential & contribute in nation building,” he noted. He was addressing a gathering of PoJK displaced persons after he inaugurated LG’s Special Governance Camp for Displaced Persons of PoJK, at Sports Stadium, Bhour Camp. “We had started outreach programmes in 2021 for

families living outside UT so that no one is left behind in any welfare scheme & focusing on skilling, self employment, social assistance, scholarships, sports, financial inclusion to aid economic development & financial stability,” he.

The drive aimed to take the welfare schemes to every house and ensure coverage of all ben-

eficiaries under Centrally Sponsored Schemes & UT Schemes will be held at Udhampur, Rajouri, Jammu, Poonch and Kathua.

“Displaced families of PoJK have suffered a lot. Prime Minister Narendra Modi understood their sufferings and made arrangements for their financial support and settlement. We have organized this camp on the direction of the Prime Minister to saturate social security schemes, handholding of youth so they pursue their dreams of becoming entrepreneurs and ensuring that they can avail all facilities like other citizens. Steps will be taken to regularize the colonies of displaced families,” said the Lt Governor.

He announced that the

J&K Government will construct Smriti Bhawan in the memory of martyrs of PoJK. Every effort will be made to preserve and promote the culture & traditions of displaced families. Land has already been identified and soon the construction work will start, he added.

Sinha also paid homage to the brave civilians who were martyred in the October 1947 terror attack by Pakistan.

We remember their supreme sacrifices & understand pain & sufferings of displaced families.

It is our responsibility to secure their rights and build an enabling environment to fulfill aspirations of the young generation from the community, observed the Lt Governor.

India can become 3rd-largest economy by skilling youth, says PM at Guj Rozgar Mela

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said skilling the youth holds the key to India becoming the third-largest economy in the world from the fifth now and asserted his government is committed to ensure benefits of skill development reach all sections of society, including Dalits and tribals.

Modi said the focus of his government is to create maximum employment opportunities through infrastructure and development projects and by giving fillip to manufacturing, while sectors neglected since the country’s independence, too, are getting covered under the Centre’s push for job creation.

Virtually addressing a “Rozgar Mela”, or employment fair, organised by the Gujarat government at the Mahatma Mandir convention centre in Gandhinagar, Modi said nearly 1.5 lakh youth were given government jobs in the state during the last five years and 25,000 more such positions will be made available in 2023. The PM emphasised on the need to create a skilled workforce on a large scale to tap growing opportunities in various sectors.

“For the new opportunities being created in the country, we need to create skilled manpower on a large scale.

“India can achieve the target of becoming the third-largest economy only by skilling its youth,” he said.

India became the world’s fifth-largest economy last year. “We are trying to see that benefits of skill development reach each and every section of society, be it Dalits, tribals or women.

“We are focussing on how everyone gets equal opportunity to grow,” he said.

According to Modi, his government’s “holistic approach” of development is creating a large number of jobs in the country.

“Today, nearly 90,000 start-ups are functioning in the country, that too in tier-II and tier-III cities.

“Apart from creating new employment opportunities, these start-ups are inspiring lakhs of youths to take up self-employment.

“The government is providing them financial assistance without any bank guarantee,” the PM pointed out.

In his address to the gathering through video conference, Modi highlighted schemes like Pradhan Mantri



MUDRA Yojana and Stand-Up India and said they have helped in promoting self-employment in the country.

The PM said the focus of this government is to create employment opportunities even in those sectors which have remained neglected after the country’s independence.

Turning his attention to his home state, Modi said nearly 18 lakh youths received jobs through employment

exchanges during the last five years in Gujarat, ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

“During the last five years, the Gujarat government gave jobs to 1.5 lakh youths. Moreover, nearly 18 lakh youths received jobs through employment exchanges during the last five years in Gujarat... I am told the Gujarat government has planned to give government jobs to 25,000 youths this year,” said the PM.

37% sanctioned posts in Gujarat Govt engineering colleges, 28% in polytechnic colleges vacant

PTI ■ GANDHINAGAR

A total of 1,004, or 36.6 per cent, of the 2,744 sanctioned posts in 16 government engineering colleges and 986, or 28.5 per cent, of 3,463 sanctioned Class I-III posts in government polytechnic colleges were vacant as on December 31 last year, the Gujarat government informed the Assembly on Monday.

State higher and technical education minister Rushikesh Patel gave the information while replying to a query on vacancies in government engineering colleges by Congress



MLA Arjun Modhwadia.

The minister’s reply stated that resignation, retirement, voluntary retirement, transfer to another job, promotion and death, among others, were the main reasons for these posts lying vacant.

There 2,744 Class I to IV sanctioned posts in 16 gov-

ernment engineering colleges, of which 1,740 are filled as on December 31, 2022, Patel said. Out of 534 Class I sanctioned posts, 308, or around 58 per cent, are vacant, while 13 per cent, or 189 out of 1,467 Class II sanctioned posts are vacant, he said.

It is 64.8 per cent (310 out of 478) for Class III and 74.3 per cent (196 out of 265) for Class IV posts, the minister added.

“Out of 986 posts vacant in the polytechnics, 84 are Class I posts, 182 are Class II, and 720 are Class III posts,” Patel said.

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is gearing up for an “extremely challenging” experiment of controlled re-entry of a decommissioned orbiting satellite on Tuesday.

The low Earth satellite, Megha-Tropiques-1 (MT1), was launched on October 12, 2011, as a joint satellite venture of ISRO and the French space agency, CNES for tropical weather and climate studies.

An uninhabited area in the Pacific Ocean between 5°S to 14°S latitude and 119°W to 100°W longitude was identified as the targeted re-entry zone for MT1, weighing about 1000 kg.

About 125 kg on-board fuel remained unutilised at its end-of-mission that could pose risks for accidental break-up, an ISRO statement noted.

This left-over fuel was estimated to be sufficient to achieve a fully controlled atmospheric re-entry to impact the uninhabited location in the Pacific Ocean.

Controlled re-entries involve deorbiting to very low altitudes to ensure impact occurs within a targeted safe zone. Usually, large satellites/rocket bodies, which are



likely to survive aero-thermal fragmentation upon re-entry, are made to undergo controlled re-entry to limit ground casualty risk.

However, all such satellites are specifically designed to undergo controlled re-entry at EOL.

“MT1 was not designed for EOL operations through controlled re-entry which made the entire exercise extremely challenging”, ISRO said.

Furthermore, the on-board constraints of the aged satellite, where several systems had lost redundancy and showed degraded performance, and maintaining subsystems under harsher environmental conditions at much lower than originally designed orbital altitude added to the operational complexities.

Innovative workarounds were implemented by the operations team based on the study, deliberations, and exchanges among the mission, opera-

tions, flight dynamics, aerodynamics, propulsion, controls, navigation, thermal, and other sub-system design teams across the ISRO centres, who worked in synergy to surmount these challenges.

Since August 2022, 18 orbit manoeuvres have been performed to progressively lower the orbit. In between the de-orbiting, aero-braking studies at different solar panel orientations were also carried out to gain better insights into the physical process of atmospheric drag affecting the orbital decay of the satellite.

The final de-boost strategy has been designed after taking into consideration several constraints, including visibility of the re-entry trace over ground stations, ground impact within the targeted zone, and allowable operating conditions of subsystems, especially the maximum deliverable thrust and the maximum firing duration of the thrusters.

Ministry of Consumer Affairs lays down the endorsement norms for celebrities, influencers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has released guidelines called “Endorsements Know-hows!” for celebrities, influencers, and virtual influencers on social media platforms saying celebrities and social media influencers will be required to disclose their material connections with a brand, service or company, including free products, contests and sweepstakes entries, trips or hotel stays, media barters, coverage and awards.

The guidelines aim to ensure that individuals do not mislead their audiences when endorsing products or services and that they are in com-

pliance with the Consumer Protection Act and any associated rules or guidelines.

As per the guidelines, social media influencers will soon have to mandatorily disclose sponsored posts as paid content if there is a material connection between them and a brand, failing which, they can be prohibited from publishing for six months and face a penalty of Rs 10 lakh and upto Rs 50 lakh for repeated offence.

The guidelines say, endorsements must be made in simple, clear language, and terms such as “advertisement,” “sponsored,” “collaboration” or “paid promotion” can be used. Individuals must not endorse any product or service that

they have not personally used or experienced or in which due diligence has not been done by them.

Such guidelines will be applicable to all individuals who have access to an audience, as well as those who have the power to influence audience decisions.

The department has observed that there is confusion regarding which disclosure word to use for what kind of partnership. Therefore, for paid or barter brand endorsement, any of the following disclosures may be used: “advertisement,” “ad,” “sponsored,” “collaboration,” or “partnership.” However, the term must be indicated as hashtag or headline text.

The guidelines specify that individuals or groups who have access to an audience and the power to affect their audiences’ purchasing decisions or opinions about a product, service, brand, or experience, because of the influencer’s/celebrity’s authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with their audience, must disclose.

The guidelines state that the disclosure must be placed in the endorsement message in a manner that is clear, prominent, and extremely hard to miss. Disclosures should not be mixed with a group of hashtags or links. For endorsements in a picture, disclosures should be superimposed over the image enough for viewers to notice.

For endorsements in a video or a live stream, disclosures should be made in both audio and video format and displayed continuously and prominently during the entire stream.

The guidelines advise celebrities and influencers to always review and satisfy themselves that the advertiser is in a position to substantiate the claims made in the advertisement. It is also recommended that the product and service must have been actually used or experienced by the endorser.

In conclusion, the guidelines aim to ensure that individuals do not mislead their audiences when endorsing products or services, and that



they are in compliance with the Consumer Protection Act and any associated rules or guide-

lines. It is essential for celebrities, influencers, and virtual influencers to adhere to these

guidelines to maintain transparency and authenticity with their audience.

FIRST COLUMN

SCALE UP RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

It can help design engagement strategies that will boost employee motivation & productivity




It is not surprising to know that millions of people who could not pursue a higher or professional education, enter the unorganized sector and start working. The majority of gig workers have experience and skills. They wish to have a degree or a diploma to facilitate their progress and growth for a more rewarding future. They don't have any certification of their skills except the fact that they are attached to different unorganized sectors and that is their certification only. In 2014 as a part of PMKVY, a novel scheme – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – was floated by the Central government for certifying the skills acquired by workers in the unorganised sectors through traditional, non-formal learning channels, makes immense sense, especially in a country where just two per cent of the workforce is certified as skilled.

After eight years of the rollout, the RPL has run into some headwinds, with several selected trainees leaving midway through the certification process, a trend that has forced the implementation agencies to attempt a course correction. It aimed to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the standardized National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), which was oriented under the RPL but nothing significant could be achieved for a set of varied reasons.

In tune with the RPL, we need to have in place a mechanism that is not only capable of skilling, reskilling and upskilling youth to deal with gaps regarding skills and competencies but also be in demand. However, our dream to reap the benefits of skilled human capital will come a cropper if we are not able to ensure the skills gained even informally are recognized and certified. Most of them are from poorer sections of society. We will be doing a great favour to ourselves if we do add value to their skills acquired through sheer hard work and perseverance.

As the India Skills Report-2022 also indicates that experienced candidates have higher demand in the job market, the RPL process can help



such persons acquire a formal qualification that matches their knowledge and skills, and thus contribute to improving their employability, earn-ability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem, consequently adding to the economic progress of the nation.

In 2020, a pilot survey was conducted to understand the awareness, advantages, and adoption of RPL in higher education in Haryana. The survey reveals that only 29 per cent of industry experts were aware of RPL and 71 per cent did not know about RPL or were partially aware of RPL. However, in the case of academic leader respondents, 55 per cent was aware of the RPL.

An important challenge that needs to be addressed is to develop a mechanism of identifying where the skills exist and how the same can be documented and communicated with the eligible desirable candidates. There is a need to develop methods of creating the potential individuals' portfolios, reviewing them and also methods to assess them through written and oral assessments including demonstration. The information campaigns, counselling and guidance are key to the success of RPL in higher education.

The intervention of the government to make more effective execution of RPL policy and practices for higher education that explicitly address to remove the challenges and roadblocks in the path of work-based learning is required. The approach requires commitment from Academics and Industry without which it will be difficult to make this policy successful. Higher education institutions need to create a wing for RPL that defines the comprehensive assessment framework and credit allotment methodology. On the other hand, industries can support by modifying recruitment guidelines to accommodate new programs/qualifications in their recruitment and promotional guidelines besides working with educational institutions in developing effective assessment methodologies for RPL.

(The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC))

Rahul Gandhi knows no democratic decency

Rahul Gandhi has made several irresponsible statements that breach conventions and do not augur well for democracy

India is hailed the world over for being a successful and largest democracy. The transition of power on the basis of the mandate of the people has always been peaceful. Indian democracy is now old by one-quarter short of a century. Indian democracy is the largest in the world. India also has a rightful claim on being the oldest democracy, as there had been traditions from Gram Sabha to provinces several centuries ago of vibrant democracy thriving within the country.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi gave a lecture in Cambridge and he made several insinuations about Indian democracy. His umbrage against the Indian democratic process and system is painful. He is indeed an Opposition leader. But his utterances show visceral apathy to the Indian democratic institutions. If the late Pranab Mukherjee had been alive, he would have been saddened at the state of affairs of his former party.

Indian democracy participants for several decades have held the tradition of not taking their sparring and bickering to foreign shores. Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, when she was touring abroad in the 1970s, had refused to comment when she was asked about the Morarji Desai government's actions against her. She had said that she would not discuss domestic politics in a foreign land. That was the spirit of Indian democracy. We may fight fiercely within the country, but outside we represent India in true spirit.

Rahul Gandhi chose foreign soil to level allegations of snooping on the government of India. He quoted unnamed intelligence officials to allege that his phone was being tapped. He made the charges of snooping on foreign soil. Such charges have been made in the past as well within the country. But he went to foreign capital to run down the strength of Indian democracy. This calls for a befitting response from all those who have faith in Indian democracy.

Rahul Gandhi may refresh his memory and recall the ugly spat between P Chidambaram and Pranab Mukherjee who were holding the portfolio for Home Affairs and Finance Ministry respectively in the Manmohan Singh Cabinet. Snooping devices were recovered from inside the desk of Pranab Mukherjee. The media headlined the episode for several days. One Cabinet minister was allegedly snooping on his colleague. The matter had gone to Manmohan Singh who brokered peace between the two squabbling ministers. Would Rahul Gandhi enlighten his audience on that episode and allow the people in the country to gain from his insight on why a senior minister of the stature of Pranab Mukherjee was being snooped on? This also warrants an explanation, because P Chidambaram is still a senior Congress leader.

A couple of months before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Kapil Sibal, who was a senior Congress leader at that time and who had the distinction of having been a Union Minister for Law in the Manmohan Singh Cabinet, had shamed the country by associating with a shady press conference by an anonymous person who remained under the cover but levelled defamatory allegations against the Indian electoral process, elections and the electronic voting machines (EVMs). That anonymous person remained a figure

“

RAHUL GANDHI ALSO CLAIMED THAT 'THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION DESCRIBES INDIA AS A UNION OF STATES AND THE COUNTRY IS LIKE EUROPE, REQUIRING CONVERSATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS AMONG STATES'

(Author is a political analyst)



from the dark web. But Sibal gave sanctity to him with his presence. It was clearly made out that the libellous allegations were being made on the blessings of Sibal.

Rahul Gandhi had not condemned Sibal for defaming the Indian democracy. Congress neither expelled him nor sought any explanations from him. Thus, the silence of Congress gave out the impression that the party was also associating with the defamatory allegations of the anonymous person whose whereabouts are still not known. In numbers, Indian democracy is bigger than 90 countries put together in the world.

It would only be Congress that is breaking ranks with the Opposition parties to violate the decades-old tradition of not washing dirty linens on foreign shores. US politics is highly divisive. The country claiming to be the oldest democracy showed the ugly spectacle when the armed forces had to be called to ensure the transition of power after the elections voted out the incumbent president. But the US politicians from the ranks of the Republicans and Democrats never wash their dirty lines on foreign shores. For them, American interests remain supreme when visiting other countries. They would only praise the strength of their institutions.

UK politics is not only sharply divisive but too fragile. The prime ministers don't last even a year in the UK. The politicians squabble bitterly. But when they are visiting other countries, memories are

without incidents of them washing their dirty linens. For them again it's the British interest that remains supreme.

The Indian politicians also held for decades another unanimity that on matters of national security they would speak in one voice. There cannot be contrasting descriptions and commentaries on issues of terror attacks within the country when speaking within India or abroad. This consensus has been held by all the political parties. But Rahul Gandhi has broken this tradition as well while speaking at Cambridge.

Pulwama terror attack in which several brave personnel of the security forces was an act of war against India by Pakistan. India gave a befitting lesson to Pakistan with successful surgical strikes. India demonstrated that the cost of exporting terrorism will be too high for Pakistan to afford with the surgical strikes. Yet, Rahul Gandhi chose to describe the Pulwama terror attack in his Cambridge lecture as an incident of a 'car bomb blast'. This is surely baffling. Even a section of Congress leaders must have been in disbelief.

There cannot be any dispute that Jammu and Kashmir was a victim of Pakistan's exported terrorism. But Rahul Gandhi chose to argue that "Jammu and Kashmir is insurgency prone". There is a world of difference between exported terrorism and insurgency. P Chidambaram, who was a Minister for Home Affairs, can

find time to explain the difference between insurgency and terrorism to his party leader.

Rahul Gandhi also claimed that "the Indian Constitution describes India as a Union of States and the country is like Europe, requiring conversations and negotiations among states". School-going children in India are well versed in the idea of Europe, which has several nations within the continent at war with each other throughout the course of history, with bloodletting still going on at a scale seen only during World War II.

India as a nation is a cultural unit, bound by tradition, history and way of life. What makes Rahul Gandhi think that India is like Europe? Which state in India killed the people of other states on the lines of European countries? In India, the tradition is that the Tamil Culture will be incomplete without Kashi, and Banaras is also incomplete without Rameshwaram. The people in Manipur share similar culture to those who inhabit the western state of Gujarat. In contrast, no historian ever has said that Europe is a nation. Europe is a continent, with nations at war against each other. Even the economic compulsion failed to bring success to the European Union.

It is incumbent upon the opposition parties in India to condemn Rahul Gandhi for his irresponsible statements made on a foreign shore. Aspersions must not be cast on the Indian democracy abroad.

BJP's 'look East' policy pays off

With the recent wins, the BJP is firmly saddled in the northeastern states while Congress is relegated to oblivion

The just released Assembly poll results in three northeastern states - Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura are seen as semi-finals before next year's parliamentary elections when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will seek a third consecutive term at the Centre. There are 25 Lok Sabha constituencies in the region. As they play the see-saw game; for some, like the BJP, they are encouraging, while for the Congress and the Left parties, it is a wake-up call.

The victory in the region is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's long-term strategy, which has paid good dividends. When he became the PM in 2014, BJP was not in power in Northeastern states. Today, it has a firm



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The author is a senior journalist)

foothold, as in Tripura or with its allies in the other two states. The ruling BJP-Tripura (IPFT) coalition has retained power in Tripura for a second consecutive term but with reduced numbers. Its strength in Meghalaya and Nagaland remained strong.

On the contrary, the once-dominant force of the Northeast, Congress, is now almost extinct. In 2014, the party was in power in five of the eight states in the region; In Tripura, which had once been the citadel of the Left parties, the CPI(M)'s strength came down from 16 seats to only 11 seats. The Grand Old Party bagged five seats in Meghalaya and three in Tripura while drawing a blank in Nagaland for another term. One cannot fault the parties

for trying all permutations and combinations to stay in power and consolidate their position. The Left parties and Congress experimented with an unnatural pre-poll alliance in Tripura, but it did not work. Sadly, the two national parties dominating the region have steeply declined. Electoral politics is a game of numbers. While the saffron party chose the correct alliance, the two national parties miscalculated. Even the combined strength of Congress- CPI(M) did not get them electoral dividends.

Secondly, the results show the consolidation of the BJP and regional forces. Of the 119 seats in the three states, the regional powers won 83 per cent (70 per cent). The National People's Party (NPP)

emerged significantly in Meghalaya and the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) in Nagaland. The Tipra Motha, the second-largest party in Tripura, clearly indicates the growing clout of regional powers.

Thirdly, Modi's Congress Mukt Bharat is becoming a reality. The two national parties – Congress and the CPI-M, which held sway in the region, have lost their grip. The Grand Old Party was decimated, and the Communists could not recover. Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave an interesting explanation for the BJP's victory. He said the reason is Triveni. "The first power is the work of the BJP govt, the second one is the work style of the BJP, and the last one is

the karyakartas of the BJP," he explained.

Moreover, the BJP communicated to the electorate well and talked about free ration, housing scheme, pay commission benefits and safety for women. Above all, the rise of the BJP in the region is also its drive and will to win.

BJP's advantage is that the regional parties recognise the new churnings and are keen to align with the party in power at the Centre. As Modi had pointed out, Christians in Meghalaya and Nagaland have supported the party, belying the belief that minorities are against the BJP.

The BJP used its advantages and was ahead in its war chest, cadre strength and leadership. The Prime minister and the other top leaders

frequently visited the region that paid the dividend. In the perception war, the BJP won by communicating to the people that the Congress CPI-M was unholy as the two had remained opponents. Above all, the party wanted to be known as a pan-national party and winning the Northeast was a significant achievement. But it cannot be complacent as the Lok Sabha polls are just months away, and the tempo has to be sustained. The BJP also had to deal with its factionalism.

As for Congress, the party should have concentrated on the region and allied with the regional parties just as the BJP did. During the recent elections, the top leadership was complacent and campaigned less than the BJP. The party

should stop living in the past glory. The Congress had strong regional leaders like Saikia who protected the party's interests. Somewhere along the way, the party lost its connection with the region; Secondly, this round of polls was held under the leadership of Congress President Mallikharjun Kharge, whose comment that northeastern states are small states and regional parties align with the party in power at the Centre reflects the party's need for a transparent electoral strategy.

The best bet for the Congress is to strengthen regional units that are still active by nurturing strong state leaders and for the Left parties to make a course correction and woo youth voters.

Sidelined, Chinese premier Li Keqiang takes final bow

AP ■ LONDON

After a decade in Chinese President Xi Jinping's shadow, Li Keqiang is taking his final bow as the country's premier, marking a shift away from the skilled technocrats who have helped steer the world's second-biggest economy in favor of officials known mainly for their unquestioned loyalty to China's most powerful leader in recent history.

After exiting the ruling Communist Party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee in October — despite being below retirement age — Li's last major task was delivering the state of the nation address to the rubber-stamp parliament on Monday. The report sought to reassure citizens of the resiliency of the Chinese economy, but contained little that was new.

Once seen as a potential top leader, Li was increasingly sidelined as Xi accumulated ever-greater powers and elevated the military and security services in aid of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". Li's lack of visibility sometimes made it difficult to remember he was technically ranked No. 2 in party.

Li "was a premier largely kept out of the limelight by order of the boss," said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies and a longtime observer of Chinese politics.

In an era where personal loyalty trumps all, the fact that Li wasn't seen purely as a Xi loyalist may end up being "the main reason why he will be remembered fondly," Tsang said. For most of his career, Li was known as a cautious, capable, and highly intelligent bureaucrat who rose through, and was bound by, a consensus-oriented Communist Party that reflexively stifles dissent.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang bows after delivering his state of the nation address at the opening session of China's National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Sunday.

As governor and then party secretary of the densely populated agricultural province of Henan in the 1990s, Li squelched reporting on an AIDS outbreak tied to illegal blood-buying rings that pooled plasma and reinjected it into donors after removing the blood products, allegedly with the collusion of local officials.

While Li was not in office when the scandal broke, his administration worked to quiet it up, prevented victims from seeking redress and harassed private citizens working on behalf of orphans and others affected.

But Li also cut a modestly different profile, an English speaker from a generation of politicians schooled during a time of greater openness to liberal Western ideas. Introduced to politics during the chaotic 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, he made it into prestigious

Peking University, where he studied law and economics, on his own merits rather than through political connections.

After graduation, Li went to work at the Communist Youth League, an organization that grooms university students for party roles, then headed by future president and party leader Hu Jintao. Higher office soon followed.

Among the largely faceless ranks of Chinese bureaucrats, Li managed to show an unusually candid streak. In a US State Department cable released by WikiLeaks, Li is quoted telling diplomats that Chinese economic growth statistics were "man-made", and saying he looked instead to electricity demand, rail cargo traffic, and lending as more accurate indicators.

Though no populist, in his speeches and public appearances, Li was practically typhonic compared to the typically languorous Xi.

Yet, he largely failed to make effective use of the platforms he was given, unlike his immediate predecessors. At his sole annual news conference on the closing day of each congressional annual session, Li used up most of his time repeating talks points and reciting statistics. Throughout the upheavals of China's three-year battle against Covid-19, Li was practically invisible.

Li, who hailed from humble backgrounds, had been seen as Hu's preferred successor as president. But the need to balance party factions prompted the leadership to choose Xi, the son of a former vice premier and party elder, as the consensus candidate. The two never formed anything like the partnership that characterized Hu's relationship with the premier, Wen Jiabao — or Mao Zedong's with the redoubtable Zhou Enlai — although Li and Xi never openly disagreed over fundamentals.

Khamenei condemns poisoning of schoolgirls

AP ■ DUBAI, UAE

Iran's supreme leader said Monday that if a series of suspected poisonings at girls' schools are proven to be deliberate the culprits should be sentenced to death for committing an "unforgivable crime."

It was the first time Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters of state, has spoken publicly about the suspected poisonings, which began late last year and have sickened hundreds of children.

Iranian officials only acknowledged them in recent weeks and have provided no details on who may be behind the attacks or what chemicals — if any — have been used. Unlike neighboring Afghanistan, Iran has no history of religious extremists targeting women's education.

"If the poisoning of students is proven, those behind this crime should be sentenced to capital punishment and there will be no amnesty for them," Khamenei said, accord-

ing to the state-run IRNA news agency. Authorities have acknowledged suspected attacks at more than 50 schools across 21 of Iran's 30 provinces since November.

Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said over the weekend that "suspicious samples" had been gathered by investigators, without elaborating. He called on the public to remain calm and accused unnamed enemies of inciting fear to undermine the Islamic Republic.

Vahidi said at least 52 schools had been affected by suspected poisonings, while Iranian media reports have put the number of schools at over 60. At least one boy's school reportedly has been affected.

Videos of upset parents and schoolgirls in emergency rooms with IVs in their arms have flooded social media.

Iran has imposed stringent restrictions on independent media since the outbreak of nationwide protests in



September, making it difficult to determine the nature and scope of the suspected poisonings. On Monday, Iranian media reported that authorities arrested a Qom-based journalist, Ali Pourtabatabaei, who had been regularly reporting on the suspected poisonings. The hard-line Kayhan newspaper in an editorial had called for the arrests of newspaper publishers who printed articles on the crisis critical of Iran's theocracy. The protests were sparked

by the death of a young woman who had been detained by morality police for allegedly violating the country's strict dress code. Religious hard-liners in Iran have been known to attack women they perceive as dressing immodestly in public. But even at the height of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, women and girls continued attending schools and universities. The children affected in the poisonings have reportedly complained of headaches,

heart palpitations, feeling lethargic or otherwise unable to move. Some described smelling tangerines, chlorine or cleaning agents.

Reports suggest at least 400 schoolchildren have fallen ill since November. Vahidi, the interior minister, said in his statement that two girls remain in hospital because of underlying chronic conditions. There have been no reported fatalities.

As more attacks were reported Sunday, videos were posted on social media showing children complaining about pain in the legs, abdomen and dizziness. State media have mainly referred to these as "hysterical reactions."

The World Health Organization documented a similar phenomenon in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2012, when hundreds of girls across the country complained of strange smells and poisoning. No evidence was found to support the suspicions, and the WHO said it appeared to be "mass psychogenic illnesses."

Pak court rejects Imran Khan's plea seeking suspension of arrest warrant

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

An Islamabad-based district court on Monday refused to withdraw a non-bailable arrest warrant it issued last week against former prime minister Imran Khan for his failure to appear in the Toshakhana case.

Khan, 70, has been in the crosshairs for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana, and selling them for profit. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief had filed an application in the Islamabad district and sessions court against the warrants issued on February 28

after Khan skipped several hearings in the case.

Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal, rejecting the plea, announced the verdict reserved earlier in the day after hearing the arguments on the former premier's application.

"The accused was in a position to appear in this court on February 28 after his appearances in different honorable courts but he wilfully avoided appearing in this court," the judge said in his order, adding that a warrant remains enforced until it is cancelled by the court which issued it or it is executed as per law. The judge further stated that the accused had not surrendered himself before the court yet and no application for his

TOSHAKHANA CASE



personal appearance (for today) was annexed with the record. "The accused has not appeared in court for ensuring his appearance in the trial in the future, therefore, the application is rejected," according to the order. On February 28, Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal issued a non-bailable warrant against Khan for con-

tinuously failing to appear before the court in the Toshakhana case. In his assets declarations, Khan is accused of concealing details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana - a repository where presents handed to government officials from foreign officials are kept. Officials are legally allowed to retain gifts provided they pay a pre-assessed amount, typically a fraction of the value of the gift. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in October last year ruled that he made "false statements and incorrect declarations" regarding the gifts. The ECP, later on, asked the Islamabad sessions court to proceed against Khan under criminal law for hiding the sale of gifts.

9 cops killed in Balochistan suicide attack

PTI ■ KARACHI

At least nine policemen were killed and 13 others injured on Monday when a suicide bomber rammed his motorcycle into a police van in the restive Balochistan province, in the latest attack on the security personnel in Pakistan. The van carrying soldiers of the Balochistan Constabulary was hit by the motorcyclist laden with explosives in the mountainous region of Kunbri in Bolan, police said.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but previous such attacks have been blamed on Baloch insurgents and Islamic militants.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mahmood Notezai said the attack took place when the policemen were returning from Sibi to Quetta. "They were returning after completing security duties for the Sibi festival which ended yesterday," the official said.

Notezai said that the preliminary evidence suggests it was a suicide attack.

At least nine personnel of the Balochistan Constabulary were killed and 13 were injured in the bomb attack in Bolan, Notezai said.

Another police official said the militants might have tried to target the Sibi festival which is held annually but might not have succeeded in piercing the heavy security cover. "So instead they targeted these men who were returning to Quetta," he added.

According to the official, the motorcyclist - believed to be a suicide bomber - rammed his vehicle into the police van. However, he said the exact nature of the attack will be ascertained after investigation.

A bomb disposal team reached the site of the incident and the area is being searched after the explosion. As soon as the incident was reported, local administration and security forces reached the spot. The Balochistan Constabulary (BC) personnel were returning from duty in Sibi Mela when they were targeted.

Prince Harry contacted over King Charles' coronation. No confirmation yet over attendance

AP ■ LONDON

King Charles III's office has been in touch with Prince Harry about the new monarch's coronation, raising the possibility the prince will attend the historic ceremony despite tensions within the royal family.

If Harry and his wife, Meghan, were to attend the May 6 coronation at Westminster Abbey in London, it would be the first meeting between Charles and his younger son since Harry deepened the rift within the House of Windsor by revealing family secrets in his bestselling book, "Spare".

A spokesperson for Harry and Meghan, also known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, confirmed on Sunday that Harry had received "email correspondence" from the king's office about the coronation. Buckingham Palace did not

immediately respond to a request for comment.

"An immediate decision on whether the Duke and Duchess will attend will not be disclosed by us at this time," the couple's office said in a statement. Speculation about whether Harry and Meghan would be invited to the coronation has raged since the release of Harry's explosive memoir, which contained damning allegations of intrigue behind the palace walls.

The disclosures, including details of private conversations with his father and brother, Prince William, fanned tensions between Harry and his family that became public when he and his wife moved to North America in 2020.

The book also included allegations that members of the royal family regularly feed the press unflattering information about other members of the

House of Windsor in exchange for positive coverage of themselves.

The prince singled out Camilla, the queen consort, accusing her of leaking private conversations to the media as she sought to rehabilitate her image after marrying Charles. Camilla was once reviled for her long-term affair with Charles, which contributed to the breakdown of his marriage to the late Princess Diana, Harry and William's mother.

The acrimony between Harry and his family once again spilled into public view this week when the Sussexes acknowledged they were asked to vacate their home in Britain.

Frogmore Cottage, on the grounds of Windsor Castle west of London, was the couple's main residence before they gave up royal duties and moved to Montecito, a wealthy enclave in Southern California.

Pak bans broadcasts of ex-PM speeches

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's media regulator banned broadcasts of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's speeches as police arrived at one of his homes to deliver another court summons for the ousted premier, officials said Monday. The development is the latest in a political tug of war between the former cricket star turned Islamist politician and the government of his successor, Shahbaz Sharif, as Khan campaigns for early elections.

The ban by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority was imposed on Sunday and went into effect on Monday. It covers airing of both recorded and live speeches by Khan, who was ousted in a no-confidence vote in Parliament last April. The ban followed a particularly fiery speech by Khan, who has a large grassroots following, lambasting Sharif's government and the country's all-powerful military. Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, now in the opposition, denounced the ban. Fawad Chaudhry, a top party

leader, told The Associated Press that the measure reflects the government's "nervousness and fear" that Khan's party would win the upcoming elections in two provincial assemblies.

The media regulator said it imposed the ban over what it described as baseless allegations by Khan against authorities and state institutions, a reference usually used for the military. It said Khan was spreading hate "against state institutions and officers, which is prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order."

A violation of the ban by any media outlet would result in its license being revoked, the regulator said. Hours later, the private ARY TV channel was taken off air for airing Khan's speech on Sunday. The rival Geo TV station's anchor, Hamid Mir — a strong voice in support of media freedom and a victim of state-controlled censorship in recent years — slammed the action.

Earlier Sunday, police arrived at Khan's home in the city of Lahore with an arrest warrant on suspicion that he had avoided appearing in court

on charges of unlawfully selling state gifts he had received as prime minister and hiding assets from the election tribunal.

However, the police were told by Khan's aides that was at his other home, in the capital of Islamabad. After the officers left the premises, Khan appeared outside the residence and delivered the speech cited for the ban. He spoke before cameras, accusing an unnamed army general of spearheading arrests of his party leaders in recent months. The 70-year-old Khan has faced a string of charges from Sharif's government, with several lawsuits launched against him. Last week marked his first appearance in court since he was shot in the leg by a gunman during a protest rally in November. He was answering summons on graft charges in a separate case against him.

After appearing in court in Islamabad last Tuesday, the judge approved bail in the case for Khan, months after police filed terrorism charges against him for allegedly inciting people to violence. The bail exempts him from appearing in

court until a trial starts.

Khan has denied any wrongdoing and blames Sharif's government of conspiring with the United States in his ouster. He has not offered any evidence for his claims and Washington and Sharif have denied the allegations.

In October, an elections tribunal disqualified Khan from holding public office and he was stripped of his seat in the National Assembly, the lower house of Parliament.

Also Sunday, Khan wrote to the country's Supreme Court, requesting he be allowed to appear before courts through video links, purportedly because of threats to his life. In the appeal, Khan said there were 74 cases pending against him in various courts and that having to show up in person would further endanger him.

The standoff between Khan and Sharif's government has roiled Pakistan as it struggles with a severe economic crisis. The country is currently in talks with the International Monetary Fund on how to revive a bailout program that was originally agreed on in 2019, when Khan was in power.

Estonia's pro-Ukraine PM wins re-poll

AP ■ TALLINN, ESTONIA

The center-right Reform Party of Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, one of Europe's most outspoken supporters of Ukraine, overwhelmingly won the Baltic country's general election, while a far-right populist challenger lost seats in a vote that focused on national security and the economy.

Preliminary returns from a completed ballot count showed the Reform Party, the senior partner in the outgoing three-party coalition government, received 31.2% of the vote — the biggest share in Sunday's election.

That translates into 37 seats at Estonia's 101-seat Parliament, or Riigikogu, an increase of three seats from the 2019 election.

"This result, which is not final yet, will give us a strong mandate to put together a good government," Kallas told her party colleagues and jubilant supporters at a hotel in the capital, Tallinn. Kallas, prime minister since 2021, faced a



challenge from the far-right populist EKRE party, which seeks to limit the Baltic nation's exposure to Russia's war in Ukraine, and blames the current government for Estonia's high inflation rate.

EKRE took second place with 16.1% of votes and 17 seats in the legislature, a

decrease of two seats compared to four years ago. The Center Party, which is traditionally favored by Estonia's sizable ethnic Russian minority, was third with 15.3% of the vote.

The biggest surprise of the election, where more than 900,000 people were eligible to vote, was the emergence of

Eesti 200, a small liberal centrist party, which won 14% of the vote.

National security in the wake of neighboring Russia's invasion of Ukraine and socio-economic issues, particularly the rising cost of living, were the main campaign themes of the election.

Bhutto's PPP puts condition on support to Shehbaz-led Govt

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Peo-ple's Party (PPP) chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said it will be "too difficult" for his party to remain part of the federal government if the Centre does not fulfil its promises of providing much-needed relief to flood victims in Sindh province. These reservations were expressed by the PPP chairman in his address after inaugurating "Subsidy Progra-mme: Reimbursement for Wheat Seed" on Sunday, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Under the programme, Bhutto-Zardari, whose party rules in Sindh province, transferred Rs 8.39 billion from the provincial budget to the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) for disbursement of Rs 5,000 per acre to each small grower holding



up to 12 acres of agricultural land.

Since Rs 13.5 billion is needed to provide relief to the flood-hit farmers through the subsidy programme, it was decided that the federal government would give Rs 4.7 billion grant and the remaining Rs 8.39 billion would be borne by

the Sindh government, he explained, reminding the Pakistan Democratic Movement or PDM-led government in the Centre of its promise.

"We [will] take up this issue in the National Assembly," he said, adding that he would also speak to Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif to fulfil the promises made to the flood victims, otherwise it would be very difficult for the PPP to be part of the federal government. The catastrophic 2022 floods, which left a third of Pakistan submerged and killed more than 1,200 persons, had an adverse impact on the economy, with a loss of more than USD 30 billion.

Bhutto-Zardari also objected to the manner the digital census exercise was being conducted, saying it was unacceptable that elections in one province took place based on a different census, and other provincial polls were held based on a "flawed" digital census. The PPP with 58 lawmakers, is a key part of the current coalition government and it may not be possible for Prime Minister Sharif to continue to rule without the party's support.

Ukraine unyielding in Bakhmut

AP ■ KIV

Ukrainian military leaders are determined to hold onto Bakhmut, Kyiv officials said Monday, even as Russian forces continued to encroach on the devastated eastern Ukrainian city that they have sought to capture for six months at the cost of thousands of lives.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office said he chaired a meeting with military officials during which the country's top brass advocated strengthening Ukrainian positions there.

Intense Russian shelling targeted the Donetsk region city and nearby villages as Moscow deployed more resources there in an apparent bid to finish off Bakhmut's resistance, according to local officials. "Civilians are fleeing the region to escape Russian shelling continuing round the clock as additional Russian troops and weapons are being

deployed there," Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

Russian forces that invaded Ukraine just over a year ago have been bearing down on Bakhmut for months, putting Kyiv's troops on the defensive but unable to deliver a knockout blow. More broadly, Russia continues to experience difficulty generating battlefield momentum.

Moscow's full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022, soon stalled and then was pushed back by a Ukraine counteroffensive. Over the bitterly cold winter months, the fighting has largely been deadlocked.

Bakhmut doesn't have any major strategic value, and analysts say its possible fall is unlikely to bring a turning point in the conflict. Its importance has become psychological — for Russian President Vladimir Putin, prevailing there will finally deliver some good news from the battlefield, while for Kyiv the display of grit and defiance reinforces a

message that Ukraine was holding on after a year of brutal attacks to cement support among its Western allies.

US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin endorsed that view Monday, saying during a visit to Jordan that Bakhmut has "more of a symbolic value than ... strategic and operational value."

He added that Moscow is "continuing to pour in a lot of ill-trained and ill-equipped troops" in Bakhmut, whereas Ukraine is patiently "building combat power" elsewhere with Western military support ahead of the launch of a possible spring offensive. Even so, some analysts questioned the wisdom of the Ukrainian defenders holding out much longer, with others suggesting a tactical withdrawal may already be underway.

Michael Kofman, the director of Russia studies at the CAN think tank in Arlington, Virginia, said that Ukraine's defence of Bakhmut has been

effective because it has drained the Russian war effort, but that Kyiv should now look ahead.

"I think the tenacious defense of Bakhmut achieved a great deal, expending Russian manpower and ammunition," Kofman tweeted late Sunday.

"But strategies can reach points of diminishing returns, and given Ukraine is trying to husband resources for an offensive, it could impede the success of a more important operation."

Ukrainian officials have previously raised the possibility of a tactical retreat.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, noted that urban warfare favours the defender but considered that the smartest option now for Kyiv may be to withdraw to positions that are easier to defend. In recent days, Ukrainian units destroyed two key bridges just outside Bakhmut, including one linking it to the nearby hilltop town of Chasiv Yar

along the last remaining Ukrainian resupply route, according to UK military intelligence officials and other Western analysts.

Demolishing the bridges could be part of efforts to slow down the Russian offensive if Ukrainian forces start pulling back from the city.

"Ukrainian forces are unlikely to withdraw from Bakhmut all at once and may pursue a gradual fighting withdrawal to exhaust Russian forces through continued urban warfare," the ISW said in an assessment published late Sunday. The Bakhmut battle has also served to expose Russian military shortcomings and bitter divisions.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the millionaire owner of the Wagner Group military company that spearheaded the Bakhmut offensive, has been at loggerheads with the Russian Defence Ministry and repeatedly accused it of failing to provide his forces with ammuni-

tion.

On Sunday, he again criticised top military brass for moving slowly to deliver the promised ammunition, questioning whether the delay was caused "by red tape or treason."

Putin's stated ambition is to seize full control of the four provinces, including Donetsk, that Moscow illegally annexed last fall. Russia controls about half of Donetsk province, and to take the remaining half of that province its forces must go through Bakhmut. The city is the only approach to bigger Ukrainian-held cities since Ukrainian troops took back Izium in Kharkiv province during a counteroffensive last September.

But taking at least six months to conquer Bakhmut, which had a prewar population of 80,000 and was once a popular vacation destination, speaks poorly of the Russian military's offensive capabilities and may not bode well for the rest of its campaign.

German Chancellor warns China not to send arms to Russia

AP ■ BERLIN

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz says there would be "consequences" if China sent weapons to Russia for Moscow's war in Ukraine, but he is fairly optimistic that Beijing will refrain from doing so. Scholz's comments came in an interview with CNN that aired on Sunday, two days after he met US President Joe Biden in Washington.

US officials have warned recently that China could step off the sidelines and begin providing arms and ammunition to Moscow. Ahead of his trip, Scholz had urged Beijing to refrain from sending weapons and instead use its influence to press Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukraine. Asked by CNN if he could imagine sanctioning China if it did aid Russia, Scholz replied: "I think it would have consequences, but we are now in a stage where we are making clear that this should not happen..."

He did not elaborate on the nature of the consequences. Germany has Europe's biggest economy and China has been its single biggest trading partner in recent years. Back in Germany on

"I think it would have consequences, but we are now in a stage where we are making clear that this should not happen..."

Sunday, Scholz was asked after his Cabinet met with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen whether he had received concrete evidence from the US that China was considering weapons deliveries and whether he would back sanctions against Beijing if it helped arm Russia.

"We all agree that there must be no weapons deliveries and the Chinese government has stated that it would not deliver any," the chancellor replied. "That is what we are demanding and we are watching it." He did not address the sanctions question. Von der Leyen said that "we have no evidence for this so far, but we must observe it every day". She said that whether the European Union would sanction China for giving Russia military aid "is a hypothetical question that can only be answered if it were to become reality and fact".

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the public that in the passport No. K0416401 (issued by Govt. of India) the name of my client AMRITA PANDEY W/o. SHRI NAMIT PANDEY R/o E-194, TYPE-B, POCKET-3, DDA FLAT BINDAPUR, NEW DELHI-110023, had mentioned as "AMRITA GAUTAM PANDEY". Her actual name is AMRITA PANDEY and declare that AMRITA GAUTAM PANDEY and AMRITA PANDEY is the one and same person.
PREM PRAKASH (Advocate)
207, PLOT NO.1, MLU, SEC-10, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-75
MOB.: 9871268399

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client, NAVEEN, S/o. CHHOTI LAL, and GEETA, W/o. NAVEEN, both R/o House No. 73, Khasra No. 78/25, Call No.1, Near Transformer, Satya Vihar, Baran, North Delhi - 110084, due to misconduct and disobedience by their son ABHISHEK, and his wife MUSKAAN VAID, D/o. Ved Prakash Vaid, have disown them from all movable and immovable properties. My clients will not be responsible for any of their actions in future.
PREM PRAKASH (Advocate)
207, PLOT NO.1, MLU, SEC-10, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-75
MOB.: 9871268399

PUBLIC NOTICE
General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Neelu W/o Mr. Ravinder Singh is the owner of Built Up Second Floor of Freshfield Property Bearing No. 13/226 (Block No. 13, Dtr. No. 226), area measuring 100 Sq. Yds., Situated at Abad of Jheel Kuranja, Gasta Colony, Delhi-110031, by virtue of Sale Deed dated 22.11.2017 regd. Vide Dtr. No. 6584, and the same is to be financed & mortgaged with M/s. Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Ltd. The Original Sale Deed dated 22.11.2017, pertaining to the aforesaid property are deposited.
Any person(s) found in possession of aforesaid original sale deed, then kindly contact the undersigned along with original property documents within 7 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid sale deed shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.
Raghav Tiwari, Advocate
Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts,
New Delhi - 110001 Mob.: +91-9076188328

PUBLIC NOTICE
My Clients **Lalit Arora** S/o Late Sh. Shiv Kumar Arora & his wife Shivani Arora R/o **B-1/212, 3rd Floor, Janak Puri New Delhi-58** has debarred & disowned their son **Sunny Arora** and his wife **Shreya Chahana** from their movable & immovable properties. My Client has also severed all their relation with them. If anybody deals with them in any manner they do so at their own risk and responsibility.
Ramesh Chander (Adv), Ch-68, Western Wing, Tis Hazari

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is publicly notified that my client Mr. Amit Kumar, S/o Sh. Sudershan Sharma lost his Property documents like Allotment Letter and Possession Letter somewhere pertaining to House No. A- 25, Nandgram, Ghaziabad, U.P. He has lodged a complaint with the Police Station: Nandgram, Ghaziabad on Dated- 22.02.2023 regarding loss of abovementioned documents. If anyone has got the allotment letter and possession letter is informed to handover said documents to the undersigned and if anyone has any objection or claim pertaining to said property or deeds, he/she may submit his/her objection in writing with the office of the undersigned alongwith sufficient proof within 07 days of the publication of this notice.
Yogesh Kumar, Advocate
Address: Shop No.02, 2nd Floor, Kalyan Kunji Choudhary Farm, Near Pillar No. 37, Sector-49, Noida, G.B Nagar-201301.
Mob.: 9911004142
Mail id : bhadanaassociates@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that I, **Rajiv Bajaj**, S/o late Sh. I.P. Bajaj, R/o MIG Flat No.91, first floor/pocket B10, sector-3 Rohini, Delhi-110085, the owner of MIG Flat No.91, first floor, pocket B10, sector-3 Rohini, Delhi-110085, vide File No.F.30(539)86/RO/G. I have lost / misplaced my original documents such as Possession Letter, Possession Slip, NOC for Obtaining electricity and water connection and Mutation Letter of the above said property. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in Police Station, vide LR No.217807 / 2023 dated 06/03/2023 Any person claiming any right, interest having any objection may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No.9711203182 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice and can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (Late Housing / Housing) Asstt. Director(Late Housing / Housing), D Block, Third Floor/Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)
Sr.DMM, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement System for supply of the following items:-

S. N.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Quantity	Closing Date
1	93226023A	Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 750/415, 200 VA Control, transformer in LBH coaches & Power Cars. After removal of Existing 100 VA Control Transformer.	6370 Nos.	23.03.2023

NOTE- 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details.
2. No Manual offer will be entertained.
No.: Sr.DMM/NS/LP/93226023A/2023 Date: 22.02.2023 681/2023
Serving Customers with a Smile

PUBLIC NOTICE
BE IT KNOWN TO ALL THAT MY CLIENT Mrs. SHILPI AGGARWAL W/o Mr. ARPIT AGGARWAL has agreed to purchase 1/2 (half) undivided share of ground floor flat (front portion) measuring approx. 660 SQ. FT. (out of 1300 SQ. FT. total area) situated at Road No. 85 Plot No. 6, Punjabi Bagh New Delhi - 110026 vide agreement to sell dated 19th FEBRUARY 2023. From Current legal owner Smt ARCHANA KOHLI W/o late Sh. SANDEEP KOHLI (WHO PASSED AWAY ON 10/02/2003) leaving Mrs ARCHANA KOHLI and their daughter SUKIRTI KOHLI only legal heirs of the above property. Mrs ARCHANA KOHLI become legal owner vide relinquishment deed registered dated 27/12/2017 at SR-II PUNJABI BAGH.
FURTHER ANY BODY ELSE AS BANKS (or any other person having interest claim/lien in the said property on the basis of facts or otherwise are required to put forth his/her claim with the undersigned within 21 days from the date of publication of the notice failing which it shall presumed that the said property in free from all sort of (encumbrances registered or unregistered) and my client shall proceed to complete the transaction, and get sale deed registered in her name after paying the amount as per sale agreement to Mrs ARCHANA KOHLI. And no claim whatsoever shall be entertained.
Undersigned:
SUSHIL KUMAR ARORA
H. NO. 6 ROAD NO 85 MOBILE No: 9810162165, 9811017520
PUNJABI BAGH NEW DELHI 110026 EMAIL ID: pag.isc@gmail.com

UJVN LTD.
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone No.: 0135-2763508, 2763808 Fax No.: 0135-2763507
CIN No.U40101UR200201SGC025866, Website: www.ujvnl.com
RO No.: 223 "e-Procurement" Date: 06.03.2023
TIME EXTENSION NOTICE NO.-01
Due to unavoidable reasons, the date of submission and opening of the following tenders invited by the Executive Engineer (Civil), Pashulok Barrage Rishikesh is extended as follows.
1.Tender Notice Reference:
NIT No.-25/222-23/EE(C)/Pashulok Barrage:- Protection Work in Left Bank at Just Upstream of Bin Super Passage.
2. Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender on the portal:- Up to 17:00 hrs of 16 March, 2023.
3. Last date & time of Receipt of relevant document in Office:- Up to 14:00 hrs of 16 March, 2023.
4. Date & Time of Opening of Tender on the portal:- at 11:00 hrs of 17 March, 2023.
For the eligibility and other detailed information, the e-procurement portal "<http://uktenders.gov.in>" keep watching continuously.
"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

Key Turkish politician rejoins alliance against Erdogan

AP ■ ANKARA

A key opposition party rejoined Turkey's six-party alliance on Monday after a compromise was found over the nomination of a joint candidate to challenge President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in elections scheduled for May.

Meral Aksener, who leads the nationalist Iyi Party, broke away from the alliance on Friday, rejecting the likely selection of Kemal Kilicdaroglu, head of the main opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP.

Aksener's split from the alliance — less than three months before the presidential and parliamentary elections — was seen as a major boost for Erdogan, whose popularity has suffered amid a weak economy as well as his government's response to a

devastating earthquake last month.

Her departure left the grouping in disarray and frustrated millions of their supporters hoping for a change after two decades under Erdogan's rule. A former interior minister whose party is the second largest in the opposition bloc, Aksener was reported to have favoured either of the popular mayors of Istanbul or Ankara instead of Kilicdaroglu.

A spokesman for IYI Party said Aksener was holding a meeting with the leaders of the five other members of the alliance to discuss the compromise solution, where Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu and Ankara Mayor Mansur Yavas would be nominated as vice-presidents. Earlier on Monday, Yavas and Imamoglu, who were elected to

lead their cities in 2019, met with Aksener in an apparent attempt to convince her to return to the alliance.

"There is an election in front of us. Our nation cannot tolerate a separation," Yavas told reporters. Hamish Kinnear, Middle East and North Africa analyst at risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft said the opposition was still able to unify behind a joint candidate.

The alliance has vowed to restore a parliamentary democracy in Turkey should they dislodge Erdogan, abolishing the presidential system that he introduced. Opponents say the system, which was narrowly approved in a 2017 referendum and was installed following elections in 2018, has amounted to "one-man rule" without checks and balances.



An inflatable decoy of High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) is presented to media in Decin, Czech Republic, on Monday. The war in Ukraine meant a boom for the weapons industry, for real arms but also their replicas. Czech company, Inflitech, has made a wide range of replicas of heavy arms, be it tanks, armoured vehicles, aircraft or artillery, including US-made HIMARS rocket system, the weapons that were among the billions of dollars in Western military aid that has helped Ukraine fight off the Russians since the Feb. 24 invasion.

AP

Nepal parties flay apex court order against Prachanda

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's nine political parties have voiced concern about the issues that have recently been raised over the transitional justice process, days after the apex court ordered to register writ petitions against Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" for claiming responsibility for 5,000 deaths during the insurgency.

"Our serious attention has been drawn over the issues raised in the transitional justice process recently," said a joint statement issued by the parties, without referring to the apex court order.

"We are committed to concluding the transitional justice process as per the spirit of the constitution and the Comprehensive Peace Accord. Remaining tasks related to the revision of the law related to it will be completed soon," the statement added.

A bill to this end, and in line with previous Supreme Court orders, will be tabled at the ongoing session of the federal parliament, it added.

The parties' meeting that

was initially called to discuss the presidential election was dominated by the apex court's order. The parties in the newly formed alliance are the Nepali Congress, the CPN (Maoist Centre), the Janata Samajbadi Party, the CPN (Unified Socialist), the Loktantrik Samajbadi Party, the Nagarik Unmukti Party, the Janamat Party, the Rastriya Janamorcha and the Nepal Samajbadi Party.

The alliance's meeting was held hours after Prachanda's party, and some leaders of the Maoist Centre as well as ex-Maoist leaders, strongly criticised the Supreme Court's order to register writ petitions against Prachanda.

On January 15, 2020, CPN (Maoist Center) Chairman Prachanda had said that as the leader of the Maoist party that led the decade-long insurgency, he would take the responsibility for the deaths of 5,000 people and that the state should take responsibility for the remaining deaths.

"I am accused of killing 17,000 people, which is not true. However, I am ready to

take the responsibility of killing 5,000 people during the conflict," Prachanda said while addressing a Maghi festival celebration event in Kathmandu. He added that the rest of the 12,000 were killed by the feudal regime.

Advocates Gyanendra Aaran and Kalyan Budhathoki, who are also conflict victims, filed separate writ petitions at the Supreme Court demanding that Prachanda be investigated and prosecuted for his statement. The administration, however, in November last year refused to register them, claiming that the issue was related to transitional justice and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was dealing with the cases.

On Friday, the Supreme Court ordered its administration to register writ petitions against 'Prachanda' for claiming responsibility for 5,000 deaths during the insurgency.

Due to busy schedules and lack of manpower, the case could not be registered on Sunday and it is likely that the same would be registered after the Holi festival which falls here on Monday.

Biden re-election bid faces resistance from some Democrats

AP ■ LACONA (US)

Steve Shurtleff was at Joe Biden's side in 2019 when he filed papers in the New Hampshire State House to run for president.

He repeatedly trekked across the state with Biden to court primary voters. And when Biden ultimately won the presidency, it was Shurtleff, then the Democratic state House speaker, who proudly sealed the envelope that carried New Hampshire's four electoral votes — including his own name — to the U.S. Senate.

But on the eve of a new election season, Shurtleff, like a majority of Democrats across the country, feels that one term is enough.

"In my heart of hearts, no,"

Shurtleff said when asked if he wants Biden to run again. "I think a lot of people just don't want to say it."

Democrats across New Hampshire are upset with the Democratic president for trying to end the state's status as home to the first-in-the-nation presidential primary. But their concerns about Biden run much deeper, in line with a majority of Democratic voters nationwide, who question the 80-year-old president's plans to soon launch his reelection campaign.

Just 37% of Democrats nationwide want the president to seek a second term, according to a poll released last month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. That was

down from 52% in the weeks before last year's midterm elections.

Many worry about Biden's age. Others, like Shurtleff, are upset about the administration's messy withdrawal from Afghanistan. And the party's progressive wing has never been enthusiastic about Biden, who is perceived as a moderate, despite his lengthy list of achievements.

The White House cast Biden's perceived weakness within his own party as an exaggerated narrative that he has repeatedly proven wrong.

"We're aware pundits' attitude toward President Biden is unchanged from before he earned the nomination faster than anyone since 2004, won the most votes in American

history, built the strongest legislative record in generations and led the best midterm outcome for a new Democratic president in 60 years," Biden spokesman Andrew Bates said. "Based on comparing the accuracy of our predictions versus theirs, we are happy for this dynamic to continue."

Still, there's a risk of a disconnect between rank-and-file Democrats and the party's establishment. While voters are signaling unease about the prospect of another Biden campaign, Democratic governors, senators and congressional representatives are virtually unanimous in supporting Biden's reelection.

One exception may be New Hampshire, a small swing state whose electoral votes

could be critical in a tight general election. The state has challenged Biden before.

Voters here served Biden an embarrassing fifth-place finish in the 2020 Democratic primary. New Hampshire polls were still open when he decamped to South Carolina, where his presidential ambitions were revived by a decisive win. That state is now Biden's pick to lead the 2024 presidential primary calendar.

Interviews with angry New Hampshire Democrats across state government and local Democratic committees suggest there is some appetite for a serious primary challenger in 2024. But top-tier prospects don't seem to be interested.

So far, only Democratic activist and author Marianne

‘Find less costly ways to address pension concerns’

Old pension scheme involves future outlays: RBI ex-Guv Raghuram

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan has expressed his concern over the decision of some States to restart the old pension scheme and suggested that some less costly ways should be found to address the demands of government pensioners.

Rajan further said the old pension scheme does involve massive future outlays because of the indexation of pensions to current salaries.

“This is an enormous obligation, not necessarily in the short run, but in the long run,” he said, adding obviously, State Governments have to think through the long-term implications for government finances, and whether civil servants are the most in need of help among the constituents



cies they deal with.

Rajan, currently Katherine Dusak Miller Distinguished Service Professor of Finance at The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, said as he understands it, it may be infeasible technically or legally to move back to the old pension scheme.

“If so, there may be less costly ways of addressing the concerns that prompt such moves,” Rajan told PTI in an email interview.

In a major move, a select group of central government employees have been given a one-time option to opt for old

pension scheme.

The employees who joined the central government services against posts advertised or notified before December 22, 2003, the day National Pension System (NPS) was notified, are eligible to join the old pension scheme under the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972 (now 2021).

Under Old Pension Scheme (OPS), employees get a defined pension. An employee is entitled for a 50 per cent amount of the last drawn salary as pension.

OPS was discontinued by the NDA government in 2003 with effect from April 1, 2004.

Under the new pension scheme (NPS), employees contribute 10 per cent of their basic salary towards pension while the government contributes 14 per cent.

Governments of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have informed the central government/ Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) about their decision to restart OPS for their employees.

Sensex, Nifty close higher for 2nd day

On gains in global equities; IT, financials shares advance

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty advanced for a second session in a row on Monday on gains in IT, financial and auto stocks following strong global trends.

The 30-share BSE benchmark rose by 415.49 points or 0.69 per cent to close at 60,224.46 with 25 of its constituents ending in the green.

The barometer opened higher and spurted further nearly 690 points to touch a high of 60,498.48 in the day trade.

The broader Nifty of the National Stock Exchange advanced 117.10 points or 0.67 per cent to settle at 17,711.45. As many as 39 Nifty shares



closed in the green.

Gains in global markets following the US markets closing higher on Friday after positive economic data bolstered the investor sentiment, analysts said.

Among Sensex stocks, Tata Motors rose the most by 2.79 per cent. NTPC, Reliance Industries, Infosys, TCS, HDFC twins, Tata Motors, ITC, Power Grid and Bajaj Finserv were among the major gainers.

‘Govt working to bring e-commerce policies, retail trade’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is working to bring a national retail trade and e-commerce policy to promote the growth of the sector in the country, a senior official said on Monday.

Joint Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Sanjiv said that the retail trade policy would provide brick and mortar retail traders a business friendly environment, modern infrastructure facilities and easy access to credit.

The policy is expedited to focus on formulating strategies to provide a globally competitive and sustainable environment for the overall development of retail trade through targeted efforts.

The Department, he said, is also working to bring an e-commerce policy for online retailers.

“We want that there should be a synergy between e-commerce as well as retail traders,” Sanjiv said at a conference on



FMCG and e-commerce here.

The Department is also in the process of formulating an insurance scheme for all the retail traders.

The accident insurance scheme would particularly help small traders of the country, he added.

“The government is trying to do policy changes not only in e-commerce but national retail trade policy for physical traders which will be introducing ease of doing business, providing better infrastructural facilities, providing more credit and providing all sorts of benefits to traders,” he said.

The Joint Secretary urged the industry to focus on producing high quality products.

Further, he said that there is no dichotomy between physical and online retail trade and both can not survive without each other.

ONDC will help small retail survive onslaught of large tech-based e-com firms: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), a unified payments interface-type protocol, will help small retailers survive the onslaught of large tech-based e-commerce companies, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday.

ONDC is an initiative of the ministry to help small retailers expand their business and reduce the dominance of e-commerce giants. It aims to build an open, interoperable network on which buyers and sellers can transact without needing to be present on the same platform.

It offers small retailers an opportunity to provide their services, and goods to buyers across the country through an e-commerce system, where buyers will be able to purchase the products, which are sold on



any platform.

“ONDC will help our small retail survive the onslaught of large tech-based e-commerce companies,” Goyal said here at an event on the retail sector.

He said that the effort is to encourage small companies, and startups to integrate into the e-commerce ecosystem.

“Like UPI democratised payment systems, ONDC will democratise benefits of e-commerce,” he added.

He also said that the consumer industry in India, and FMCGs have been victims of indiscriminate low-quality imports because of which people have suffered.

Extra 1 mn tons sugar exports possible if domestic output meets estimate: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India, the world's second largest sugar producing nation after Brazil, can export an additional 1 million tonnes of the sweetener if the domestic output reaches an estimated 33.6 million tonnes this year, a senior food ministry official said on Monday.

The Government will take a call next month on allowing more quantities of sugar exports, after assessing domestic production, he said.

Sugar availability is comfortable in the country and as a result wholesale and retail prices of the sweetener are on a decline in the last one month.

The food ministry has allowed 6 million tonnes of sugar exports for the current 2022-23 marketing year (October-September).

India exported a record 11 million tonnes of sugar in the previous year.



“More exports are possible and we have a cushion for exports of additional one million tonnes, suppose the overall production reaches the estimated 33.6 million tonnes this year,” the official said.

Sugar production has already reached 24.7 million tonnes till February of the ongoing 2022-23 marketing year, while mills have despatched 4.3 million tonnes for exports so far this year, he said.

The crushing operation will come to an end by the next month and the government will

review exports after assessing the final production figures, he added.

According to the food ministry, the country's sugar production has been estimated lower at 33.6 million tonnes for the 2022-23 marketing year, due to fall in production in the top three producing states.

Sugar production in Maharashtra, the country's leading sugar producing state, is estimated to be lower at 12 million tonnes in the 2022-23 marketing year, as against 13.7 million tonnes in the previous year.

Rupee gains 5 paise to close at 81.92 against US dollar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rupee appreciated by 5 paise to close at 81.92 against the US dollar on Monday, as a positive trend in domestic equities and fresh foreign fund inflows boosted investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 81.85 against the American currency and finally settled at 81.92 against the greenback, registering a gain of 5 paise over its previous close of 81.97.

During the trading session, the rupee touched a high of 81.62 and a low of 81.95 against the dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.06 per cent to 104.58.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures declined



0.77 per cent to USD 81.17 per barrel.

The Indian rupee touched a fresh one-month high of 81.62 on extended rally in the domestic markets and fresh foreign inflows. Positive Asian currencies also supported the domestic currency, said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

“We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on the rise in risk appetite in global markets and a soft dollar. Overall weak tone in crude oil and FII inflows may also support rupee,” Choudhary said.

Gold gains ₹25; silver climbs ₹160

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price rose by ₹25 to ₹55,900 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid gains in prices of precious metal in the overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had settled at ₹55,875 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also climbed by ₹160 to ₹65,000 per kg.

“Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹55,900 per 10 grams, up ₹25 per 10 grams,” Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the overseas market, both gold and silver were quoting higher at \$1,856 per ounce and \$21.24 per ounce, respectively.



Second round of auction for Reliance Capital on March 20

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Committee of Creditors of Reliance Capital will hold a second round of auction for the sale of company assets on March 20, sources said.

This follows the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) last week allowing lenders of Reliance Capital to hold an extended challenge mechanism or second round of auction for the sale of the debt-ridden financial services company.

Sources with direct knowledge of the matter said the second round auction was aimed at getting the maximum value from the sale of assets.

‘Indian retail industry to reach \$2 tn by 2032’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian retail market is one of the fastest growing in the world and is expected to reach \$2 trillion by 2032, according to Reliance Retail Director Subramaniam V.

The Indian retail market is estimated at USD 844 billion in 2022 with the unorganised retail market contributing around 87 per cent of the share, he said.

“The retail market is projected to grow at 10 per cent annually to reach a whopping 2 trillion by 2032 making it the fastest growing retail market of the world,” Subramaniam said at an event organised by industry body FICCI here.

Talking about the unorganised retail segment, Subramaniam said it is highly



fragmented and lacks modern day infrastructure and technology due to smaller volume and financial resources.

Subramaniam said there is a need to build an operating environment which promotes inclusive and sustainable growth for the sector and government policies and business practices of the big players must support the inclusive growth for the small players of the unorganized players.

Airtel announces 5G rollout in 125 more cities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Monday announced the launch of its 5G services in 125 cities.

With this largest-ever such roll out by the telco, Airtel 5G Plus service is now available to customers in over 265 cities in the country, according to a release by the company.

The company said its 5G rollout is on track to cover all towns and key rural areas by March 2024.

Bharti Airtel CTO Randeep Sekhon noted that 5G has revolutionised the world of internet, ushering new era of connectivity and communications that will prove to be a game-changer for the country.

“At Airtel, we remain committed to delivering the high-



est quality of network and service to our customers as we roll-out 125 more cities today,” Sekhon added.

Airtel 5G Plus service availability will continue to expand, including service in all towns and villages in the country soon, as the company is working towards offering nationwide coverage. Airtel is now offering its 5G services in every major city from the upper northern city of Jammu to the southern tip of Kanyakumari, the release said.

Nova Agritech files draft papers with Sebi to raise funds via IPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Manufacturer of agricultural inputs Nova Agritech Ltd has filed its preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to mobilise funds through initial public offering (IPO).

Shares of the company are proposed to be listed on both NSE and BSE.

The IPO comprises fresh issue of equity shares worth up to Rs 140 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) component of up to 77,58,620 equity shares of shareholder Nutalapati Venkatasubbarao, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

The Telangana-based company may consider a pre-IPO placement of equity shares of up to Rs 25 crore.

NTPC logs nearly 12% growth in electricity generation in April-Feb this fiscal year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned power giant NTPC on Monday said that it has logged nearly 12 per cent growth in electricity generation to 364.2 billion units in April-February period this fiscal compared to year ago.

“NTPC Ltd registered 11.92 per cent growth in generation i.e. 364.2 BU in FY23 till February month, compared to the country's generation growth of 9.56 per cent,” a company statement said.

NTPC continues to demonstrate an increasing trend in coal production from its captive mines.

It stated that the NTPC



Captive Coal production stood 2.6 Million Metric tonnes(MMT) whereas the despatch stood 2.5 MMT, thus registered a robust growth of 80 per per cent and 87 per cent respectively, in February vis-à-vis previous corresponding year.

On a cumulative basis, the coal production crossed 20 MMT in FY23, it stated.

Hindustan Power Exchange trade crosses 2.5 billion-unit mark in 8 months of launch

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hindustan Power Exchange (HPX) on Monday said that it has crossed the trade milestone of 2.5 billion units within eight months of its launch.

“HPX, promoted by PTC India, BSE and ICICI Bank, has successfully crossed the milestone of 2.5 Billion Units of power traded within 8 months of its launch,” an HPX statement said.

HPX was able to cross this landmark with a rapid increase in trade volume across contingency, weekly, monthly, and Long Duration Contracts

(LDC) segments, it explained.

The exchange recently concluded monthly long-duration contracts of 453.7 MU (million units) which will be delivered in the months of March and April 2023 and is a part of the above volume.

HPX raced to 2.5 BU within a short span of 67 days with a daily average volume of 18 MU, post crossing the historic landmark of 1 BU, which happened within six months of its launch, it stated.

This is the fastest increase in volume for the initial few months of the existence of any of the power exchanges operating in the country, it stated.

8 Adani Group companies settle with gains; Adani Enterprises rallies 5%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Stocks of eight listed Adani Group firms settled with gains on Monday and Adani Enterprises rose more than 5 per cent amid positive momentum in the broader equity market. Some of the group stocks also hit their upper circuit levels. Adani Enterprises stock climbed 5.51 per cent to end at Rs 1,982.85 on the BSE. During the day, it rallied over 10 per cent to hit an intra-day high of Rs 2,135.

The market valuation of the flagship firm rose to Rs 2.26 lakh crore.



Shares of Adani Power, Adani Transmission, Adani Energy, Adani Total Gas and Adani Wilmar jumped 5 per cent each and their closing levels touched the respective upper price bands on the BSE.

Also, shares of NDTV climbed 4.95 per cent and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone gained nearly 1 per cent.

Barca beat Valencia, move 9 pts clear

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona clung on with 10 men to beat Valencia 1-0 and move nine points clear of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga on Sunday, thanks to Raphinha's early header.

The champions could not find a way through against Real Betis in an entertaining 0-0 draw later on at the Benito Villamarin.

Brazilian winger Raphinha nodded Barca in front in the 16th minute. But after Ferran Torres missed a penalty and Ronald Araujo was sent off, the hosts were left fighting tooth and nail for the three points.

They retreated in the final half hour following Araujo's 59th minute red card but survived to beat Ruben Baraja's Valencia, who are 19th and two points from safety.

"We suffered too much, we had many chances to score the second," Xavi told reporters.

"It can't be that we have to finish games like that when we have chances. We have to learn how to close out games."

Barcelona's 1-0 Copa del Rey semi-final first-leg triumph over Madrid on Thursday followed two consecutive defeats, and this narrow victory felt like a significant step towards a first league title since 2019.

Without top scorer Robert Lewandowski, midfield maestros Pedri and Gavi and winger Ousmane Dembele, the Catalans did just enough to win.

Valencia resisted early Barcelona pressure but came undone when Sergio Busquets lofted a pass into the area for Raphinha to meet with a cunning run

and a header over Giorgi Mamardashvili.

Samuel Lino missed a big chance for Valencia in the first half, and early in the second Barcelona should have moved two ahead when Hugo Guillamon was penalised for handball.

Torres grabbed the ball to take the penalty, although Ansu Fati also wanted it and the pair exchanged words, increasing the pressure on the Spaniard, who hit the post.

Fati hit the woodwork himself moments later, before a mistake from Jules Kounde left Barcelona with 10 men.

The French defender's header back towards his own goal sent Hugo Duro through. Araujo dragged down the striker and saw red.

Valencia put pressure on Barcelona without troubling Marc-Andre ter Stegen, who kept his 18th La Liga clean sheet of the season.

The visitors might have been awarded a late penalty when Franck Kessie tangled with Fran Perez, but the referee waved away their desperate — and not unfounded — appeals.

"I thought the referee was going to blow for (the penalty), he steps on him and there's contact," said Valencia's Hugo Guillamon.

MADRID STUMBLE

Reigning champions Madrid forged the better openings against Betis but could not find the goal they needed to stay as close as possible on Barcelona's tail. Karim Benzema had a free-kick strike disallowed while Betis goalkeeper Claudio Bravo made fine saves to deny the French forward and Vinicius Junior.

Thibaut Courtois was also forced into two superb stops by Betis who



showed why they are in contention for a Champions League place next season with a hearty performance.

"It's quite evident what we're lacking, we have to be more efficient," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti told Movistar.

"Sometimes opponents close up at the back, but we have the quality and we have to do it better."

The coach did not think his team's title defence was over, despite the setback.

"It's not impossible. It's very difficult, but we have no doubt we will try until the end," added Ancelotti.

Madrid winger Vinicius, as has become customary in La Liga, was engaged in a running battle with the Betis defence.

Vinicius has not scored away from home in the top flight since August, but brilliantly set up Benzema at the start of the second half with former Barcelona stopper Bravo parrying the effort.

It was Madrid's first shot on target since last weekend's 1-1 draw against Atletico Madrid.

Los Blancos have scored just once in their last three games — from a corner.

"I'm more upset than angry," said Ancelotti.

"I'm upset that this team, with this quality, can't score a goal in three games (from open play)."

Courtois made a stunning save to thwart Borja Iglesias at the other end, when the striker seemed poised to score.

"We had moments in which we had clear openings, my chance with Thibaut," Iglesias told Movistar.

"That's why this guy wins what he wins — he saves a lot."

Real Valladolid climbed to 14th with a 2-1 over Espanyol, while Rayo Vallecano and Athletic Bilbao shared a 0-0 draw.

Mancini rocket fires Roma past Juve

AP ■ ROME

Gianluca Mancini fired Roma into Serie A's Champions League places with the only goal in Sunday's 1-0 win over Juventus, while Inter beat Lecce to regain second place.

Italy defender Mancini let rip with a perfectly-struck shot six minutes after half-time of a tight contest in Rome, lifting Roma up to fourth with his first goal of the season.

Jose Mourinho's team are 12 points ahead of eighth-placed Juve who played the final minutes a man down following a moment of madness from substitute Moise Kean, who booted Mancini to the ground just 40 seconds after being brought on as a late substitute.

Roma moved above AC Milan on goal difference thanks to the champions' defeat at Fiorentina on Saturday night and are three points behind Inter.

"We won because the players gave everything... it was the players' attitude which won the match tonight," said Mourinho to DAZN.

"We're a team that when we're on it, we're on it, but we need to be aware of our limitations. When you know them you play to hide them and you get results."

Champions League football looks increasingly unlikely for Juve, who hit the woodwork three times on a frustrating night, unless their 15-point penalty for illicit transfer activity is overturned on appeal.

Mourinho was in the Roma dugout after his two-match ban for a row with officials at Cremonese was suspended.

The Portuguese coach is not famed for expansive football and the teams served up a dour spectacle in the opening half, which would have ended with Juve ahead had Rui Patricio not pulled off a magnificent save to tip Adrien Rabiot's close-range header out the post.

All the hosts had mustered up to that point was a speculative shot from former Juve star Paulo Dybala, playing up front on his own, which was easily



saved by Wojciech Szczesny.

But Mancini clattered Roma ahead just as Juve looked to be gaining a foothold. He was left alone to shoot from just outside the area and unleashed a low drive at which Szczesny could only grasp in vain.

Juan Cuadrado almost immediately smacked a free-kick against the post before Szczesny made a brilliant reaction stop to deny Chris Smalling in the 75th minute.

Mancini almost undid his good work when he headed against his own post, and after Kean lost his head Danilo wasted a great chance to level in the final seconds of stoppage time when he duffed a shot too close to Patricio.

"If you don't score goals you won't win. We should have done better with the opportunities we had," said Allegri.

"This match can't destroy

everything that we've built... Sometimes it feels like the world if going to cave in but it won't."

INTER HOLD 2ND SPOT

Goals in each half from Henrikh Mkhitaryan and Lautaro Martinez gave Inter the points against promoted Lecce and slightly closed the giant gap between them and Napoli to 15 points.

However, the league title is still a distant hope despite Napoli's shock home defeat to third-placed Lazio on Friday night, Inter's main concern being Champions League football next season.

"We were focused and keep going, and that is how you win games," said coach Simone Inzaghi.

"Lecce are aggressive and press hard. We really had to move off the ball to create space. We did really well."



Srikanth pulls out of German Open

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former world No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth has pulled out of the German Open Super 300 badminton tournament which starts with the qualifiers here on Tuesday.

While Srikanth will be missing in action, finalist of the last edition, Lakshya Sen will hope to go the distance this time as he spearheads the Indian challenge.

Sen, and newly-crowned national champion Mithun Manjunath, will be the top Indian players. Sen, the reigning Commonwealth Games gold medalist, had defeated world No. 1 Viktor Axelsen in the semifinals, only to lose the final in the last edition.

This time the 21-year-old from Almora, seeded sixth, will meet France's Christo Popov in the opening round and is expected to face top seed Malaysian Lee Zii Jia in the quarters, if he can cross the initial rounds.

"I might face Lee Zii Jia in quarterfinals, so looking forward to it. I have done everything in my hand to approach this week in best shape, so hope to get a good momentum ahead of All England," Sen said.

Manjunath will be brimming with confidence after his maiden national crown and will look to carry the momentum when he opens against former world champion Loh Kean Yew.

Malvika Bansod and Saina Nehwal are also in the women's singles draw, while the mixed doubles pairing of Ashwini Ponnappa and B Sumeth Reddy, who had played at the 2022 CWG, are also in fray.

Djokovic withdraws from Indian Wells Masters

AP ■ CALIFORNIA

World number one Novak Djokovic has withdrawn from next week's ATP/WTB Indian Wells Masters event, organisers confirmed on Sunday with the Serb barred from entering the country.

Djokovic is unable to enter the United States because he is unvaccinated against Covid-19, but he had petitioned US authorities for special permission to enter.

The Indian Wells ATP 1000 event begins next week in the California desert and is followed by the prestigious tournament in Miami which Djokovic is now expected to miss unless US authorities have a change of heart.

The United States still doesn't allow unvaccinated international travellers to enter the country, with the Transportation Security Administration recently indicating the policy would not change until at least mid-April.

Djokovic's vaccination status saw him deported from Australia shortly before the 2022 Australian Open.

After winning Wimbledon he also missed the US Open last year because of the travel restriction.



He returned to Australia in January, winning the 2023 Australian Open for a record-equaling 22nd Grand Slam singles title.

He took his match win streak to 20 in Dubai last week before falling on Friday to Daniil Medvedev in the semi-finals.

Djokovic will be replaced in the field by Nikoloz Basilashvili, a brief statement said.

On Friday, both the US Tennis Association and US

Open organisers voiced support for Djokovic's request to be allowed to enter the United States.

"Novak Djokovic is one the greatest champions our sport has ever seen," the US Open wrote on its official Twitter feed.

"The USTA and US Open are hopeful that Novak is successful in his petition to enter the country, and that the fans will be able to see him back in action at Indian Wells and Miami."

FRANKFURT HELD IN WOLFSBURG

AP ■ WOLFSBURG

Aerred Eintracht Frankfurt missed the chance to cut the gap on fourth place to just one point after being held to a 2-2 draw at Wolfsburg on Sunday.

The France striker scored a goal and set up what looked like a second-half winner for Danish midfielder Jesper Lindstrom, but the effort was ruled out for offside.

Wolfsburg struck first in a seesawing encounter, Omar Marmoush released into space

by a pinpoint Yannick Gerhardt pass before rounding goalkeeper Kevin Trapp and hammering home. The goal was initially chalked off for offside but a VAR review showed Marmoush had timed his run perfectly.

Frankfurt scored two goals in four minutes to take the lead, the first a Kolo Muani header from a corner and the second a long-range rocket from defender Evan Ndicka.

Wolfsburg equalised right before half-time, Gerhardt heading in a Patrick Wimmer free-kick.



Set up by some pacy lead-up work from Kolo Muani, Lindstrom had the ball in the net with 20 minutes to go but the goal was correctly ruled out for offside.

Ndicka had a chance in the 90th minute to win it for Frankfurt when the ball fell at his feet after a mistake from Koen Casteels, but his shot ricocheted off the outside of the post.

The draw leaves sixth-placed Frankfurt three points off the Champions League spots, while Wolfsburg sit five points back in eighth place.

Ten Hag slams 'unprofessional' Man Utd

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Erik ten Hag accused his Manchester United players of an "unprofessional" and "unacceptable" performance as they crashed to a humiliating 7-0 defeat at bitter rivals Liverpool on Sunday.

United's stunning loss ranked as their worst ever defeat against Liverpool and the joint heaviest in their entire history.

Ten Hag's team collapsed after falling behind to Cody Gakpo's opener just before half-time.

Liverpool scored six times in the second half, with Gakpo striking again, while Mohamed Salah and Darwin Nunez netted braces before Roberto Firmino capped one of the most aston-

ishing results in Premier League history.

United boss Ten hag was ashen faced on the touchline as the scoreline kept mounting and he admitted his players had let themselves down badly.

"I think we played a decent first half. One mistake in organisation just before half-time. Second half it was just not us. It was not our standards. We didn't play as a team. It was unprofessional. Yes (I am angry). Definitely," Ten Hag told the BBC.

"I am surprised because I have seen the last weeks and months this team is resilient and has a winning attitude. Second half we didn't have a winning attitude at all. We didn't stick to the plan and we didn't do our jobs."



"We didn't track back and it was really unprofessional. The incredible defeat came just seven days after Ten Hag's side had ended United's six-year trophy drought by beating Newcastle 2-0 in the League Cup final at Wembley."

'DISAPPOINTED & ANGRY'

That result was heralded as the start of a bold new era for United, with Ten Hag praised for transforming a team that finished sixth in the Premier League last term before he arrived from Ajax in the close-

season. But United's wretched display in such a significant game showed how much work Ten Hag still has to do to rebuild a club that hasn't won the title since 2013.

United, who remain third in the Premier League, had already endured an embarrassing 6-3 defeat at Manchester City this season, as well as a 4-0 loss at Brentford.

This was a new low but Ten Hag urged his team to use it as motivation for the rest of the season, starting in Thursday's Europa League last 16 first leg at home to Real Betis.

"We have seen in the past we can bounce back. After Brentford, after Manchester City. This is definitely a strong setback and is unacceptable. I'm really disap-

pointed and angry about it," he said. "It is a reality check. We have to take this strong."

United midfielder Bruno Fernandes echoed Ten Hag's call for a strong response to the abject surrender on Merseyside.

"It's very frustrating and disappointing. It's sad because it's a really bad result. We came here with a different mindset before the game," Fernandes told Sky Sports.

"We tried to go forward and score goals and we lost a bit of balance. We gave too much space away against this kind of team. We have to avoid that. We had setbacks in the past and we have to come back quickly again. This is what Manchester United are about. We can go down but we have to get back up."

MODRIC BACK IN CROATIA SQUAD FOR EURO 2024 QUALIFIERS

AP ■ ZAGREB

Luka Modric is back in the Croatia national team as part of a 25-man squad named on Monday that includes Benfica forward Petar Musa for two European Championship qualifying games.

The 37-year-old Modric said after captaining Croatia to victory over Morocco in the third-place game at last year's World Cup that he wanted to "continue until at least the Nations League and after we will see."

Croatia starts the four-team UEFA Nations League Finals on June 14 against the host Netherlands in Rotterdam. The winner advances to the final against either Spain or Italy four days later.

First, Modric should add to his national record 162 appearances for Croatia in Euro 2024 qualifying. Croatia hosts Wales on March 25 and then plays at Turkey three days later.

Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic's squad includes 22 players that he took to the World Cup in Qatar, with the 25-year-old Musa among the new additions.

The five-nation qualifying group also includes Armenia and Latvia. The top two teams advance to the Euro 2024 tournament in Germany, when Modric will be approaching his 39th birthday. The Real Madrid midfielder placed fourth last week in voting for the FIFA best player award. Modric won that award four years ago after Croatia reached the 2018 World Cup final, losing to France.

OZ NEED 'COURAGE' TO UPSCALE STALE TAIL



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Australian assistant coach Daniel Vettori has urged the team's lower-order batters to be more courageous and score some valuable runs in the fourth and final Test of the Border-Gavaskar series here beginning March 9.

Unlike India's lower-order batters who have contributed hugely in the first two Tests which the hosts have won, Australia's No.8 to No.11 have added only around five runs per innings so far in the series.

Captain Pat Cummins' 33 in the second Test at the Ferozshah Kotla and Nathan Lyon's 10 first-innings runs in the same match are the only double-digit scores the Australian tail has been able to rustle up. With Cummins returning

home to be with his ailing mother, the Australian lower order wears an even more fragile look.

Vettori said the team management and support staff should instil more confidence among the lower-order batters ahead of the fourth Test here.

"I think Pat (Cummins) did that (batting) exceptionally well in the first innings in Delhi, and I think the lower four have got an understanding of how to do it and how they want to do it. It's just having the courage to actually take it out there. "I think we all understand that defence is not necessarily a way through that situation because of how much the ball is turning and how good the bowlers are, and finding your scoring areas," the former New Zealand captain was quoted as saying by news.Com.Au.

Lower-order batting has been a major concern for Australia during the series with Nathan Lyon, Matt Kuhnemann, Todd Murphy, Mitchell Starc and Scott Boland unable to negotiate the turn on Indian pitches, leading to two massive defeats for the visitors.

Australia won the third Test in Indore to secure the World Test Championship final berth due to spinner Nathan Lyon's 11 wickets in the match.

On the other hand, Axar Patel, Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin contributed immensely to India's triumphs in the first two Tests. Umesh Yadav too batted with confidence in the third Test at Indore, playing a cameo of 17 studded with a boundary and two maximums.

"Even you see an innings

like Umesh Yadav, I know it's on the back of probably having that licence (to go for the big hits), but that can be such a difference maker in the scheme of things.

"We've got to push our lower four to have the confidence to actually take the game on," added Vettori. The veteran of 113 Tests added the pitches in India during the ongoing series are far more demanding than the flatter tracks he had played on several occasion when New Zealand toured India.

"They were always just a war of attrition, the wickets I played on. It was India won the toss and got 600, you could get 400 and hang on for dear life in the last couple of days."

"That's normally how it played out — it was a real grind, it was day five, the result was still in the balance, then

normally a draw or a win to India."

The New Zealander added that he was extremely happy with the performance of spinners Todd Murphy and Matt Kuhnemann, and the way they had handled pressure.

"They don't wilt to the pressure, they just understand their process and they repeat and repeat and repeat. That's the real skill over here ... you can get carried away with what's going on," Vettori said.

"I think (Matt) Kuhney in particular has come in so early in his career and Todd as well, and to be able to be consistent against some of the best players against spin you'll come across in these conditions and with these expectations has been probably the most impressive thing so far," he said.

Don't believe in the hype around pitches in India: Kasprowicz

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former pacer Michael Kasprowicz doesn't understand why so much attention is being given to the pitches in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar trophy as they are "typical" Indian wickets, on which, Australia need to "adapt and adjust".

"I don't believe the hype I reckon because for all the attention around the pitches they were typically Indian wickets," Kasprowicz, one of the architects of Australia's first Test win in India in 29 years, told The Age.

"I realise this last one in Indore did a few tricks early on, but because they're starting so early (9.30am), maybe that little bit of moisture helps grab the ball. But at other stages later in the day, it wasn't doing anything like that."

India had won the first

two Tests in Nagpur and New Delhi where the pitches got "average" rating by the ICC. The pitch in Indore was rated "poor" as Australia won the game by nine wickets.

Most of the experts, including former Australian captain Mark Taylor and Mark Waugh, too have been critical of the pitches, especially the Indore track.

"When I say don't believe the hype, I know the odd ball was turning square, and it got a poor rating," said Kasprowicz, who was part of the Australia team which won their only series in India back in 2004.

"But I remember turning up to the Bangalore Test in 1998, and I've got a picture of me standing on the wicket. It honestly looks like a dry creek bed. There's no grass, but it's got these cracks and spider cracks all down the whole

face of it.

"And you just go well, like that's what we're gonna play on. And guess what? We've got to adapt and adjust. That's the game of Test cricket."

After losing the opening Test in Nagpur, Australia dominated the first two days in the Delhi Test before collapsing to 113 all out in their second innings on day 3 to lose the match by six wickets and go 0-2 down in the four-Test series.

"Obviously, after the Delhi experience of that second innings, the Australians adapted to the conditions and did really well. And so come the second innings they were 1/76 and got through (to victory)," Kasprowicz said.

"(Travis) Head and Marnus (Labuschagne) batted really well. They found a way, and that's what Australia's been known to do over all these years."

Smith to lead Aus again as Cummins stays home

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Steve Smith will lead Australia in the fourth and final Test against India as regular captain Pat Cummins remains with his unwell mother back home.

Smith had captained the side in Indore in Cummins' absence. Cummins had flown back home after the Delhi Test to be with his mother who is in palliative care.

Cricket.com.au reported that Cummins will remain in Sydney.

Three ODIs follow the final Test and a decision on Cummins' participation in those games will be taken later.

Smith had captained Australia to a nine-wicket win in Indore last week. India lead the series 2-1 and need a win



to qualify for the World Test Championship final.

With the win in Indore, Australia secured their qualification for the WTC summit

clash in London in June.

Smith, who captained Australia to their first win in India in six years, had enjoyed leading the side but said it was

very Cummins' team.

"My time is done. It's Pat's team now. I've obviously been able to stand in this week, obviously in tough circumstances with Patty going home. Our thoughts are still with him back home.

"But India is a part of the world I love captaining ... it's probably my favourite place in the world to captain. Every ball is an event and therefore can dictate what happens after, which is something that I really love and you've got to be ahead of the game.

"So I thought I did it well this week and it was good fun," Smith had said after the nine-wicket win in Indore.

The website also reported that Nathan Ellis has replaced injured Jhye Richardson in the Australia squad for ODIs beginning March 17.



Mumbai Indians beat RCB by 9 wkts in WPL

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by nine wickets in their Women's Premier League match here on Monday.

Chasing 156, MI reached their target with 34 balls to spare. After picking three wickets, Hayley Matthews completed a fine all-round show by scoring a 38-ball 77, while Nat Sciver-Brunt made 55 off 29 balls.

Earlier, RCB were all out for 155 in 18.4 overs. Opting to bat after winning the toss, RCB were off to a brisk start with the opening duo of skipper Smriti Mandhana and Sophie Devine adding 39 runs in 4.2 overs, when the latter was dismissed by Saika Ishaque

for an 11-ball 16.

Disha Kasat failed to open her account, before Mandhana was sent back by Hayley Matthews for a 17-ball 23, the RCB captain yet again falling after getting a start.

Richa Ghosh, then, contributed 28 off 26 balls. Later, RCB were helped by useful cameos from Kanika Ahuja (22 off 13), Shreyanka Patil (23 off 15) and Megan Schutt (20 off 14).

BRIEF SCORES

Royal Challengers Bangalore: 155 all out in 18.4 overs (Richa Ghosh 28; Hayley Matthews 3/28).

Mumbai Indians: 159/1 in 14.2 overs (Hayley Matthews 77 not out, Nat Sciver-Brunt 55 not out).

Carey looks for runs in final Test via sweep shot

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Australia wicket-keeper Alex Carey feels he has more chances of succeeding if he goes for his shots, including the sweep, rather than defending in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar trophy.

The southpaw has been impressive with his glove work on wickets offering turn from day one but has only managed 56 runs in the series so far.

Carey also feels the Australian batters have their own methods to deal with rank turners and he is going to back his own in the final Test beginning in Ahmedabad from March 9.

"I had some confidence out of the first game and then getting out defending, am I happy with that? Not really," Carey told reporters here.

"I think probably just sticking to my method now and understanding if you chase it too much then you might get yourself into trouble. "So yeah, back my strength and try to score with the sweeps and manipulate a little bit more that way. In India, if you change your method too much, it goes pretty quickly. I'll continue to be positive over here."

Australia made an unexpected comeback in the series with a nine-wicket win at the



Holkar Stadium last Friday. India lead the series 2-1 going into the final game. After the Delhi debacle, Australians did not play a lot of sweep shots but did not abandon them completely. Expect Carey to sweep at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

"We all know that our players play differently, Travis (Head) will play an aggressive nature and Peter (Handscomb) will grind out runs, and he's played beautifully. And Steve (Smith) does it his way.

"We've all got different methods and, internally, we live with that. So looking forward to another opportunity in Ahmedabad and get down and maybe get the broom out again," he said.

Carey had pulled off a sharp stumping to send back Rohit Sharma on the opening day of the third Test. The ball from Matthew Kuhnemann turned eight degrees and Rohit missed it with Carey doing the rest behind the stumps.

"Instinct takes over when

you see a ball bounce like that. I don't think many of us were expecting an eight degree turning ball that early in the game. But it was nice to hold on to that and for us to get a bit of momentum."

"It was nice after we missed a couple of reviews (in the first over of the game) to get that one I thought once the big screen showed the nick, I thought he might have settled in for a nice 150 or something like that," he added.

Nortje out as SA aim for Test series win over WI

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa will be without fast bowler Anrich Nortje for the second Test against the West Indies which starts at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on Wednesday.

Nortje played a major role in South Africa's 87-run win in the first Test in Centurion as part of a four-pronged pace attack, taking five for 36 in the first innings.

Cricket South Africa announced on Monday that Nortje had experienced "mild groin discomfort" during the first Test and had been advised to rest by South Africa's medical team.

No replacement was named, which will mean a change of emphasis in South Africa's bowling line-up, with medium-paced all-rounder Wiaan Mulder the only other seamer in the squad.

Mulder will add batting strength to the team, which could open the way for a return for left-arm spinner Keshav

Maharaj.

Senuran Muthusamy, also a left-arm spinner, played ahead of Maharaj in Centurion as an all-rounder. But he failed with the bat and bowled only eight overs without taking a wicket.

The match is the final fixture for both teams in the World Test championship. South Africa are in fourth position but cannot qualify for the final at The Oval in London in June. West Indies are also out of the running in seventh place.

It is the last Test match for South Africa until they meet India in two matches at the end of the year.

Players from South Africa and the West Indies lamented the shortage of Test opportunities as well as the fact that most of their scheduled series over the next four years consist of only two matches.

"West Indies deserves more Test cricket," said fast bowler Kemar Roach.

"Two-Test series are pretty tough. By the time you get a rhythm the series is



over."

South African fast bowler Kagiso Rabada, whose second innings return of six for 50 hurried South Africa to victory at Centurion, was equally disappointed by the lack of opportunities at Test level.

"It is disappointing that we are not playing as much Test cricket as we would like. I see Test cricket as the pinnacle of the game," he said.

The two Tests against the West Indies come in a summer dominated by the new SA20 franchise competition and the Women's T20 World Cup. There is a low-key feel about the matches, which had minimal build-up and were scheduled in midweek, almost guaranteeing low spectator turn-out.

But Rabada pledged full commitment. "You're playing a Test match," he said. "The West Indies are a capable team. Whether it's high profile or low profile it's a Test match and you have to rock up and play your best."



All-rounder Shakib gives Bangladesh consolation win over England

AP ■ CHATTOGRAM

Shakib Al Hasan put in a fine all-round performance as Bangladesh pulled off a consolation 50-run win in the third ODI against England in Chittagong on Monday.

Shakib top-scored with 75 to guide Bangladesh to 249 runs and then claimed 4-35 to help the home side bowl out England for 196 in 43.1 overs, ending the series 1-2.

This was England's last scheduled ODI until September 8 and gave the defending champions useful practice on tricky South Asian pitches ahead of the ODI World Cup in India later this year.

Ebadot Hossain and Taijul Islam played their part in the win with 2-38 and 2-52 and Mushfiqur and Najmul chipped in with 70 and 53 runs respectively with the bat.

Bangladesh had England reeling on 55-3 with quick strikes after Jason Roy and Philip Salt put on 54 runs for the opening stand.

Player-of-the-match Shakib broke the stand with Salt going for 35 before bowling out Roy for 19 in his next over.

In between his two wickets, Ebadot handed Dawid Malan a duck.

James Vince and Sam Curran staged a recovery with a 49-run stand for the fourth wicket before they were removed by Shakib and Mehidy Hasan Miraz respectively.

Bangladesh then took full control of the game once Taijul

had skipper Jos Buttler out leg-before for 26.

Taijul also bowled Adil Rashid before Shakib returned for his final spell to dismiss debutant Rehan Ahmed.

Mehidy took a low catch at midwicket as Shakib completed 300 ODI wickets, the first Bangladeshi to do so.

Shakib thought he had his fifth five-wicket haul in ODI after Jofra Archer was given out lbw but the decision was reversed on review.

Mustafizur ended the fight of Chris Woakes, who made 34 runs, in the next over to end the contest.

Archer earlier picked up 3-35, Adil Rashid 2-21 and Curran 2-51 as England bowled out Bangladesh, who opted to bat first after winning the toss, in 48.5 overs.

Curran struck early, handing opener Liton Das a duck in the very first over before he dismissed Tamim Iqbal for 11.

Najmul and Mushfiqur shared a 98-run partnership for the third wicket to steady Bangladesh's innings before the former was run out by Buttler.

Rashid bowled Mushfiqur and Archer ended Shakib's 71-ball innings in the penultimate over, wrapping up Bangladesh's innings the next ball.

England handed an ODI debut to 18-year-old leg-spinner Rehan, who finished with a modest 1-62.

The two teams will now play a three-match T20I series, with the first match scheduled for March 9 in Chittagong.