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INDIA SHINES IN THE
G20 PRESIDENCY

WORLD 9

ANGER AT MACRON MOUNTS AS
PROTESTS INTENSIFY

MONEY 10

SENSEX HALTS 2-DAY GAINS, FALLS
290 PTS TO CLOSE BELOW 58K

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY MARCH 24, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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Rahul convicted for 'all thieves Modi' jibe

Surat court gives Rahul 2-year jail, suspends sentence for 30 days; verdict stirs debate on possible disqualification

PNS/PTI ■ SURAT/NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was on Thursday sentenced to two years in jail by a Surat court in a 2019 criminal defamation case over his "all thieves have Modi as the common surname" remark, in a setback to the Lok Sabha MP who faces the risk of disqualification. Rahul made the remarks during a rally in Karnataka's Kolar during the Lok Sabha poll campaign.

The defamation case was filed by BJP MLA and former Gujarat Minister Purnesh Modi.

The court of Chief Judicial Magistrate HH Varma, which held 52-year-old former Congress president guilty under IPC sections 499 and 500, also granted him bail and suspended the sentence for 30 days to allow him to appeal in a higher court. Rahul can escape immediate disqualification as a member of Parliament if the appellate court suspends the conviction as well as the two-year jail term.

As the conviction ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections set off a political slugfest and posed another challenge to Rahul with a bearing on his political future, the Congress said he will file an appeal.

Rahul could have limited his speech to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Nirav Modi, Vijay Malliya, Mehul Choksi, and Anil Ambani, but he "intentionally" made a statement that hurt individuals carrying the Modi surname, and thereby committed criminal defamation, the court said in its 168-page order. Rahul was present in the court when the verdict was pronounced.

Rahul took to Twitter to give his initial reaction by quoting Mahatma Gandhi in a tweet in Hindi about truth and non-violence. "My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God, non-violence the means to get it. — Mahatma Gandhi."

In another tweet, he paid tributes to freedom fighters



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi arrives at IGI Airport in New Delhi after a Surat court on Thursday convicted him in a criminal defamation case filed against him over his alleged 'Modi surname' remark

Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru on their martyrdom day, saying they have learnt fighting fearlessly for the country and holding on to truth.

The court noted that the seriousness of the accused's crime increased because a speech delivered by a member of parliament has a "very wide impact on the public." "And if the accused is given less punishment, then it sends a wrong message to the public and the purpose of defamation is not fulfilled and anybody will easily slander someone."

The court also said the Supreme Court had in the past asked the accused to remain alert in the future after he apologised in a 2018 case for his "chowkidar chor hai" remark. "Despite the Supreme Court alerting the accused,

there appears to be no change in his conduct."

According to the Representation of the People Act, a person sentenced to imprisonment of two years or more shall be disqualified "from the date of such conviction" and remain disqualified for another six years after serving time.

PDT Achari, a former Lok Sabha Secretary General and Constitution expert, said if the appellate court stays the conviction and the sentence then the disqualification will remain suspended. "The disqualification will last for eight years (in case he is disqualified)," he said, adding that a disqualified person can neither contest, poll or vote for a certain period.

Sources said after going through the judgment, the Lok

Sabha Secretariat will take a call on issuing a notification announcing a vacancy in the lower house. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said legal experts will examine the verdict and only after that the Government will take a decision on the next step.

During the hearing on the quantum of sentence, Rahul, when asked about the punishment, submitted before the court that he had delivered the speech as per his duty in the interest of the public. The Congress leader also submitted that he has no discrimination against anybody and loves and cherishes all the people of his country.

Rahul's lawyer argued for a lesser punishment claiming there was no intention to insult anyone.

LS OK's Budget amid ruckus

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha on Thursday approved the Budget envisaging an expenditure of around ₹45 lakh crore for the fiscal year starting April 1 without any discussion, as the Opposition continued to create ruckus over demand for a JPC probe into charges against the Adani Group.

The Lower House of Parliament took up the Demands for Grants and Appropriation Bills after two adjournments as the ruling and Opposition MPs engaged in a matching duet over demands for an apology by Rahul and the Adani issue.

Cong protests, terms judgment 'erroneous'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties, including the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), rallied behind Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying dissent should not be stifled as it is the core of democracy.

Congress workers staged a rail roko protest in Kumbakonam and Virudhachalam in Tamil Nadu. They staged a "black band" protest in front of the State Assembly, condemning the sentencing of their leader in a defamation case. Protests by party workers were also reported from Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, Kerala, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.

Rahul returned from Surat to the national Capital and was accorded a reception at the domestic airport in Delhi on his arrival.

The Congress said the former party chief will file an appeal against a Gujarat court verdict holding him guilty in a 2019 criminal defamation case. It alleged that the Government was after him for speaking the truth and bringing to light its "misdeeds".

The grand old party, which is battling a series of legal actions against its former party chief, dubbed his conviction case as an "infirm, erroneous and unsustainable judgment" that will be immediately challenged in a higher court. It expressed hope that it will be stayed and quashed soon.

A host of Congress leaders, including party president Mallikarjun Kharge and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, spoke out angrily on the matter.

In a tweet in Hindi, the Congress president alleged that the "cowardly, dictatorial BJP government is incensed at Rahul Gandhi and Opposition because we are exposing their misdeeds and demanding a JPC."

Continued on Page 2



Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and Opposition MPs protest during Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Thursday

BJP: Should Rahul have freedom to abuse others

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday asserted that the law has to take its course if Congress leader Rahul Gandhi abuses people and slammed the Congress over its criticism of his conviction in a defamation case, asking whether the opposition party wants "complete freedom" for him to "abuse" others.

Taking objection to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's comment that judges were "changed" in Rahul's case and maintaining that it also calls for the "contempt of court", the BJP on Thursday alleged that Rahul was sowing "seeds of hate" by his unbridled comments.

The BJP, however, skirted the question on the disqualification of Rahul's Lok Sabha membership following the court conviction, saying it was the prerogative of the House Speaker.

Addressing a press conference here, BJP leader and for-

mer law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said there is yet another defamation case in Bihar filed by the party leader Sushil Kumar Modi against the Congress leader.

Taking exception to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's questioning of the court's order by saying that "several judges hearing the matter were changed," Prasad said it means that the Congress does not believe in the judiciary and the rule of the law.

"It is a serious issue of contempt [of court] also," Prasad said and added that it was "grossly unfair" on the part of Kharge to make such comments.

The BJP leaders cautioned Rahul against making defamatory remarks, saying the Congress leader will find himself facing "more troubles" if he doesn't refrain from doing so. "He is sowing seeds of hate by his comments," said the BJP leader, adding the law will take its course if Rahul abuses people.

CAPSULE

BJP APPOINTS FOUR STATE UNIT CHIEFS

New Delhi: The BJP on Thursday named four new state presidents, including Lok Sabha MP C P Joshi in Rajasthan and OBC leader and MLC Samrat Choudhary in Bihar, as the party moves to tone up its organisational machinery with an eye on consolidating its support base in the run up to crucial state and national polls.

ACCENTURE TO LAY OFF 19,000 EMPLOYEES

New Delhi: IT services and consulting firm Accenture will lay off 2.5 per cent or 19,000 employees over a period of the next one and half years, the company said in a regulatory filing. Accenture employs over 7 lakh people and is estimated to have the largest employee base of 3 lakh people in India.

Nikah halala: SC to form bench

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it will set up a fresh five-judge Constitution bench at an "appropriate stage" to hear pleas challenging the constitutional validity of polygamy and "nikah halala" among Muslims.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala was urged by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay, who has filed a PIL on the issue, that section 494 of the IPC doesn't allow plogamy, halala, etc, and needs to be struck down.

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Khalistani violence unacceptable, says UK Foreign Secy

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ LONDON

In the first high-level condemnation of violent incidents by alleged Khalistan supporters in London, UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly has said his country will review security at the Indian High Commission there following "unacceptable" acts of violence.

He also asserted the British Government takes these matters "very seriously" and would "robustly" respond to such incidents. These assurances were given by him late Wednesday. He also said "acts of violence towards staff at the Indian High Commission in London are unacceptable and I have made our position clear to the High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami".

Around 2,000 protesters waving so-called Khalistan flags descended upon the Indian mission in London on Wednesday for a planned demonstration and hurled objects and chanted slogans amid a heightened security presence and barricades.

Unlike the violent disorder on Sunday when the Indian High Commission came under attack, the protesters were barricaded across the road.

The protesters, including turbaned men, and some women and children, had been bussed in from different parts of the UK and chanted pro-



Khalistan slogans.

In a statement, Cleverly said the British Government takes such matters very seriously and would "robustly" respond to the attack as it works with the Metropolitan Police to make changes needed to ensure the security of the mission's staff.

Continued on Page 2

Scribe faces death threat in Canada for anti-Amritpal show

New Delhi: Khalistan supporters have reportedly issued death threats to an Indian-Canadian news professional after some guests in his television show criticised Amritpal Singh.

The reporter was identified as Pardeep Bains, who hosts a programme in Punjab in Greater Toronto Area.

Detailed report on P4

First batch of Agniveers 'ready to tread Agnipath'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The first batch of the Agniveers will pass out from Navy's training institute on March 28 signalling the commencement of transformation of the Armed forces.

The batch includes women also. Along with their male colleagues, they will be deployed on frontline ships.

Incidentally, the Navy will be the first of the Armed forces to receive fully trained Agniveers since the new policy Agnipath to recruit soldiers into the Services was announced on June 14 last year.

Navy planned to induct 3,000 Agniveers including 341



women and their training started at INS Chilka, the premier ab-initio training establishment of the Indian Navy.

In a Twitter post, the Indian Navy said the first batch of Agniveers is "ready to tread the Agnipath". The passing-out parade will be held on March 28.

Nikhat, Lovlina, Nitu, Saweety raise hopes for world boxing golds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

On a delightful day for Indian boxers, the quartet of Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Lovlina Borgohain (75kg), Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) and Saweety Boora (81kg) marched into the finals of the Women's World Championships with stellar wins here on Thursday.

While Nikhat out-punched Rio Olympics bronze medallist Ingrid Valencia of Colombia 5-0, two-time Worlds bronze medallist Lovlina beat Li Qian of China 4-1 to book her maiden appearance in the title round of the prestigious championships.

Detailed report on P12



Nikhat Zareen (red) punches Colombia's Ingrid Valencia during their 50kg category semifinal bout at the 2023 IBA Women's Boxing World Championships, in New Delhi on Thursday



India's Neetu (blue) punches Alua Balkibekova of Kazakhstan during their 48kg category semifinal bout at the 2023 IBA Women's Boxing World Championships, in New Delhi on Thursday

‘Details of 17 cr Indians leaked, gang arrested’

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

A massive data breach that has implications for national security was unearthed by Cyberabad Police here, who arrested seven people of a gang allegedly involved in the theft and sale of sensitive data of the government and important organisations, including details of 2.55 lakh Defence personnel as well as the personal and confidential data of about 16.8 crore citizens across the country.

The accused persons were found selling more than 140 different categories of information, which include sensitive information such as details of defence personnel and the mobile numbers of citizens and NEET students, among others, Cyberabad Police Commissioner M Stephen Raveendra told reporters here on Thursday. Seven data bro-

kers were arrested from Delhi, police said adding that the accused had been operating through three companies (call centres) in Noida and other places. So far it has been found that the accused sold data to at least 100 fraudsters, who used it for committing cyber crimes. Investigations are still on, police said.

Sensitive data of defence personnel containing their ranks, email ids, place of posting, etc was found available with the accused, Commissioner Raveendra said.

“This will have serious national security implications. The data of defence and government employees can be used for espionage; to impersonate them and commit serious offences that may jeopardise national security. We are in process of finding out how this data got leaked and who are insiders who are doing it,”

he added. The arrested accused were selling the data through a contact details directory service provider and similar platforms, police said, adding that during the course of the investigation it was found that the accused had sold data of 50,000 citizens for as low as Rs 2,000.

Notices will be sent to the service providers and they will be examined and legal action will be initiated against them also, police said. “When any individual calls toll-free numbers of service providers for any sector or category related confidential data of individuals, their query is listed and sent to that category of service providers.

Then these fraudsters contact the clients and send them samples. If the client agrees to purchase, they make payment and are provided data,” police said, explaining modus operandi.

Opposition leaders to move EC with concerns on EVMs, remote voting

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Thursday decided to approach the Election Commission to voice concern over the use of Electronic Voting Machines for conducting elections, particularly its plans to allow remote voting for migrant voters.

NCP supremo Sharad Pawar convened the meeting of leaders of opposition parties in the Rajya Sabha, which was attended by Congress leader Digvijay Singh, independent Rajya Sabha member Kapil Sibal, Samajwadi Party leader Ramgopal Yadav, Shiv Sena (Thackeray faction) member Anil Desai and BRS member K Keshav Rao among others. There was no representative from Trinamool Congress at the meeting.

“We just raised certain questions and we expect a reply from the Election Commission,” Pawar told reporters after the meeting.



Briefing the media about the meeting, Digvijay Singh said opposition parties had unanimously rejected the Election Commission plans on deployment of remote EVMs to allow migrant voters exercise their franchise.

“The opposition parties had even turned down the EC’s plans to make a demonstration about the remote-EVMs. There is doubt amongst voters on EVMs. Earlier, they used to say EVM is a stand alone machine, but now they

are saying the names of candidates can be added through the internet,” the former Madhya Pradesh chief minister said.

Sibal said no other country uses EVMs for elections, then why should the machines be used in India.

Sibal and Singh brushed aside questions on whether they doubted the electoral victories of opposition parties where EVMs were deployed for the conduct of polls. “We have decided to move the Election Commission one last time. We want to hear from the Election Commission on our concerns. If the EC does not address our concerns, we will take political action,” Sibal said, without elaborating.

Digvijay Singh said Citizens Commission on Elections chaired by retired Supreme Court judge Madan Lokur had raised doubts about EVMs and petitioned the Election Commission but had received no response from the Commission.

Probe Shah’s Sangma Govt ‘corrupt’ remark, Congress writes to CBI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday wrote to CBI Director Subodh Jaiswal asking the probe agency to question Home Minister Amit Shah over his remark describing the Conrad Sangma Government in Meghalaya in its previous term as corrupt, and to investigate that claim.

In a letter to Jaiswal, Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh stated that Shah in his public speech on February 17, 2023, said the then government of Meghalaya “was the most corrupt government in the country.”

“Shah is also the Home Minister of India. In his capacity as the home minister, he would surely have had access to information and facts that led him to this conclusion,” he said. For some inexplicable

reasons, the home minister, who is also the former national president of BJP, has failed to act upon the information about the corrupt practices and instances of the then Meghalaya government, Ramesh said in the letter dated March 21 which he tweeted Thursday.

“Therefore, in the highest national interest, we urge you to summon Shah and ask him to submit all the information and facts that led him to the stated assessment and investigate the matter,” he said.

“We also urge you to investigate if the Home Minister of India was under any undue duress from his party or other forces, to suppress the information related to the corruption of Meghalaya, in order to enable his party BJP to support the same chief minister after recent Meghalaya elections,” the Congress leader said.

Cong protests...

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“Under its political bankruptcy, the Modi government sends police, ED and imposes cases on political speeches. We will appeal in the higher court,” he said and also alleged that “they kept changing judges”.

AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal alleged that a conspiracy was being hatched to “eliminate” non-BJP leaders and parties by prosecuting them.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin expressed his solidarity with Gandhi. His Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren too said the sentence awarded to Rahul is a matter of concern for democracy. Both Stalin and Soren are running a coalition government with Congress as an ally.

Def Min inks ₹3,700 cr contracts with BEL

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining the momentum of having self-reliance in defence production, Ministry of Defence on Thursday inked two separate contracts with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), at a total cost of over Rs 3,700 crore, to enhance the operational capabilities of the Indian Air Force.

The first contract, worth over Rs 2,800 crore, pertains to the supply of Medium Power Radars (MPR) ‘Arudhra’ for the Indian Air Force.

The second contract, at an overall cost of approximately Rs 950 crore, relates to 129 DR-118 Radar Warning

Receivers (RWR). Both projects are under Buy (Indian – IDMM (Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured)) category, defence ministry officials said later.

These essentially embody the spirit of ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ and will help facilitate the realisation of the country’s journey to achieve self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

MPR (Arudhra) radar has been indigenously designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and will be manufactured by BEL. Its successful trials have already been conducted by the Indian Air Force.

Indian, Royal Navy of UK conduct joint maritime drill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of forging more close defence ties, the Indian Navy and Royal Navy of United Kingdom carried a joint maritime drill Konkani 2023. The annual bilateral exercise was held from March 20 to 22 off the Konkani coast in the Arabian Sea.

INS Trishul, a guided missile frigate, and HMS Lancaster, a Type 23 guided missile frigate, participated in this edition and undertook multiple maritime drills to enhance interoperability and imbibe best practices, navy officials said here on Thursday.

The exercises covered all



domains of maritime operations, air, surface and sub-surface, and included gunnery shoots on surface inflatable target ‘Killer Tomato’, helicopter operations, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare drills, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS), ship manoeuvres and exchange of personnel.

The exercise yielded excellent training value to personnel of both navies. A high level of

professionalism and enthusiasm was also evident during its conduct.

The focus personnel exhibited on operational readiness, enhancing interoperability and improving the ability to conduct joint operations will go a long way in bolstering the combined efforts of the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy to strengthen maritime security and uphold a rules-based order in the region.

Karnataka HC quashes ED’s order freezing bank accounts of Amnesty International

Bengaluru: The Karnataka High Court has quashed a 2018 Enforcement Directorate order of freezing the bank accounts of Amnesty International India Private Limited. The petition filed by Amnesty International in 2018 was allowed and the notices quashed, the single-judge bench of Justice K S Hemalekha said in its February 24 order.

The copy of the judgment was made available recently. In the judgment, the court said: “On perusal of the provisions of Section 132(8A) of the Act, it is evident that order under Sub-Section (3) of Section 132 of the Income Tax Act would not be in force beyond sixty

days from the date of the order. In light of the provisions of Section 132(8A), the impugned notices dated 25.10.2018 have lost their efficacy by efflux of time as the period of sixty days has expired.”

The court, however, said all the contentions are left open to be urged before the appropriate authority in accordance with law. Calling itself a company “engaged in the business of rendering, research (primary and secondary) and consultancy services regarding human rights”, Amnesty claimed in petition before High Court that on October 25, 2018, without any notice to it, a search and seizure was conducted on its premises. PTI

NDDP-BJP Govt has accepted ‘letter of support’ from all political parties: Rio

PTI ■ KOHIMA

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Thursday said the newly formed NDDP-BJP alliance government has accepted the ‘letter of support’ of all political parties in the state Assembly, making it an ‘opposition-less’ government. While NDDP-BJP had won 37 out of the 60 seats in the just concluded state Assembly elections



to form the second Peoples’ Democratic Alliance (PDA), the remaining 27 members from six other political parties, including Independents extended ‘unconditional support’ to the Rio government.

Following Naga Peoples’ Front (NPF) MLA, Kuzholuzo Nienu raising queries on the floor of the Assembly about whether their ‘letter of support’ has been accepted or not, Chief

Minister Rio said, “I welcome the support extended to my government by NPF party and also all the parties who have been gracious in extending the support”.

He said the state government requires support, cooperation and assistance of each and every member of all political parties in the interest of the Naga people for an early solution to the Naga Political Issue

and various other issues confronting the state. Rio also informed the House that he has already met the BJP central leaders and informed them about the acceptance of the support extended by other political parties and they have also accepted it. “The support extended by other political parties cannot be refused,” he said. Heartily accepting the support of other parties, Rio expressed

confidence that “the coming together of all political parties in support will help the state in reaching even higher levels of development, progress and for early solution of Naga Political Issue which is what we aspire and look forward to”.

However, Rio did not say anything on the nomenclature of the opposition-less House. This is the third time that the 60-members of the Assembly

have come together to form an ‘opposition-less’ government in the state. The first opposition-less government was in 2015 after eight Congress MLAs merged with then ruling NPF-led Democratic Alliance of Nagaland (DAN) government under the leadership of T R Zeliang. The second all party government coined as United Democratic Alliance was formed in September 2021 of

the last House under Rio. He said the newly formed state Assembly has 29 new members out of the 60 while 33 members of the previous House could not be re-elected.

Saying that there is an underlying message in this verdict, he said “people want positive change and performance”. The duty of elected representatives is to deliver the goods to their citizens, he said.

US allows tourists...

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These include filing an application for a change of non-immigrant status; filing an application for adjustment of status; filing an application for a “compelling circumstances” employment authorization document; or be the beneficiary of a non frivolous petition

to change employer. “If one of these actions occurs within the up to 60-day grace period, the nonimmigrant’s period of authorised stay in the United States can exceed 60 days, even if they lose their previous non-immigrant status,” the USCIS said.

If the worker takes no action within the grace period, they and their dependents may then need to depart the United States within 60 days, or when their authorised validity period ends, whichever is shorter, it said.

“Many people have asked if they can look for a new job while in B-1 or B-2 status. The answer is, yes. Searching for employment and interviewing

for a position are permissible B-1 or B-2 activities,” the US Citizenship and Immigration Services said in a series of tweets. At the same time, the USCIS said before beginning any new employment, a petition and request for a change of status from B-1 or B-2 to an employment-authorized status must be approved, and the new status must take effect.

“Alternatively, if the change of status request is denied or the petition for new employment requested consular or port of entry notification, the individual must depart the U.S. And be admitted in an employment-authorized classification before beginning the new employment,” the USCIS said.

Nikah halala: SC to form bench...

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“I will consider it. At an appropriate stage, I will constitute a constitution bench,” the CJI responded. On August 30 last year, a five-judge bench comprising Justices Indira Banerjee, Hemant Gupta, Surya Kant, M M Sundresh and Sudhanshu Dhulia had made the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), National Commission for Women (NCW) and the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) parties to the PILs and sought their responses.

Justice Banerjee and Justice Gupta retired on September 23 and October 6 last year respectively giving rise to the need for re-constitution of the bench to

hear as many as eight petitions against the practices of polygamy and ‘nikah halala’. Upadhyay, in his PIL, has sought a direction to declare polygamy and ‘nikah halala’ unconstitutional and illegal.

While polygamy allows a Muslim man to have four wives, ‘nikah halala’ deals with the process in which a Muslim woman, who wants to re-marry her husband after divorce, has to first marry another person and get a divorce from him after consummation.

The apex court had in July 2018 considered the plea and referred the matter to a Constitution bench already tasked with hearing a batch of similar petitions.

Covid-19 cases rise nine-fold in five weeks; States alerted

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“Around 1 per cent of the global cases being reported in India as of now. Active cases stand at 7,600 right now. 966 cases being reported on a daily basis, on average. In the second week of February, 108 daily cases were being reported on average, it has now increased to 966,” said Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan.

“The eight States where the maximum number of cases are being reported are - Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. I had personally written to these states on March 16 on what actions they need to take up,” he added. A total of

349 samples of Covid-19’s XBB.1.16 variant, which might have been behind the recent rise of coronavirus cases in the country, have been detected, according to INSACOG data.

These 349 samples of the variant have been found in nine states and Union Territories. The highest number of cases due to this variant has been found in Maharashtra at 105, followed by Telangana 93, Karnataka 61 and Gujarat 54, according to INSACOG data. XBB 1.16 was first found in January when two samples tested positive for the variant.

In February, 140 samples of the XBB 1.16 variant were found. In March, 207 XBB 1.16 variant samples have been found till now, according to

INSACOG data. According to the Ministry, more than 220.65 crore total doses of vaccines have been administered in the country. “There has been no evidence of an increase in hospitalisation. Precaution doses should be increased. Enhanced lab surveillance and testing of all severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) cases needs to be done”, as per the statement.

India has recorded 1,134 new coronavirus cases, while the active cases increased to 7,026. The death toll climbed to 5,30,813 with five deaths. One death each has been reported in Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra while one fatality was reconciled by Kerala, the data updated at 8 am stated.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

LOST & FOUND

I, Mohd Ali Jaubar S/o. MD. Mushtaque Ahmed, R/o. 77F, Sector-8, Jasola Vihar, New Delhi-110025 have actually lost my original POA document no 787, Volume No. 4056, pages 72 to 75, book IV, date 14.07.2014.

PD(90304)A

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify that one of our contract service providers who was providing accounting services like book keeping and auditing services to us till March 2021, had taken some signed cheques without our knowledge and recently on 16-Mar-2023 has fraudulently used 2 cheques to withdraw big amounts. We have not availed his services from 01-Apr-2021 and we do not owe him anything. We also do not have any liabilities to any other person or companies as of today. He has taken away many cheque books and he is still in possession of mine and my family members cheque books. So if he issues any of our cheques having our signature to anyone, we won't be responsible for the same. Below are the details of our names and our company names. V. Gopala Krishnan (myself) GS International (my company) Sarita Gopal (my wife) Drafts United (my wife's company) Sajeev Gopal (my elder son) Sanjay Gopal (my younger son) Tenacity Retail (my younger son's company) Anju Sanjay (daughter in law). This notice is for the information of general public.

Regards,
V. Gopala Krishnan
Add- Flat No-666, Pocket-E, Near Sanjay Lake, Mayapuri Phase-II, Delhi-110061

Khalistani violence unacceptable, says UK Foreign Secy

From Page 1

As a sign of the action already taken, the Minister cited the heightened security measures in place at India House for a planned demonstration on Wednesday, which included several police officers standing guard outside the building, as well as many mounted officers on horseback patrolling the area along with helicopter surveillance. He said the police investigation is ongoing and the

Government is in close contact with the Indian High Commission in London and the Indian Government in New Delhi.

“We are working with the Metropolitan Police to review security at the Indian High Commission, and will make the changes needed to ensure the safety of its staff as we did for today’s demonstration,” he said. “We will always take the security of the High Commission, and all foreign

missions in the UK, extremely seriously, and prevent and robustly respond to incidents such as this,” he noted. The Minister observed the “thriving” India-UK relationship, driven by the deep personal connections between our two countries.

“Our joint 2030 roadmap guides our relationship and shows what we can achieve when we work together, creating new markets and jobs for the two countries and helping

to tackle shared challenges. We want to build deeper ties between the UK and India for the future,” Cleverly added. The statement follows the Indian Government’s strong protest over the lack of adequate security measures at its mission in London.

An evident Metropolitan Police presence has been visible around the Indian High Commission in Aldwych since the violent disorder on Sunday when Khalistani flag-waving

extremists smashed windows at the mission and attempted to pull down the tricolour from the flagpole. During Wednesday’s planned demonstration by similar groups chanting anti-India slogans, the protesters were confined to a barricaded area opposite the building. Additional officers were deployed as scenes of charged-up protesters hurling flares and water bottles towards India House unfolded briefly.

The Indian High

Commission responded to the protest by unfurling a giant national flag to add to several tricolours pinned to its windows and a large national flag unfurled on the facade of the building.

Meanwhile, High Commissioner Doraiswami took to Twitter to counter disinformation circulating around developments in Punjab related to enforcement action against the separatist group ‘Waris Punjab De’.

‘Boosting city’s revenue key concern’

Seeking Centre, LG’s approvals for everything delays decision-making: Gahlot

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after presenting his maiden budget, Finance Minister Kailash Gahlot on Thursday said boosting Delhi’s revenue is of prime concern in light of diminished central funds and also lamented about the AAP government having to go to courts often due to regular interventions by the Centre and the LG.

It is “unfortunate that everything has to first go to the Centre and the LG for approval which delays the decision-making process”, he said, claiming that hindrances are created in whatever the AAP government sets out to do.

While presenting the budget in the Assembly on Wednesday, Gahlot had claimed that Delhi was being provided Rs 325 crore as its share in the central taxes pool, despite pay-



ing 1.75 lakh crore as income tax.

He also said from the financial year 2023-24, even the Rs 325 crore will not be given to Delhi and termed it “economic discrimination” and “gross

injustice”.

“It is our right. We have a share in Delhi’s taxes. We are considering going to court,” he told PTI in an interview. Asked when they would be approaching the court, Gahlot said, “We

have to go to courts for everything.”

During his budget speech, Gahlot had said he was missing former finance minister Manish Sisodia, who was arrested by the CBI in connection with the

Delhi excise policy scam case.

“The experience (of presenting the budget) was wonderful but we deeply missed Manish Sisodia. Not just the Kejriwal government but the entire Delhi missed him as the Delhi budget and Sisodia have been synonymous with each other. We have presented a good budget,” Gahlot said.

The budget presented on Wednesday was delayed by a day following a row between the Centre and the AAP dispensation over allocations under various heads.

“Nothing is easy here. Be it getting yoga done for Delhiites, sending teachers to Finland, or the chief minister himself going to Singapore,” Gahlot said.

“But still we are committed and whatever promises we have made to Delhiites, we will fulfill them even if we have to fight for them,” he added.

Gupta moves HC against suspension from Assembly

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Vijender Gupta moved the Delhi High Court on Thursday challenging his one-year suspension from the Delhi assembly by the Speaker. His plea was mentioned by senior advocate Jayant Mehta before a bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sachin Datta.

The bench agreed to list the petition for hearing on Friday. On March 21, Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel had suspended Gupta till the next budget session for allegedly obstructing the proceedings of the House.

In the petition, the legislator from Rohini said his suspension is “unfair, unjust, unreasonable” and contrary to the principles of natural justice as well as the law including the Rules of Procedure & Conduct of Business, Legislative Assembly of National Capital Territory of Delhi.

It is a strategy to scuttle the voice of the opposition and violated his powers and privileges as a member of the assembly, the plea alleged. The plea asserted the procedure adopted by the Speaker was in



absolute violation of Gupta’s rights guaranteed under the Constitution as a citizen as well as a member of legislative assembly.

“Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Sanjeev Jha proposed petitioner’s suspension from the House for a period of one year. The Speaker put the motion to vote by adopting the voice vote and ordered the suspension of the Petitioner from sittings of the House for one year without any justification and again marshalled out the petitioner,” said the plea filed through lawyers Neeraj, Pavan Narang and Satya Ranjan Swain said.

Petitioner’s suspension is not an extemporaneous incident but is a result of a well-designed conspiracy and a well-planned strategy to scuttle the voice of the opposition and ignore the serious breach committed by the (AAP) Minister.

AAP leaked Budget details on social media, LG told

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A BJP delegation met Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena on Thursday and complained to him that the budget details were leaked on social media allegedly by the AAP before the document was tabled in the assembly.

Led by the leader of opposition in the assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, the BJP MLAs also complained to the LG about the suspension of their colleague Vijender Gupta from the assembly for one year after he had raised the issue of budget details being leaked on social media.

“The Delhi government announced the budget date without the approval of the Centre, which was constitutionally unfair. After this, the finance minister leaked the budget, which is a violation of the oath of secrecy,” said a statement from Bidhuri’s office.

Release those arrested for pasting anti-Modi posters, CM urges PM



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday lashed out at the Centre, saying corruption cases have been “closed” against those leaders who switched over to the BJP.

Addressing a public meet at the Jantar Mantar, Kejriwal, who is the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener, said he has “no objections” about the posters that were put up against him and that those behind it “should not be arrested”.

“Why is the prime minister so scared? I saw that posters were put up against me and I don’t have any problem about that. There won’t be any FIR or arrest. Some people are taking

AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal addresses a public meeting at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Thursday

the country towards dictatorship. Together we have to save the country’s Constitution and democracy, we have to save the country,” he said.

The CM urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release those who were arrested in connection with the poster that read “Modi Hatao, Desh Bachao”. Sounding the poll bugle for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the AAP kickedstart a ‘Modi Hatao, Desh Bachao’ (Remove Modi, Save the Nation) campaign from the Jantar Mantar here on Thursday.

Kejriwal supports Rahul against defamation case CM claims conspiracy against Opp leaders

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Showing a shift in stance, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday openly supported Congress leader Rahul Gandhi after he was sentenced to two years in jail in a defamation case and alleged a conspiracy was being hatched to “eliminate” non-BJP leaders and parties by prosecuting them.

The Congress and the AAP have in the past avoided taking each other’s side on various issues. The grand old party did not support AAP when Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia was arrested by the CBI in connection with alleged irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the now-scraped Delhi excise policy for 2021-22.

However, AAP’s support for Gandhi has come at a time when Kejriwal is learnt to be attempting to forge an alliance of “like-minded” parties ahead of the Lok Sabha polls next year. Earlier this month, he had invited chief ministers of eight non-BJP, non-Congress ruled states for dinner and discussion over political issues.

On Thursday, the Aam Aadmi Party indicated a soft-



Activists of Indian Youth Congress shout slogans during a Protest against Modi on the issue of Rahul Gandhi’s two-year sentence in a defamation case in New Delhi on Thursday

ening in its stance for Congress after a court in Gujarat’s Surat held Gandhi guilty of defamation for his 2019 “Modi surname” remark.

“A conspiracy is being hatched to eliminate non-BJP leaders and parties by prosecuting them. We have differences with the Congress, but it is not right to implicate Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case like this.

“It is the job of the public and the opposition to ask questions. We respect the court but disagree with the decision,”

Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha said opposition forms the core of democracy and dissent should not be stifled.

“Respectfully disagree with the court verdict against Rahul Gandhi. Opposition forms the core of democracy. Dissent should not be stifled. India has a strong tradition of critique.

Attempt to reduce this to the viewpoint of one ideology, one party, one leader is unconstitutional and undemocratic,” he tweeted.

Observe Earth Hour, BSES appeals to consumers



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Power utility BSES has appealed to its over 48 lakh consumers to switch off electrical appliances and non-essential lights for one hour from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm on March 25 to observe ‘Earth Hour’, officials said. Last year, Delhi had saved 171 MW electricity on account of Earth Hour, they said. Earth Hour is a global environmental movement started by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2007.

“We sincerely appeal to our over 4.8 million consumers and around 2 million residents in our area to make the right choice for the planet and for the future generations that will inherit it.

This Earth Hour, ‘switch-off and invest in our planet’. Citizens can help protect the natural world to safeguard our future,” a BSES spokesperson said. “BSES discoms are actively championing sustainable growth by promoting renewable, roof-top solar, EV charging, electric vehicles, battery storage, behavioural energy efficiency, and demand side management programs.

We also urge consumers to adopt a sustainable way of life and adopt green options like solar energy, EVs, and energy efficiency as a way of life,” the spokesperson added.

19 IPS, DANIPS officers shifted

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a major reshuffle, Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on Thursday transferred 19 IPS and DANIPS officers in the national Capital, an official order said.

Sindhu Pillai, a 2001 batch IPS officer, has been appointed as joint commissioner of the Economic Offences Wing, while 2010 batch IPS officer Rajender Singh Sagar has been made the DCP of the First Battalion, the order stated.

Additional DCP north-west Apoorva Gupta, a 2013 batch IPS officer, has become the DCP of Railways. Sachin Sharma, a 2014 batch IPS officer, who was additional DCP east district is now additional DCP central district, while his batchmate Shashank Jaiswal is the new additional DCP east district, it stated.

Similarly, 2014 batch IPS officer Surendra Choudhary, the current additional DCP of the southeast, will take the charge of additional DCP Dwarka, the order said.

Sandhya Swami, a 2016 batch IPS officer, has been promoted to additional DCP of the northeast district from additional DCP 2. Harsh Indora, an officer of the same batch, has become additional DCP southeast. Earlier, Indora was additional DCP 2 Shahdara district, it said.

The order further stated that Rajneesh Garg, a 2009 batch DANIPS officer and currently serving as additional DCP Rohini, has been appointed as DCP licensing. Pankaj Kumar, a 2009 batch DANIPS officer, who is additional DCP 2 New Delhi district has been appointed as additional DCP Rohini district.

2019 Jamia violence

Trial court order discharging 11 perverse: Police to HC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Thursday contended before the Delhi High Court that a trial court order, discharging JNU student Sharjeel Imam and student activists Asif Iqbal Tanha and Safoora Zargar in a 2019 Jamia Nagar violence case, was perverse and unsustainable in law as it cannot indulge in conducting mini trial at the stage of framing of charges.

The police said at the stage of framing of charges, a trial court cannot indulge in conducting a mini trial by determining the credibility of the evidence as to whether it would warrant a conviction or not.

The submissions were made before Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma who reserved



the verdict on the police’s plea after hearing arguments of the lawyers for Delhi Police and 11 people, who were discharged by the trial court, for two-and-a-half hours.

The case concerns the violence that erupted after a clash between police and people protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in the Jamia Nagar area here in December 2019.

The trial court had in its February 4 order discharged 11 people in the case while holding that they were made “scapegoats” by police and that dissent has to be encouraged, not stifled.

Virendra Sachdeva picked as Delhi unit BJP chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP on Thursday got its full-time president in Virendra Sachdeva, the first party leader from Punjabi background in the last 13 years to hold the post.

Sachdeva, 55, till now held the charge of working president of Delhi BJP, which he got after the resignation of then chief of the state unit Adesh Gupta following the party’s defeat in MCD polls last year.

“My priority will be to strengthen the organisation of Delhi BJP and ensure that the party wins all seven Lok Sabha seats in the city with bigger margins in next year’s elections,” Sachdeva told PTI at the party office on Pant Marg after being appointed full-time president of the state unit.

BJP chief JP Nadda had earlier in the day appointed new state presidents in Delhi, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Odisha.

According to BJP sources, Sachdeva has been impressive in his short stint as the party’s Delhi working president since Gupta’s removal from the position. He is a low-key and out-and-out organisation person



who has been able to infuse a sense of cohesion in the state unit often pulled in different directions by local heavyweights, they added.

Sachdeva in a tweet thanked the party leadership: “Many thanks to honourable BJP national president JP Nadda and the national leadership for appointing me Delhi BJP state president. I assure to discharge the organisational works of the party with dedication and honesty.”

Before Sachdeva, OP Kohli held the post of Delhi BJP president in 2010. “There was a wave of happiness among the refugees who came to India from Pakistan at the time of partition after my appointment as working president of Delhi BJP and today this happiness has doubled,” he said.

Couple stages robbery at home to get friend’s crypto assets worth crores

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Noida Police on Thursday said they have arrested three people, including a married couple, for allegedly staging a robbery at their home after inviting a businessman friend in order to gain control of his cryptocurrencies worth “crores of rupees.”

The businessman, a frequent visitor to the couple’s apartment, had told them that he had investments worth crores in Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Noida) Shakti Avasthy said. Avasthy told reporters that the Sector 113 Police Station was alerted about a robbery at a flat in Arania society in Sector 119 on the intervening night of March 20 and 21.

“The three people (the couple and the businessman) had come to the police station in an inebriated condition. They requested a medical test. The medical test was done and it showed minor injuries with all three. The next day they filed a loot complaint,” the officer said.

When police investigated the case, they found that the businessman, Virendra Malik, who is also one of the complainant in the matter, was invited by Ajit alias Rahul Singh and his wife Mahi to their apartment.

“The couple had roped in four more people to stage the



robbery at their home and one of them, identified as Ankur Payal, has been arrested,” he said. During the staged episode, the “robbers” made off with some gold jewellery worn by the businessman and also administered him some narcotics which left him unconscious for more than 24 hours, he said.

According to police, a wristwatch, a neck chain, three mobile phones, and Rs 5,800 in cash were robbed from Malik by the assailants who were acting in collusion with the couple. They also asked him for his cryptocurrency details, and his mobile passwords, which Malik refused to share despite being beaten up.

According to police, they also beat up the couple, probably to allay any suspicion that they were together in the act. “Malik had informed Rahul and Mahi that he had investments worth crores in Bitcoin. Rahul and Mahi were undergoing financial stress and they were lured by this option to resolve their problem.”



March and the post-monsoon season. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said the rise in influenza cases is due to the Influenza A subtype

H3N2 virus. Hospitals across the country have been reporting a large number of influenza cases over the past few months.

'Xi's Moscow visit will not impact Russia-India ties'

'Wishful thinking', says Russian envoy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Brushing aside speculation that recent visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Russia will harm India-Russia strategic ties, its envoy to New Delhi Denis Alipov on Thursday termed these claims as "wishful thinking." The visit came at a time when tension prevails at the border between India and China.

In this backdrop, the Russian envoy said in a tweet message "Profusion of analysis these days of the outcomes of Xi Jinping's Russia visit.

The impression as though various reputable Indian experts almost dream of Russia-China ties harming Russia-India strategic alignment. A wishful thinking case in point," the Russian Ambassador said.

Chinese President Jinping



was on a three-day visit to Russia from March 20 to 23. In Moscow, he met President Putin.

The State visit came in the backdrop of the ongoing Ukraine war and sharp division between the Western world and Russia.

India, so far, has refrained from voting against Russia on the Ukraine issue in the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security

Council(UNSC). New Delhi has time and again called for diplomacy and dialogue to end the conflict.

Xi Jinping reportedly told the Russian President that he is convinced of the popular support Putin enjoys in Russia, ahead of a Presidential election next year. Vladimir Putin also praised China's growth trajectory and also said that Russia is "slightly envious" of the rapid development of China in recent decades.

Western countries reacted sharply to Xi's visit and asked China to press Russia to end its military campaign in Ukraine.

"We hope President Xi uses this opportunity to press President (Vladimir) Putin to cease bombing Ukrainian cities, hospitals, schools, to halt some of these atrocities that we are seeing on a daily basis," UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman said.

BJP names 4 new State chiefs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday appointed four new State presidents, including Lok Sabha MP C P Joshi in the poll-bound Rajasthan and OBC leader and MLC Samrat Choudhary in Bihar.

Besides these two states, BJP president J P Nadda also appointed Manmohan Samal, a former state minister, as the head of the party's Odisha unit, while Delhi working president Virendra Sachdeva was elevated as its chief.

Soon after the announcement of his appointment the BJP's new Bihar unit chief asserted that securing all 40 Lok Sabha seats of the state next year and ensuring an "absolute majority" for his party in the assembly polls of 2025 will be his top priorities.

Currently the Leader of the Opposition in the state legislative council, Chaudhary, who was a minister in the Nitish Kumar government till the JD(U) leader remained with NDA, also did not deny that by hedging its bets on him, the BJP has sought to make a dent



in the "Luv-Kush" base of the Bihar chief minister.

Choudhary (54), whose standing within the BJP has steadily risen after joining the party in 2018, comes from the politically important Kushwaha community.

He replaces Lok Sabha MP Sanjay Jaiswal at the helm of the Bihar BJP.

In the poll-bound Rajasthan, Joshi (47), will replace Satish Poonia, an MLA from Jaipur's Amber constituency, and the appointment comes close on the heels of veteran Rajasthan BJP leader Gulab Chand Kataria being eased out of active politics following his appointment as Assam governor.

A Brahmin face, Joshi is a

second time MP from Chittorgarh Lok Sabha seat.

Like Kataria, Poonia, too, did not have the best of equations with former chief minister Vasundhara Raje who remains the BJP's most formidable leader in the state.

The party's central leadership has had its reservations with her but there have been indications that equations have improved between them. Poonia, who was heading the state unit since September 2019, wished Joshi on his appointment, and said it will further strengthen the party.

"It is the Bharatiya Janata Party which always prepares new leadership from time to time, gives opportunities and takes it forward," he said.

The party gave me three full years for organisational work and I also contributed through constructive works during the coronavirus pandemic, he said.

"In the same way, the role of the Opposition was discharged from the assembly to the roads. Today, the BJP has reached 50,000 booths on the ground in Rajasthan," he said.

Raje also welcomed the appointment, and wished Joshi success for his term as the state president.

Deputy leader of opposition Rajendra Rathore and other leaders also congratulated Joshi. Samal, a former MP, is one of the better known BJP faces from Odisha and is seen to bring more organizational skills than his predecessor Samir Mohanty, political watchers said. He is aggressive and his politics bears a distinct Hindutva mark, they added. He had headed the state BJP earlier as well.

According to BJP sources, another round of changes in other state units, some of which are to face assembly polls this year, are expected soon.

TMC MPs visit offices of FM, ED, CBI, seek Adani's arrest

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delegations of TMC MPs on Thursday visited the offices of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Enforcement Directorate and CBI demanding the arrest of businessman Gautam Adani.

The delegations comprised Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha members of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), which over the last week has been demanding his arrest alleging that he is responsible for financial irregularities amounting to nearly Rs 1.20 lakh crore which belongs to the common people.

"PM @narendramodi's government cares more about Adani than having a transparent image! Our MPs handed over signed caps in protest to the Finance Ministry, ED, and CBI officials. @BJP4India's tactic of disrupting the Parliament to avoid any discussion on this issue won't work!" the party tweeted from its official handle.

Form No. 3
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/ 16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
1st Floor SCO 33-34-35 Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)
Case No.: OA/663/2020
Exh. No. 14030
Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993
ICICI BANK LIMITED
VS
PARMANAND
To,
(1) PARMANAND
D/W/S/O-S/O. RAMANAND MR. PARMANAND S/O. MR. RAMANAND, R/O. H. NO. 181/3, GALI NO. 11, GANDHI NAGAR, SECTOR-10 ROAD, GURGAON-122001, HARYANA
2ND ADDRESS:- FLAT NO. 1706, 17TH FLOOR, TOWER T-16, GREEN PARK II, SECTOR-92, GURGAON-122039, HARYANA
Also At: MR. PARMANAND SON OF MR. RAMANAND, ADDRESS AT RESIDENT OF FLAT NO. 1706, 17TH FLOOR, TOWER T-16, GREEN PARK II, SECTOR-92, GURGAON-122039, HARYANA. GURGAON-122039, HARYANA-122039
(2) MRS. LUXMI W/O MR. PARMANAND
R/O. H.NO.181/3, GALI NO.11, GANDHI NAGAR, SECTOR -10 ROAD, GURGAON-122001, HARYANA
2ND ADDRESS:- R/O FLAT NO.1706, 17TH FLOOR, TOWER T-16, GREEN PARK 11, SECTOR-92, GURGAON-122039, HARYANA
Also At: MRS. LUXMI WIFE OF MR. PARMANAND RESIDENT AT FLAT NO. 1706, 17TH FLOOR, TOWER T-16, GREEN PARK II, SECTOR 92, GURGAON-122039 HARYANA. GURGAON-122039 HARYANA.
(3) M/S RAMPRASTHA SARE REALTY PVT LTD.
PLOT NO. 46, UDYOG VIHAR, PHASE-IV, GURGAON-122015 THROUGH ITS AUTHORISED OFFICER

SUMMONS
WHEREAS, OA/663/2020 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 14/10/2022.
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 61,09,611/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 22/05/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 31/10/2022.

Signature of The Officer
Authorised to issue summons

Form No. 3
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/ 16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
1st Floor SCO 33-34-35 Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)
Case No.: OA/1560/2021
Exh. No.: 15792
Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993
ICICI BANK LIMITED
VS
AZAD SINGH
TO,
(1) AZAD SINGH
D/W/S/O-MR. HOSHIYAR SINGH SON OF MR. HOSHIYAR SINGH, FLAT NO. 716, TOWER-C/4, SIDCO SHIVALIC APARTMENT, SECTOR-1, IMT, MANESAR, GURGAON-122050, HARYANA
(2) MRS. SAVITA WIFE OF MR. AZAD SINGH, R/O FLAT NO. 716, TOWER-C/4, SIDCO SHIVALIC APARTMENT, SECTOR-1, IMT, MANESAR, GURGAON - 122050 HARYANA, (CO-APPLICANT)
ALSO AT:- R/O FLAT NO. G-901, TOWER-G, NCR ONE, 9TH FLOOR, SECTOR - 95, GURGAON - 122001, HARYANA, GURGAON/HARYANA-122001
(3) M/S SIDHARTHA BUILDHOME PRIVATE LIMITED, R/O SHOP NO. 1 AND 4, LOCAL SHOPPING CENTER, PUSHP VIHAR, MADANGIR, NEW DELHI-110 062 THROUGH ITS AUTHORIZED OFFICER, [BUILDER]

SUMMONS
WHEREAS, OA/1560/2021 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 09/01/2023.
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 1,20,53,122/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 06/04/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 21/01/2023.

Signature of The Officer
Authorised to issue summons

PUBLIC NOTICE
KHETARPAL HOSPITAL
F-95 Ball Nagar, Main Najafgarh Road, Near Ramesh Nagar, Metro Station, New Delhi-110015
Khetarpal Hospital hereby, through this Public Notice brings to the kind attention of the concerned that it is going to destroy its All Medical records, for the year of 2017 as per Government's Documents retention Policy.
In case any Person/ Patient/ Relative thereof wants to see their treatment records or to have a copy of the same, may please contact Medical Record Department of the Hospital, by 30th April, 2023. Year 2013 published in Advertisement on 22.3.2023 and read it the same of year 2017.

FORM No. 3
[See Regulation-15 (1)(a)]/16(3)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
CHANDIGARH (DRT 2)
1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35, Sector-17A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)
Case No.: OA/392/2021
Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993
Exh. No. 13594
ICICI BANK LIMITED
Vs.
SHANE PRAKASH MASHI
To,
(3) M/S. RAMPRASTHA SARE REALTY PVT. LTD. R/O. CRESCENT PARC PATAUDI ROAD, SECTOR- 92 GURGAON, HARYANA
SUMMONS
WHEREAS, OA/392/2021 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 12/10/2022.
WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 1,03,15,346/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-
(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
(iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
(v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 15/05/2023 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 19/10/2022.

Signature of The Officer
Authorised to issue summons

Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during his two-day visit beginning Thursday.

India endorsed his candidacy soon after his nomination was announced in February. Since then, a diverse coalition of governments have expressed their support for Banga, including Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom.

Announcing his visit to New Delhi, the US Treasury Department said in a statement "While in India, Banga will meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as the minister of finance Nirmala Sitharaman and the minister of external affairs S Jaishankar. These discussions will focus on India's development priorities, the World Bank, and global economic development challenges."

Banga's visit to India is the final stop on his three-week global tour that began in Africa before progressing to Europe, Latin America and Asia.

The US also said Banga will visit the Learnet Institute of Skills, which is a network

Army-IAF joint drills to test operational readiness

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Given the ongoing tension with China on the borders, the Army and IAF recently carried out joint drills including elite commandos of the Special Forces to test their operational readiness in the Eastern Command.

It looks after the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

Incidentally, China tried to change the status quo in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh on December nine last year.

It led to a clash between the troops of the two countries



and scores of soldiers received injuries. As regards the joint Army-Air Force Intra-Theatre Mobility Operations rehearsed for 96 hours in Eastern Command,

ED tenure extension: SC rejects Govt's submission

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday disagreed with the Centre's submission that petitions challenging the amended law allowing tenure extension of the Enforcement Directorate director up to five years should not be entertained as they have been filed by political entities facing serious money laundering charges.

The top court said even if the petitioners are facing cases, they have the right to approach the judiciary for redressal of their grievances.

"Even if they are accused, they would still have a locus. If these people do not have a locus, who else will?" a three-judge bench headed by Justice B R



Gavai observed.

The remark came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta clarified that he never used the word 'victim' for the petitioners. The clarification was made after senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for one of the petitioners, submitted that the Centre's objection was that the petitions have been filed by political parties, who are 'victims' of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Mehta said he never used the word "victim" and in fact, these are party people who are accused in cases.

sources said here on Thursday, the drills were conducted in the second week of this month.

The Army and the Air force jointly conducted the Multi Domain Air-Land Exercise 'Vayu Prahar' there to validate joint plans to prosecute synergised multiple domain operations.

Multi-Domain operations aim to orchestrate military activities across all domains to deliver converging effects.

The scope of the joint exercise included rapid mobilisation of an earmarked Rapid Reaction Force from the hinterland to undertake air-landed operations in a nominated Advance Landing Ground.

The apex court asked Sankaranarayanan to withdraw the "victim" from his statement with attribution to the Solicitor General. Arguing that piecemeal extensions threaten the independence of the institution, Sankaranarayanan said ED has become a 'caged parrot'.

The top court then asked Sankaranarayanan to confine his submissions to legal issues.

"As to we are concerned, we are hardly bothered as to whether before us is belonging to party A or B. We have to decide the matter on the basis of law. The law would not change if the petitioner is belonging to the BJP or any other party," the bench, also comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sanjay Karol, said.

Parliament panel for new law to define power, functions of CBI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



during World War II.

"The Committee feels that the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act has many limitations and therefore, recommends that there is a need to enact a new law and define the status, functions and powers of the CBI and also lay down safeguards to ensure objectivity and impartiality in its functioning," it said.

The panel said that vacant posts in the CBI are not being filled up at the required pace and recommended that "every effort should be made to fill up vacancies at the earliest". A total

of 1,709 posts are vacant in the CBI against its sanctioned strength of 7,295.

"The Committee is of the opinion that vacancies in the cadres of executive ranks, law officers and technical officers will unquestionably increase pendency of cases, hamper the quality of investigation and ultimately impact the effectiveness and efficiency of the agency," the report said.

The panel further recommended that the Director of CBI should monitor the progress made in filling up of vacancies on a quarterly basis and take necessary measures to ensure that the organisation is sufficiently staffed.

On being asked about the reasons for delay in filling up of vacancies, CBI informed the committee that it is not receiving sufficient nominations of officers from Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and state police which have traditionally been a major source of induction, particularly up to the rank of inspector in the organisation, it said.

Reporter faces death threat in Canada from Khalistanis for anti-Amritpal show



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/TORONTO

Alleged Khalistan supporters have reportedly issued death threats to an Indian-Canadian news professional after his television show in which some guests criticized Amritpal Singh. The reporter was identified as Pardeep Bains who hosts a programme in Punjab in Greater Toronto Area.

These threats came days after the Khalistan backers blocked the entry of Indian High Commission to Canada Sanjay Kumar Verma in British Columbia on Sunday last to a venue to honour him. The reception was organized by Friends of India and Canada Foundation. Some of the protestors were also wielding swords. The envoy's visit was called off due to security reasons. An Indian origin journalist Sameer Kaushal covering the event was also assaulted.

Meanwhile, Pardeep Bains reportedly said the threats included photographs

he was sent of his family residence in the Hoshiarpur district of Punjab as well as those of the location of his studio in the GTA.

"I've only done honest reporting," Bains said, and presented both sides of the argument but started receiving threats since January this year, before receiving the images this week.

Some of the threats came via WhatsApp calls, with the numbers shown as originating in Pakistan and Malaysia. He also received a threatening letter ostensibly from the Khalistan Liberation Force in February.

Bains said he has informed local law enforcement, Peel Regional Police (PRP), about the threats.

Bains said he was concerned over not just his personal safety but also that of his family and staffers at the studio. He also said he had not taken a side in the issue of Amritpal Singh and his outfit. He said he wanted to make it "clear" that he was "not against or in support of any organisation"

Naveen, Didi resolve to make federal structure strong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Days after Mamata Banerjee met Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav in Kolkata for a rudimentary discussion on a possible non-Congress anti-BJP alliance — ahead of the 2024 general elections — the Bengal Chief Minister on Thursday met her Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik at Bhubaneswar where they allegedly discussed the health of Indian federal system.

While Mamata called the meeting a mere “courtesy call” Patnaik said there was no serious discussion on things relating to national politics.

On whether they discussed Congress or the BJP, Mamata said it was an informal discussion a “courtesy call” only.

Patnaik on the other hand



made a formal statement saying, how they “resolved to make the federal structure of the country permanent and strong.” Apart from this “there was no other political discussion,” he added.

Apart from not discussing the much touted third option outside the BJP and the Congress and focusing the whole one hour parley on a permanently robust federal structure the two leaders dis-

cussed issues mutually beneficial to their States.

Incidentally, Patnaik had earlier allotted land at the request of Mamata to construct a guest house for the Bengali tourists coming to visit Jagannath Temple at Puri.

Meanwhile, Mamata is likely to meet former Karnataka Chief Minister Kumaraswami too later this month, her party source said in Kolkata.

Adhikari calls for Opp unity to oust Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee calling for an all-out united effort to bring down the “corrupt” Trinamool Congress Government.

“There should be no other goal of the opposition parties irrespective of their flags and ideologies ... there should be only one objective and that is to bring down this corrupt regime led by Mamata Banerjee,” Adhikari said adding “the first objective of the opposition parties should be to oust Mamata Banerjee as people no longer want to see her face ... and after she goes future



options can be discussed.” He said that the people had made up their mind to throw the TMC out. “Only we will have to give them proper opportunity to do so by way of a free and fare election ... we will have to approach the judiciary so that people can be given an opportunity to cast their votes ... and then you will see how this Government falls,” Adhikari said.

Referring to the corrupt regime that the Chief Minister

was allegedly running the BJP leader said, he had written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi wondering why Mamata Banerjee will not be interrogated by the central agencies regarding the scams that have taken place under her nose.

Speaking to the media following remarks by TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh that Adhikari and CPI(M) central committee member Suján Chakrabarty were some of the opposition leaders who had got their people illegally appointed to the government posts, Adhikari said how Ghosh himself at one point in time said that “Mamata Banerjee is the biggest beneficiary of the Sharada chit fund scam.”

NIA searches locations in 3 States in Bihar’s Ghazwa-e-Hind case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday carried out raids and searches at houses of eight suspects across three States, including four locations in Nagpur (Maharashtra), and one location each in Gwalior district of Madhya Pradesh, and Valsad, Surat and Botad districts of Gujarat in the the July 2022 ‘Ghazwa-e-Hind’ case.

“Incriminating materials, including digital devices (mobile phones, memory cards) and documents have been seized,” the NIA said in a statement.

In July 2022, the NIA registered a case at the Phulwarisharif police station in Patna district of Bihar against members of Ghazwa-e-Hind’ module, which was being operated and controlled from Pakistan.

Marghoob Ahmad Danish alias Tahir, Admin of a WhatsApp Group ‘Ghazwa-e-Hind’, launched by a Pakistani national, was arrest-

ed in the case.

Marghoob had created ‘Ghazwa-e-Hind’ groups on different social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Telegram and BiP Messenger. He had also created a dedicated WhatsApp group for Bangladeshi nationals, with the title -‘BD Ghazwa E HindBD’, it said.

Marghoob had added many persons from India as well as from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Yemen, in these groups.

“The module aimed to radicalize impressionable Indian youth with the ultimate objective of conquest of India-‘Ghazwa-e-Hind’. The members of this group were being radicalized with the aim to convert them into ‘Sleeper Cells’ for carrying out terrorist activities,” the agency said.

NIA had filed a chargesheet against Marghoob Ahmad Danish in January 2023 and had continued its investigations in the case registered at the NIA headquarters here.

Vedic heritage portal, virtual museum launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the Narendra Modi Government is securing the knowledge in India’s ancient books and manuscripts for the future through technology. Shah said this after launching a Vedic heritage portal and a virtual museum — ‘Kala Vaibhav’ — built by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).

“The Modi Government is securing the knowledge of



India’s ancient books and manuscripts for the future through technology. In this direction, the Vedic Heritage Portal built by @ignca_delhi was inaugurated today. With this, the

younger generation will be able to carry forward the knowledge and tradition of Vedas and Upanishads,” Shah tweeted.

The Home Minister said through the virtual museum, based on 64 arts, the world will be more familiar with India’s architecture, painting, drama and music and the world will know the rich history of India’s glorious culture. Union Minister of Tourism and Culture G Kishan Reddy, IGNC President Ram Bahadur Rai attended the event, among others.

ED: Multiple raids carried out in APPSC paper leak, APSSB scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said it carried out multiple search operations under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh in connection with investigation relating to Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board (APSSB) scam and Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APSSC) paper leak cases.

The ED initiated investigation under PMLA on FIR registered by the Special



Investigation Cell (SIC) under various sections of Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act and the Indian Penal Code in the APPSB scam and another case registered by SIC and CBI in the case of APPSC paper leak case.

The SIC (Vigilance) has filed chargesheet in APSSB case against the accused persons. It has been alleged that Kaptor Lingu, the then Under Secretary

, APSSB along with other officials hatched criminal conspiracy in connivance with various middlemen/brokers, and thus abused their official positions for accepting undue favour/advantage to themselves, the ED said in a statement.

The ED investigation in the APPSC paper leak case revealed that Taket Jerang, Deputy Secretary-cum-Deputy Controller of Examination of APPSC along with government servants and private individuals were involved in the leakage of question papers of various examinations which were conducted by the commission.

Women taking hormonal contraceptives at higher risk of developing breast cancer: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Women taking hormonal contraceptives whether oral pill, IUD, implant, or injection have a 20 to 30 per cent higher risk of developing breast cancer than those who do not use them, according to a recent study published in the journal PLOS Medicine. The study, however, also confirmed, like others, that the risk of breast cancer declines



in the years after a woman stops using hormonal contraceptives.

The researchers who carried out the study stressed that the increased risk of breast cancer needs to be weighed against the benefits of hormonal contraceptives, including the protection they provide against other forms of female cancer.

Previous studies have established an increased risk of breast cancer from two-hor-

mone, or combined, contraceptives that use both estrogen and progestogen.

While the use of progestogen-only contraceptives has been on the rise for well over a decade, little research had been performed previously on their links to breast cancer.

The study found that the risk of a woman developing breast cancer was about the same for hormonal contraceptives using both estrogen and progestogen as for those

using just progestogen.

The findings are similar to those published previously, including in a vast 1996 study.

Taking into account that the likelihood of breast cancer increases with age, the authors of the study calculated how much absolute excess risk is associated with hormonal contraceptives.

For women taking hormonal contraceptives for a period of five years between the ages of 16 to 20, it repre-

sented eight cases of breast cancer per 100,000, they said.

Between 35 and 39 years old, it was 265 cases per 100,000.

“Nobody wants to hear that something that they’re taking is going to increase their risk of breast cancer by 25 percent,” said Gillian Reeves, a professor of statistical epidemiology at the University of Oxford and a co-author of the study.

“What we’re talking about here is a very small increase in

absolute risk,” Reeves said.

“These increases in risk for breast cancer have to, of course, be viewed in the context of what we know about the many benefits of taking hormonal contraceptives,” she added. “Not just in terms of birth control, but also because we know that oral contraceptives actually provide quite substantial and long term protection from other female cancers, such as ovarian cancer and endometrial cancer.”

SC rejects SCBA’s plea for land for lawyers’ chambers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that issues pertaining to the change of land use should be addressed on the administrative side, the Supreme Court on Thursday rejected the Supreme Court Bar Association’s plea to allot an entire tract of land, which was allotted to the apex court, for conversion into a chamber block for lawyers.

The top court said the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) cannot assert a right over entire land admeasuring 1.33 acres situated near the ITO, which has been allotted by the Union Government for housing the Supreme Court Archives, for converting it into a chamber block for lawyers.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said matters such



as those raised in the petition cannot be resolved by the application of judicial standards and have to be taken up on the administrative side of the Supreme Court.

The apex court said a holistic view has to be taken on the allocation of available resources by balancing the needs of stakeholders both for the present and the future.

The top court was hearing a plea by the SCBA to convert the land, allotted to the top court, for the construction of chambers for lawyers.

Audit watchdog now being extended to include political executives: CAG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu on Wednesday said the audit watchdog outreach is now being extended to include political executives to highlight audit concerns.

“The intention is to build a shared understanding of the most pressing concerns in governance and find possible solutions,” Murmu said during an orientation programs with the Officer Trainees of the Indian Information Service (IIS) belonging to three batches of 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Noticing that most of the officers are from engineering background, Murmu said that technical skills should be used to handle the challenges of future media, especially with emerging self-help AI tools such as ChatGPT. He said that the trainee IIS officers should gear up to meet the challenges posed by Big Data and Artificial Intelligence.

Tomar praises ex-PM Shastri on World Water Day 2023

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of World Water Day 2023, which coincided with first day of Vikram Samvat 2080, Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar on Wednesday praised the leadership of former Prime Minister ‘Bharat Ratna’ late Lal Bahadur Shastri saying his initiative of doing farming at Prime Minister’s residence inspired Indian farmers to attained self sufficiency in food grain production.

“Shastri’s personality was incomparable. At the peak of food grain crisis in 1965, he, not only did farming at his official residence, but also exhorted the farmers of country to go to field with a slogan of ‘Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan’ so that as a country we could become self sufficient and never had to depend on others.

Like Shastri, today people follow our Prime Minister Narendra Modi,” Tomar citing example of how people gave up gas subsidy on PM’s call.



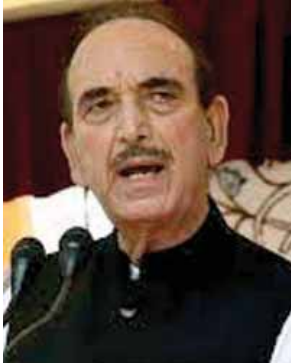
Tomar was speaking at a function organised on the occasion of World Water Day 2023 by Dhanuka Group. Tomar also unveiled a newly made portrait of the late Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and a booklet on his life written by his grand-son Sanjay Nath Singh amid gracious presence of family members of Shastri — son Anil Shastri, grand-sons

Siddhartha Nath Singh and Vibhakar Shastri and Shastri’s daughter-in-laws.

Azad’s Azaad to throw light on hitherto untold stories

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Ghulam Nabi Azad is coming out with Azaad, his autobiography that includes the author’s more than fifty year old journey with the Indian National Congress. Having worked closely with former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, P V Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh, it was Ghulam Nabi Azad who played the crucial role in bringing Sonia Gandhi to the post of Congress President. In the 1999 General Election to Lok Sabha, it was Azad who persuaded Sonia Gandhi to contest from Bellari in



Karnataka where she defeated the BJP’s glamorous Sushma Swraj. “The Congress has remained invincible in Bellari since the first general election in 1952 and that is the reason behind our move.

Madam Sonia would win hands down from this constituency,” Azad had told this writer during the campaign. Azaad will hit book stores across India on April 5.

What makes Azad different from conventional politicians is his camaraderie with leaders of all political parties. The articulation which he speaks is unique and at no point of time he has hurt anybody either with his words or actions. Though he enjoyed close rapport with all members of the Sonia Gandhi family, the ties suffered a set back in the last two years paving the path for his exit from the party. Azad’s departure from the Congress came

at a time when the Grand Old Party was experiencing the withering away of frontline leaders like Captain Amarendra Singh of Punjab and the unexpected demise of Ahmed Patel.

People in Tamil Nadu remember the personal equation enjoyed by Azad with the DMK supremo Karunanidhi. Azad was instrumental in making Karunanidhi switch over from the BJP camp to the Congress fold. He was a regular visitor to Karunanidhi’s Gopalapuram bungalow in Chennai to keep the grand old man of Indian politics in good humour.

“Azaad” is expected to throw lights into incidents

which remained under cover till date. According to a release by Rupa Publishers which has published the book, the chapter dealing with Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, the chief minister of Assam, leaving the Congress and joining the Hindutwa forces was a watershed moment in the modern history of the GOP. Azad also showcases the grand arc of the great Indian story through the most dramatic political transformation of the last five decades. The book is a collage of the nation’s tumultuous political history, the untold backroom stories, humorous anecdotes and invaluable life lessons, says Rupa.

Not Gandhian

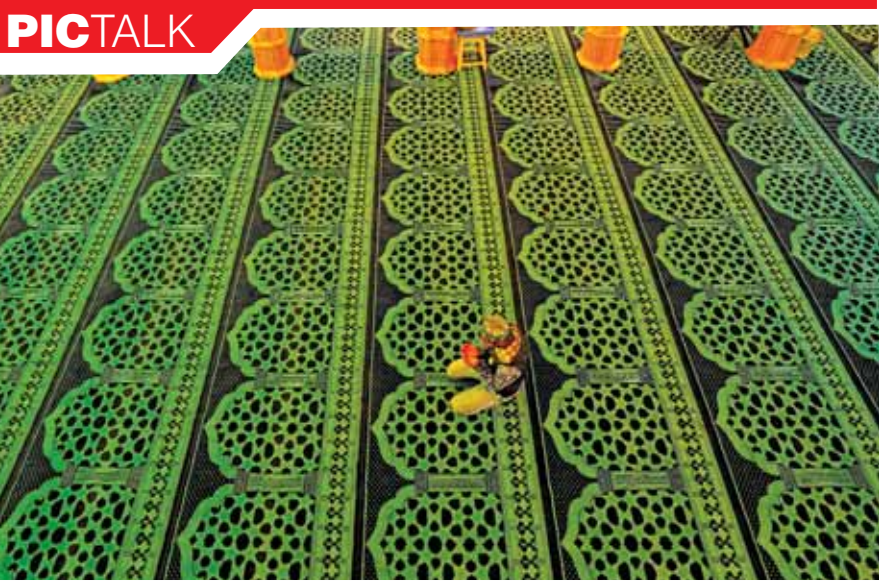
Rahul claims to be Mahatma’s admirer but doesn’t follow in his footsteps while talking about his opponents

Congress leaders are angry that former party president Rahul Gandhi has been convicted in a 2019 criminal defamation case. A court in Surat on Thursday, finding him guilty, sentenced him to two years in jail for his rhetorical remark “why all thieves have Modi surname.” It was surely in bad taste. How on earth could a senior leader condemn a large section of people just because they share their surname with Prime Minister Narendra Modi? Rahul’s first reaction to the verdict was a tweet quoting Mahatma Gandhi: “My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God, non-violence the means to get it. — Mahatma Gandhi.” But then there is nothing on record to suggest that Gandhi ever slandered anyone; he was such a gentle soul that he never even used harsh words for his detractors, let alone calling them thieves. This is despite the fact some of his adversaries were extremely critical of him;



yet there was rarely, if ever, loss of cordiality. It was Subhas Chandra Bose, the most outspoken critic of Gandhi’s methods against the British, who conferred the title of the Father of Nation on Gandhi. Therefore, Rahul’s methods of opposing Modi and his Government are not exactly Gandhian. It is the right and the duty of Opposition leaders to take the government of the day for its sins of omission and commission, but that should not include slander, libel, and calumny. Mahatma Gandhi, for one, never stooped to that level, and yet he defeated the greatest empire mankind has ever seen, the empire in which the sun never set.

“The complainant has not suffered any kind of pain or loss, and the accused has never been found guilty of any crime before and has not sought any mercy or forgiveness from anyone,” Rahul Gandhi’s lawyer told the court. Bharatiya Janata Party MLA (Surat West) Purnesh Modi is the complainant; with the surname ‘Modi,’ he can justifiably claim to be victim of slander. Besides, as a people’s representative, he cannot be unaffected by statements defaming his party’s top leader, Narendra Modi. It is true that Rahul Gandhi has never been convicted of any illegality, but that does not give him the licence to slander anyone he chooses to. The Surat court’s verdict is likely to send a stern message to not just Congress leaders but the entire political class: criticism should never descend to the level of abuse and aspersion. It is unfortunate that in the last few years the level of political debate has fallen considerably. Politicians of all parties, while commenting on their opponents, often use words and terms which are best avoided. They also hurl wild allegations at their adversaries. Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party boss Arvind Kejriwal and his cronies, for instance, did such things with impunity — till finance minister Arun Jaitley sued them and forced them to apologise. Now, with Rahul Gandhi’s conviction, we can hope that there would be some decency and decorum in politics.



A man offers prayers on the first day of fasting month of Ramadan, in Srinagar

Remembering Satish Kaushik

Satish was as adorable off screen as he was on screen. His simplicity and amicable personality made him a true friend one could bank upon

Satish ji, as I used to call him, really shocked us a day before he shared his photographs taken at Shabana Azmi - Javed Akhtar’s home at a holi party. Suddenly, we are hit by news that the veteran actor, filmmaker, and producer has gone.

Don’t understand where to start. So many incidents and so many sweet memories. I started my career with this company many years ago. He always appreciated me and gave me unconditional love. Whenever, and wherever, I invited him to attend the newly formed film festivals, if he was not a filmmaker, he was always present there. Whenever I followed up with an artist, he always appreciated it. A few years ago, at the Osian’s-Cinefan Asian Film Festival in Delhi, he mentioned, “this Santanu used to follow up with such affection, constantly, and whatever date and time I gave him, he always called me then. It would be easier for others to say forget it, but he never does that. It is his politeness that attracts us to attend his events.” In this case, we showed The Brick Lane directed by Sarah Gavron,



based on Bangladeshi-origin writer Monica Ali. I have shown the film at innumerable film festivals with the honorable presence of Satish ji. Once travelling to Meerut to attend a film festival, he was very happily informed that he had been blessed with a baby girl. I have seen the tremendous joy on his face. Usually, I don’t dig into the personal lives of the artists I am dealing with. Neither did I read the gossip news, that’s why I didn’t know of the news, and I told him that, but he never felt guilty about it. Whenever I am in Mumbai, I have to meet him either in his office or at home. And on one such tour at his home, I met his daughter Vanshika, when she was three years old. Many times some small-time film festival organisers used to take senior artists like Satish Kaushik for granted. They promised him and

Seema Biswas five-star hotel accommodation at a small film festival organised by a prominent publication group, but provided them with an ordinary hotel. And unfortunately, at the last minute, they cancelled my trip as well. In that day’s meeting, Satish ji told me about the bad arrangement. He politely said, “If I had come to the theater, then I can compromise to any statement, but if I had come to a film-related event, then they should follow the protocol.” Because we did theatre with great difficulties but for the film there is a lot of money involved, so the film event organisers need to take care of the artist’s comfort.” When I requested some professional help from him, he called back to let me know there was an opportunity at Gandhinagar in Gujarat. And the Gandhinagar International Film Festival was born in 2011, and was inaugurated by Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat. Satish ji was present there with his long-time friend Anupam Kher, where we showed their co-production Hawai Dada as the Opening Film of the festival.



SANTANU GANGULY

During the Dehradun International Film Festival, one-star actor was throwing tantrums, so I ran to Satish ji for advice on how to handle the situation. He gave me some helpful suggestions in a calm manner that helped me to deal with the situation better.

At the Chandigarh Music & Film Festival, where Satish ji was showing his co-production English film A Billion Colours Story. I was very hopeful about the film. However, when it did not bag the National Award for Best English film, I was a bit surprised. This is because that year there was no other English film competing in the competition in the same category. When I asked Satish ji about it, he very sadly said, “what to do? Shekhar Kapoor is a very trustworthy friend. I don’t think I need to approach him and lobby for my film, but being the Jury President, if he doesn’t consider the film, what to say?” Only that is the one day I have seen a sad Satish Kaushik. (Writer is a Delhi-based film festival curator, filmmaker, producer and freelance writer)

India shines in the G20 presidency

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is making full use of Indian presidency of G20 to offer solutions to global challenges

The Indian G20 presidency has attracted much global attention. Several meetings have taken place in all parts of the country. By the time India hosts the Leaders’ Summit in September this year, India would have guided the G20 member nations and special invitees on the solutions-oriented path to dealing with pressing challenges across the globe. India has demonstrated resolve to tackle challenges with perseverance and innovation since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014.

At the heart of India’s G20 presidency is people-oriented governance. People from all walks of life and across the globe must gain from the advancement of the economies, and if there is an economic slowdown they must be protected from the ill effects. Since the beginning of 2020, the world has seen the debilitating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Without exception, the global community has suffered the rigors.

Thus, the Indian presidency of the G20 is faced with challenges that became acute primarily because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rising sovereign debts of several countries in the Global South, the credibility of the multilateral development banks (MDBs), cross-border terrorism, drug trafficking, cybercrimes, multilateral institutions, food shortage, climate challenges, disruptions of global supply chains, health emergencies, income inequality and several others are the challenges staring at the global community now.

The last three years, however, have accentuated some of the global challenges, which require credible and sustainable solutions. India has shown that prudent governance is capable of meeting these challenges. The Economic Survey of this year revealed that the government’s expenditure on efforts to improve the quality of life of the people has been steadily growing even during the pandemic years.

From Rs 5.26 lakh crore spent on education in 2018-19,



government expenditure was Rs7.57 lakh crore in 2022-23, as per the revised budgetary estimate, revealed the Economic Survey. From Rs2.66 lakh crore spent on health in 2018-19, government expenditure was Rs5.49 lakh crore in 2022-23. In other areas, which help in enhancing the quality of life of the people, government expenditure grew from Rs 4.86 lakh crore in 2018-19 to Rs 8.26 lakh crore.

The efforts have also been captured in data revealed by the Economic Survey, as the dropout ratio in primary schools came down from 4.7 per cent in 2013-14 to 1.5 per cent in 2021-22. Pupil to teacher ratio in 2012-13 34 and it was 26.2 in 2021-22. This is a clear message for the G20 nations, accounting for 85 per cent of the global GDP, two-thirds of the world population and 75 per cent of the global trade, that the path to sustainable socio-economic development is laid by according topmost priority to the people in governance and charting the course of reforms to ensure an inclusive develop-



FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHRAMAN SOUGHT A GLOBAL CONSENSUS ON MITIGATING THE INDEBTEDNESS OF VULNERABLE NATIONS

ment model without burdening the future generation with debts.

Thus, the Finance Ministers meeting in Bengaluru of the G20 saw the issue of addressing the rising debts of the developing and poor nations at the centre stage. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman sought a global consensus on mitigating the indebtedness of vulnerable nations. It’s in the interest of global financial stability that no country faces an economic collapse of the magnitude of Sri Lanka. This will only be possible if multilateral development banks rise up to the occasion and protect vulnerable nations from predatory countries seeking debt traps for strategic purposes.

India has become a votary for the Global South. Several countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and other parts of the world even after constituting the largest share of the global population were without a collective voice on the international stage. The Global South is facing the consequences of climate change. In India, the Global South discovered

under the Indian presidency a voice that could negotiate with the developed world on equal terms. In this context, the G20 this year is giving the utmost importance to the issue of climate change. India has shown the world with the International Solar Alliance (ISA) that the energy transition to clean sources is not a matter of choice but a matter of urgency. With the Indian presidency of the G20, the developed world will be persuaded to share capital and technology for energy transition at an accelerated pace.

The world is currently facing the consequences of the war in Ukraine. Sadly, few countries have not taken sides in this war. India remains the voice of sanity in such a tough time. PM Modi told the Russian President that today’s era is not one of war. Diplomacy alone can bring peace. The global community expects India to work for peace during its G20 presidency. The G20 under the Indian presidency is uniquely positioned to deliver on the global aspirations of peace.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DELHI GOVERNMENT STALLED

Sir — The machinery that runs the Delhi govt is getting stalled too often for the comfort or understanding of the citizens. This has become more of a conundrum after the parliament passed an act in March 2021 which Lieutenant Governor-“the Government”. The elected government is completely at the discretion of the LG in any matter of governance.

Even the much-maligned military junta of Myanmar, which is preparing for elections now, appears more liberal toward democratic principles. While 500 members of its parliament are voted by the people, its military junta nominates only 250 of its own. This is fairness personified when compared to Delhi where 70 elected members have been disarmed by just one titular appointee.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

ABSCONDING AMRITPAL

Sir — The Punjab police stepped up its manhunt for pro-Khalistan preacher Amritpal Singh, with multiple teams raiding several locations, leading to the arrest of 34 more of his associates and the seizure of the vehicle he allegedly used while escaping from the police. In the meanwhile, two fresh cases were registered against the radical preacher and his associates following his escape from the police dragnet. These cases also resulted in the seizure of illegal weapons from his organisation. It is a dangerous signal and Khalistan is trying to control the entire region, and a Bluestar operation will see the end of atrocities there. Even though the total number of arrests reached 112, the main culprit is not traceable and avoids arrests.

To prevent any incitement to violence by his supporters, the ban on mobile Internet services was extended across the State. Warning of strict action against spreading fake news, rumours and hate speech. All citizens, media persons and social media platform intermediaries are requested to act responsibly and to fact-check the authenticity of the content being shared by them on various social

Water scarcity is for real



If there is one thing in the future that has the potential to disrupt peace and tranquillity and sink humanity into another world war, it is water scarcity. Accelerating change is a central theme this year. The U.N. The Water Conference to be held on world water day also highlights the close connection between the water crisis and climate change. It is a well-known fact that only 3 % of the water on earth is fresh and two-thirds of that is ice. The problem lies in our ever-increasing numbers, over-exploitation and abuse of our precious but limited resources. For instance, West Antarctica, Greenland ice sheets, warm water coral reefs, and the Amazon rainforests have already crossed their tipping

points. The World Bank report for 2022 states that about 2 billion people do not have access to clean drinking water. In addition, about 3.6 billion do not have safe sanitation services, and 2.3 billion lack basic handwashing facilities. With the ever-increasing global population that has crossed 8 billion, the demand for fresh water is doubling every 18 years. We are slowly heading towards a global catastrophe.

The Indian Government’s National Water Mission launched in this context aims to ensure its efficient management by reducing inequality and poverty thereby enabling peace and sustainability. The SDG 6.3 states that by 2030 water quality might be improved by reducing pollution, recycling and reuse. These difficult times call for heightened cooperation among countries. Water is precious and its judicious use is the responsibility of every human soul. Let’s conserve it. Every drop of water saved is crucial for our future generation.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

media, electronic media and print media platforms. The culprit will be caught by the police sooner or later.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

DISAPPEARING HOUSE SPARROWS

Sir — Thank you for sharing this thought-provoking article about the declining population of house sparrows. It is unfortunate that these friendly companions, who were once a part of our daily lives, are now disappearing quietly from our cities. As you mentioned, the lack of nesting sites in modern concrete buildings and disappearing kitchen gardens have deprived them of their habitat. It is heartening to know that efforts are being made by scientist-conservationist Mohammad Dilawar and organisations like “Natura Forever” to raise awareness about the plight of these birds and their importance in our ecosystem.

It is interesting to learn that the history of house sparrows dates back to the ancient Romans who introduced them to

Europe from North Africa and Eurasia. Scientific evidence also shows that wherever there is a human population, sparrows follow them. However, the unfriendly architecture of our homes, chemical fertilizers in our crops, noise pollution, and noxious exhaust fumes from vehicles have contributed to the declining population of these birds. Additionally, the increased use of packed food, insecticides in farming, and changing lifestyles have resulted in inadequate food supplies for birds.

We must take responsibility and provide some places in our homes for shelter, where sparrows can easily make their nests and lay their eggs. Overall, this article is a poignant reminder of how our actions impact the environment and the importance of taking responsibility to preserve the natural world around us.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

KISHIDA IN INDIA,
XI IN RUSSIA

The strengthening of the
Indo-Pacific strategy



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

This week marked two significant developments in Asia. Each of the two powerful leaders from Asia, albeit with differing approaches, developed their own agendas for shaping the geopolitics of the region as they moved westward. The first was Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's state visit to New Delhi, where he talked about the revised Indo-Pacific strategy, an older version of which Japan has been pursuing diligently for nearly one and half decades. The second was the state visit of Chinese premier Xi Jinping, to the Russian capital, the first major visit by any significant global leader, since the Russian invasion of Ukraine where it was a reiteration of growing Sino-Russia bonds, for a better Eurasia.

In many ways, Japan, more specifically, ex-PM Shinzo Abe, was the author of the Indo-Pacific strategy, nearly fifteen years ago, when he articulated the conjoined at the hip, future, for all nations dotting the Indian and Pacific oceans. In his now famous speech to the Indian Parliament in 2007, titled "The confluence of the two seas", a blueprint for the now-established geopolitical strategy for many nations in the Indo-Pacific was outlined. Incidentally, during the same speech, Abe made the point about broader cooperation between the largest democracies in Asia. This point later on emerged as the QUAD, comprising the US, Japan, Australia and India.

In several pitches during the intervening years, made to various region-

al groupings and multilateral forums, Abe continued to push on his vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific founded primarily on three pillars. Pillar 1 emphasises the need for the establishment of the rule of law, freedom of navigation by air and sea and free trade for the region. Pillar 2 emphasises economic prosperity by promoting broader regional connectivity through building roads, ports, and digital linkages as well as creating the human bridge through increased people-to-people connectivity. This pillar also looks at the harmonisation of trade rules thereby facilitating more access to each other's goods and services. The third pillar focuses on peace and security in the region. It has a clear focus on maritime security, law enforcement, prevention of terror activities, sharing intelligence, providing disaster relief etc. In spite of this, it took Japan years of patient pitching before the Indo-Pacific became the focus of US and EU foreign policy. It got the attention it deserved, with the changing geo-strategic situation in 2020, which showcased the vulnerabilities of relying on a China-monopolised critical supply chain system and the stiff restrictions imposed by China due to its zero Covid policy. China wasn't willing to cooperate with other nations during disaster. Japan was particularly shocked at the state visit of Vladimir Putin to Beijing, right before he invaded Ukraine, which established the "no limits friendship" between Russia and China.

It was almost a moment, which sharply divided the world into blocks that supported Russia and China and one that was led by the US and western allies. Although not a 21st-century version of the cold war yet, this rift will continue to dictate global affairs for some years. The Sino-Russia partnership has also empowered China, as it can utilise a second UN security council permanent member, Russia, to push its agenda through multilateral platforms. Meanwhile, observing the Russian invasion of Ukraine, China can reevaluate its strategy regarding unilaterally changing geographical boundaries with several neighbouring nations (including India).

The two-state visits, therefore assume significance, as the first one, reiterates India and Japan's commitment to deepening their engagement for an open safe, transparent rules-based Indo-Pacific while reiterating their commitment to increased cooperation with regional groups such as ASEAN. It re-emphasised the centrality of India to Japan's Indo-Pacific strategy, particularly in a year when Japan is the chair of G7 and India has the G20 presidency, two significant platforms for cooperation and future road mapping. The conference in Moscow, has raised enough concerns across global capitals, to further energise their Indo-Pacific strategies.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

Sardar Patel, Scindia and Swaraj



ARUNANSH B GOSWAMI

Maharaja Jiwajirao Madhorao Scindia of Ujjain and Gwalior became Patel's friend and assisted him in unifying Indian states



Dr Rajendra Prasad observed on May 13, 1959, how the legacy of Sardar Patel was being sidelined. He mentioned how Sardar Patel had been forgotten, but he also acknowledged that there was a prominent individual in India who was standing in support and appreciation of Sardar Patel, when many found it unneeded. This man was Scindia, the then Maharaja of Ujjain and Gwalior or, as he was called, HH Maharaja Jiwajirao Madhorao Scindia of Ujjain and Gwalior.

He was later on to become a close friend of Sardar Patel and his close aide VP Menon. He played a positive role in ensuring the unity of India and was made the first Rajpramukh of Madhya Bharat province after Independence of India. Prasad said, "Even Sardar Patel's portrait in the Parliament House is the gift of a ruling Prince [Gwalior]. Let us not, therefore, run away with the thought that his services are any less valuable because we choose not to recognise them."

This admiration of Scindia for Patel was only natural. The Maharaja was inspired by his ancestor Mahadji Scindia, who is known for being the most important man in the latter half of the eighteenth century in South Asia (as per Historian Henry George Keene in entire Asia), ensuring the unity of the subcontinent when not just the Afghans but the British were also looking to occupy the throne of Delhi.

Famous political philosopher James Mill acknowledged the danger to the existence of the British in India if Mahadji Scindia lived longer, and after Mahadji Scindia died, Colonel George Bruce Malleon, author of *Final French Struggles in India and on the Indian Seas*, called him the most farsighted statesman India had ever produced.

Mahadji Scindia prevented a likely partition of India by the Durrani Afghan Empire of Ahmad Shah Abdali and his son Taimur, when in 1771 Scindia conquered Delhi. He extended his de facto empire all the way to the areas of present-day northern Pakistan, the then subas of Lahore and Attock. He also defeated the British at



NEHRU ONCE SAID THAT THE GWALIOR STATE OF SCINDIA HAD FULL CAPACITY AND RESOURCES TO REMAIN AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY. HOWEVER, IT NEVER WORKED IN THAT DIRECTION BECAUSE OF THE PATRIOTISM OF MAHARAJA SCINDIA

(The writer is head, Scindia Research Centre, Gwalior)

Wadgaon, Sirsi, Prayagraj, Kolaras, Shivpuri, Sarangpur, and many other places. This sent a clear message to Indians that, if united, they can easily defeat the British.

Jiwaji was well aware that what Patel was doing was actually substantially similar to Mahadji Scindia's work. He felt an attachment to the project of national integration, and the persona of Sardar Patel.

A friendship to unite India

After a couple of months of the death of Maulana Azad in 1954, his oil painting was installed in the Parliament House. But there was no oil painting of Sardar Patel in Parliament, even four years after his death. This was disappointing and preposterous despite his immense contributions to India.

Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, who was present in parliament when Maulana Azad's portrait was installed, noticed how the legacy of his late friend was being sidelined. He pointed this out to President Rajendra Prasad. Rajendra Babu immediately gave his approval, after which Maharaja Scindia started making the necessary arrangements to get Sardar's picture put up in the Parliament House.

Scindia spent a significant amount of money from his personal funds in order to paint Sardar's portrait. The President took prompt action to get the picture installed in Parliament House. On the occasion of unveiling the portrait of Sardar, Scindia offered tributes to Sardar Patel. Talking about Sardar Patel, Maharaja Jiwajirao Scindia said, "Here is the man whom I once hated. The man who later terrified me is shown here. Here is the man whom I admire and love."

While Sardar Patel had once mentioned in a letter to Jiwajirao Scindia, "I would like to thank you and Her Highness for the hospitality and consideration extended to us

during our stay in Gwalior. All of us were overwhelmed by the attention bestowed on us by both of you. By vacating your palace for our sake, you won our hearts completely. I am afraid we imposed a great deal of strain on both of you, but you cheerfully put up with all this. We shall always carry the most pleasant recollections of our visit to Gwalior."

The intensity of love and admiration that Maharaja Jiwajirao Scindia and Sardar Patel had for each other is manifested from these statements.

Sardar Patel came to Gwalior to meet Maharaja Scindia not alone but with his daughter Maniben. As mentioned in the paragraph before, Maharaja Scindia vacated his palace for them. It was Sardar Patel that Scindia invited to inaugurate the first medical college of Central India, Gajra Raja Medical College, on December 5, 1948. When states like Bhopal were planning with Jinnah to Balkanise India, Scindia and Patel stressed the need for Indian unity that they should work for.

Jawaharlal Nehru once said that the Gwalior state of Scindia had full capacity and resources to remain an independent country. However, it never worked in that direction because, as per Nehru, of the patriotism of Maharaja Scindia and his utmost respect for India. Nehru was right when he said this, since India then had only five princely states that were substantial and prosperous enough to be entitled to a 21-gun salute. Scindia's Gwalior was one of them.

Scindia helped Sardar for Swaraj

The help that Maharaja Scindia gave to Sardar Patel and the sacrifices he made for a united India were many. He decided to support Patel wholeheartedly in his nationalist endeavour to unify India. Menon has documented Scindia's help to Sardar. This was when several other

princely states were looking forward to furthering their interests with the help of Pakistan, specifically Bhopal. Menon writes in his book *The Story of The Integration of Indian States* that Maharaja Scindia was the first among the rulers of the five 21-gun-salute states to agree to integration, a step which was motivated by the good of the country.

Menon wrote about Jiwaji: "He has always moved with the times. He had announced his intention to grant a responsible government as early as December 1946, and in May 1947 he readily gave his support to an interim government of popular representatives as well as a constitution-making body."


The Government of India had got Rs 74 crore from the merger of more than five hundred princely estates; out of that, Rs 54 crore was the contribution of Maharaja Scindia according to Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia.

According to Menon, the rulers of Gwalior were not prone to extravagance. Expressing his gratitude to the generous contribution by the Maharaja, Patel had said in the Lok Sabha, "The people who are opposing the Privy Purse for the erstwhile kings, they do not know that this amount will accrue only from interest on the contribution made by Maharaja Gwalior."

The government won't have to give anything from its treasuries, according to Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia. Scindia and Sardar also mentioned the threat of China to India long before the 1962 India-China war. They shared a realistic approach to international relations. Unfortunately, the role of Patel and the Scindias of Gwalior in uniting India was downplayed. But, under the new dispensation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is recognising the ignored and less known heroes and heroines.

Time to put a full STOP on tuberculosis

On the World Tuberculosis Day today, let us resolve to make TB history



AMBARISH JOSHI

(Writer is Senior Consultant - Pulmonary & Sleep Medicine, Primus Superspecialty Hospital, New Delhi)

Whether we have escaped from the scourge of tuberculosis or not, there is probably hardly a family that has not had to do something with this dreaded disease," said Jawaharlal Nehru. The effects of this deadly disease have been tormenting our country for ages—and continue to do so.

The existence of the disease dates back to the Vedas. It has been described as Kshayaroga in the Vedas, meaning 'to decay'. It wasn't until 1882 that Robert Koch discovered the causative agent for TB, which led to the World TB Day being observed annually on March 24.

Tuberculosis, commonly known as TB, is an infectious

disease that has been a significant public health issue since time immemorial. It remains a significant global health threat, with an estimated 10 million cases occurring every year. Unfortunately, India has the highest TB burden across the globe, with 2.69 million cases and 4.5 lakh deaths every year. Shockingly, 40 per cent of the Indian population is infected with these bacteria.

Types of TB

TB can manifest in two forms, pulmonary and extra-pulmonary. Pulmonary TB symptoms include cough, fever, chest pain, shortness of breath, bloody expectoration, loss of weight, and appetite, but these symptoms are non-specific. Diagnosis is con-



firmed by a sputum examination. TB can also masquerade as other diseases, making it challenging to diagnose.

TB is highly contagious, with people with active pulmonary TB potentially infecting 5-15 persons per year through close contact. Hence, treatment is the only way to cut this chain. The govern-

ment has committed to planning and providing high-quality evidence-based treatments under the banner of the Revised National Tuberculosis Programme.

How to STOP tuberculosis

Combating TB is an arduous and perplexing task due to multiple deep-

rooted issues. Understanding and solving these issues requires efforts from all stakeholders. Doing so requires the following.

Let us understand what the STOP technique is.

S- Stigmas: Stigmas against tuberculosis have existed for centuries and continue in the 21st century. Women fear verbal abuse, a failed marriage, and social isolation, while men fear disclosing the disease to friends, loss of jobs, or discrimination at the workplace. A study showed that more than 2 lakh people lost follow-up in the national TB program after diagnosis.

When patients feel better during treatment, they may skip or ignore the number of pills, leading to treatment

failure and drug resistance progression.

O- Outreach: At the community level, there is a connectivity deficit between the needy and the programmes curated for them, hindering contact with services.

P- Prevention: Poor application of preventive measures like cough etiquette, nutrition, health education, ventilation, and counseling fuels the spread of TB.

Counseling about the disease, drugs, and treatment duration is essential to tackling the increasing prevalence of tuberculosis. Community participation in framing slogans and messages for TB and sensitisation for the programme can also help. Interventions involving psychological and nutrition-

al aspects for families and patients are necessary. Addressing stigmas by leaders, influential members, or celebrities in the community can help alleviate stigmas.

Although TB remains a significant public health threat globally, with India carrying the highest burden, following effective preventative measures can help curb the spread of the disease. It is imperative to note that to 'STOP' the spread of TB will require concerted efforts by all stakeholders, from the government to individuals in communities. By addressing stigmas, ensuring treatment adherence, promoting outreach, and focusing on prevention, we can combat TB and work towards a healthier world.

Hungary not to arrest Putin

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Authorities in Hungary would not arrest Russian President Vladimir Putin if he were to enter the country despite him being the subject of an international warrant for alleged war crimes in Ukraine, a Hungarian official said Thursday.

Gergely Gulyas, chief of staff to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, said during a news conference in Budapest that arresting Putin would contravene Hungarian law because the country has not promulgated the statute of the International Criminal Court into its legal system.

The court, which is based in The Hague, Netherlands, last week issued an arrest warrant for Putin that accused him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine. Gulyas said the statute of the ICC, of which Hungary is a member state, was in conflict with Hungary's Constitution, and that arresting Putin would therefore violate Hungarian law. Orban's government has not yet taken a position on the warrant, but Gulyas said he considered it counterproductive.

"I think these decisions are not the most fortunate because they lead toward escalation and not toward peace," he said. The chances of Putin facing trial in The Hague are highly unlikely because Moscow does not recognise the ICC's jurisdiction or extradite its nationals. However, the warrant could limit the Russian leader's ability to travel to the tribunal's 123 member nations, which could arrest him in accordance with the warrant.



EU leaders set to endorse joint ammo purchases for Ukraine

Brussels (AP): European Union leaders were poised on Thursday to endorse a plan for sending Ukraine 1 million rounds of artillery ammunition within the next 12 months to help the country counter Russia's invasion forces.

EU foreign and defense ministers approved the plan for a fast-track purchasing procedure earlier this week, and the leaders of the bloc's 27 member nations will give it their political blessing at a summit in Brussels, according to several senior EU diplomats. They spoke anonymously under EU practices ahead of summits.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked leaders for the initiative dur-

ing a video call. According to a diplomat with direct knowledge of the conversation, Zelenskyy spoke from a moving train as he visited besieged Ukrainian cities.

The diplomat, who could not be identified because discussions took place behind closed doors, said Zelenskyy also asked leaders to deliver modern aircraft and long-range missiles to help Ukraine's resistance.

With Ukraine facing ammunition shortages after more than a year of fighting, Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas brought to the table last month the idea of the EU setting up a joint purchasing plan similar to the one devised during the coronavirus pandemic to buy vaccines.

sanctions against Moscow and has held up the adoption of a major EU funding package to Kyiv. Earlier this week, Hungary refused to join the other 26 EU members in signing a resolution in support of the ICC warrant for Putin.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine 13 months ago, Hungary has condemned the war but refused to supply Ukraine with weapons or allow their transfer across its borders. It has also threatened to veto certain European Union

China against US military in Philippines

AP ■ MANILA

Chinese diplomats expressed their strong opposition to an expanded United States military presence in the Philippines in closed-door talks with their Filipino counterparts on Thursday in Manila, a Filipino official said, underscoring the intense US-China rivalry in the region.

The Philippine official, who attended the meeting, told The Associated Press about China's intense objections on condition of anonymity for lack of authority to discuss what transpired at the start of the two-day talks. The Filipino diplomats responded by saying the decision to allow an expanded American military presence was in their national interest and would boost Philippine capability to respond to natural disasters, the official said, suggesting it was not aimed at China.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong and Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Theresa Lazaro led the talks aimed at assessing overall relations between the two sides amid thorny issues, including Beijing's alarm over a Philippine decision to allow the US military to expand its presence to a northern region facing the Taiwan Strait and escalating spats in the South China Sea. The discussions on Friday will focus on the long-seething territorial spats in the disputed waterway, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila.

The back-to-back meetings are the first under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office in June. He met Chinese President Xi Jinping in a state visit to Beijing in January, where both agreed to expand ties, pursue talks on potential joint oil



Xi invites Spanish PM on visit next week

Madrid (AP): Chinese President Xi Jinping has invited Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez to Beijing for a state visit as Xi tries to galvanise support for China's peace proposal for Ukraine. Spain's minister for the presidency, Félix Bolaños, confirmed late on Wednesday that Sánchez would visit China on March 30-31, citing Xi's "possible mediation in the war in Ukraine" as a key reason for the visit.

Spain takes over the European Union's rotating presidency in July, and Sánchez has portrayed his nation on the world stage as

a staunch NATO ally of Ukraine. He plans to hold commercially focused meetings during the Boao Forum for Asia on the Chinese island of Hainan on March 30 before travelling to Beijing to meet with Xi on March 31, Sánchez's office said. Xi met in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin this week to promote Beijing's peace plan for Ukraine, which Western nations have all but dismissed as unviable. Putin said it could be a basis for ending the fighting when the West is ready but added that Ukraine's Western allies have not shown interest.

and gas explorations and manage territorial disputes amicably. In early February, the Marcos administration announced it would allow rotating batches of American forces to indefinitely

station in four more Philippine military camps.

Those are in addition to five local bases earlier designated under a 2014 defence pact between the longtime treaty

allies. Marcos said on Wednesday the four new military sites would include areas in the northern Philippines. That location has infuriated Chinese officials because it would provide US forces a staging ground close to southern China and Taiwan. The Americans would also have access to military areas on the western Philippine island province of Palawan, Marcos said, adding that the US military presence under the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement was aimed at boosting coastal defence.

Palawan faces the South China Sea, a key passage for global trade that Beijing claims virtually in its entirety but a United Nations-backed arbitration tribunal ruled in 2016 that historical claim had no legal basis under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Seas. China had dismissed the ruling, which Washington and other Western governments recognise, and continues to defy it. When asked to react to the Philippine decision, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told a news briefing on Wednesday in Beijing that defence cooperation between countries "needs to be conducive to regional peace and stability and not targeted at or harmful to the interests of any third party". Wang warned countries in the region "to remain vigilant and avoid being coerced or used by the US" without naming the Philippines.

A recent statement issued by the Chinese Embassy in Manila was more blunt and warned that the Manila government's security cooperation with Washington "will drag the Philippines into the abyss of geopolitical strife and damage its economic development at the end of the day."

China's claim about American destroyer denied

AP ■ BANGKOK

The United States denied Chinese claims on Thursday that its military had driven away an American guided-missile destroyer from operating around disputed islands in the South China Sea, in an incident that comes as tensions in the region between the two powers continue to rise. The US Navy's 7th Fleet said that a statement from China's Southern Theatre Command that it had forced the USS Milius away from waters around the Paracel Islands — called Xisha by China — was "false."

"USS Milius is conducting routine operations in the South China Sea and was not expelled," said Lt. j.g. Luka Bakic in response to a query from The Associated Press.

"The United States will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," Bakic added.

Bakic would not comment on whether the ship had been operating in immediate proximity of the Paracel Islands, which are in the South China Sea a few hundred kilometers (miles) off the coast of Vietnam and the Chinese province of Hainan, or whether there had been any sort of a confrontation. China occupies the Paracel Islands, but they are also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam.

Launch of 3D-printed rocket fails on debut

AP ■ CANAVERAL

A rocket made almost entirely of 3D-printed parts made its launch debut Wednesday night, lifting off amid fanfare but failing three minutes into flight — far short of orbit. There was nothing aboard Relativity Space's test flight except for the company's first metal 3D print made six years ago.

The startup wanted to put the souvenir into a 125-mile-high (200-kilometre-high) orbit for several days before having it plunge through the atmosphere and burn up along with the upper stage of the rocket. As it turned out, the first stage did its job following liftoff from Cape Canaveral

Space Force Station and separated as planned. But the upper stage appeared to ignite and then shut down, sending it crashing into the Atlantic.

It was the third launch attempt from what once was a missile site.

Relativity Space came within a half-second of blasting off earlier this month, with the rocket's engines igniting before abruptly shutting down. Although the upper stage malfunctioned and the mission did not reach orbit, "maiden launches are always exciting and today's flight was no exception," Relativity Space launch commentator Arwa Tizani Kelly said after Wednesday's launch.

Germany to buy Australian-made combat vehicles

AP ■ BERLIN

Germany plans to buy more than 100 Australian-made combat vehicles as it moves ahead with plans to modernize its armed forces, the government said on Thursday.

German and Australian officials signed an agreement to cooperate on the procurement of the new combat reconnaissance vehicles, based on the Boxer family of armored fighting vehicles and equipped with a 30-millimeter gun. The aim is for deliveries to start in 2025, the Defence Ministry said.

It didn't give a price for the purchase. However, it said the money will come from a special 100 billion-euro (USD 108 billion) fund for the modernisation of the military that Germany approved after Russia invaded Ukraine last year.

The new vehicles will replace the German army's Wiesl 2 armoured vehicles, the Defence Ministry said.

Germany's military is widely acknowledged to be suffering from years of neglect and in particular from aging, poorly functioning equipment.

The German government has faced criticism for making a slow start to spending the special fund, but has said that 30 billion euros has already been committed to contracts.

Zelenskyy visits front-line areas

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's president on Thursday made his third visit in two days to areas that have felt the brunt of Russia's war, with a trip to the southern Kherson region that was retaken from the Kremlin's forces, and as a senior Kyiv commander hinted that a brewing Ukrainian counteroffensive could come "very soon."

Ukraine took back control of the Kherson region's capital, also called Kherson, at the end of last year, pushing out the Russian occupiers who had captured the city in the weeks following the start of Moscow full-scale invasion more than a year ago.

The Dnieper River now marks the front line in the region, which is still partially occupied.

While in Kherson on Thursday, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with local security officials and inspected infrastructure damaged by Russian strikes, his office said.

On Wednesday, Zelenskyy visited Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city in north-eastern Ukraine. Kyiv's troops recaptured Kharkiv from the Russians last September as part of the same monthslong counteroffensive that won back Kherson.

Also Wednesday, Zelenskyy met with troops in

the eastern Donetsk region, stopping by a hospital to see wounded soldiers and giving state awards to the defenders of Bakhmut, a wrecked city that is now a symbol of Ukraine's dogged resistance against Russian President Vladimir Putin's ambitions.

Zelenskyy's 48 hours of visits far from Kyiv — and close to the front line — came as improving weather sets the stage for possible new offensives by both sides.

The biting winter weather, followed by mud as the ground thawed out, have prevented major changes on the battlefield, and the war has largely been deadlocked in recent months. Ukraine is now starting to receive modern weapons, including tanks, from its Western allies, who are also training Ukrainian troops to use them.

Russian forces have been digging in where they hold territory in the four provinces that Moscow illegally annexed in September — Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia. Putin has made it clear he wants to have control there.

Ukraine's ground forces commander said on Thursday that Russian forces are "exhausting themselves" in their grinding push to take Bakhmut, giving Kyiv a window of opportunity for a counterstrike.

Pentagon: Budget readies US for possible China confrontation

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The US military must be ready for possible confrontation with China, the Pentagon's leaders said Thursday, pushing Congress to approve the Defence Department's proposed USD 842 billion budget that would modernize the force in Asia and around the world.

"This is a strategy-driven budget — and one driven by the seriousness of our strategic competition with China, the People's Republic of China," Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said in testimony before the House Appropriations subcommittee on defence.

Pointing to increases in new technology, such as hypersonics, Austin said the budget proposes to spend more than USD 9 billion, a 40 per cent increase over last year, to build up military capabilities in the Pacific and defend allies.

The testimony comes on the heels of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow, amid concerns China will step up its support for Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine and increasingly threaten the West. China's actions, said Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "are moving it down the path toward confrontation and potential conflict with its neighbours and possibly the United States."

S Korean min in Japan to discuss North Korea

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan and South Korea almost simultaneously dropped their export claims against each other on Thursday in the latest sign of improving ties.

Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry announced that effective Thursday the country would lift export controls of three key semi-conductor-related materials imposed in 2019 against South Korea, while Seoul said it would drop its complaint with the World Trade Organisation over the issue.

The two sides had agreed to the plan as part of their recent effort to improve ties and the announcement came a week after their leaders agreed to work past their troubled history and mend ties so they can better respond together to growing regional threats.

The announcement came hours after South Korea's unification minister and senior Japanese government officials reaffirmed their close cooperation in response to North Korea's escalating missile threats at a rare meeting.

Kwon Youngse is in Tokyo for talks with Japanese ministers and top governing party officials, becoming the first unification minister to do so in 18 years. His trip comes on the heels of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's summit with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida last

week, when they agreed to resume regular visits and launch high-level talks on security, trade and other issues.

Kwon and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi agreed that North Korea's repeated ballistic missile firings, which have occurred at an unprecedented pace, are a "serious and pressing threat to regional security and a clear and grave challenge to international society," according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The two ministers confirmed their close cooperation in response to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, the ministry said.

At the outset of the talks, Hayashi said last week's summit was "a great success" and praised Yoon's leadership toward improving bilateral relations. Hayashi also said he was "delighted to meet with Minister Kwon without delay."

Kwon, in response, said the process of improving ties has just begun and that he believes further efforts by the two governments can help bolster their healthy relations.

He said North Korea's nuclear and human rights issues represent a problem not only for South Korea but also for the international community.

He said it is also necessary for his country to strengthen ties with Japan to tackle those issues.



कार्यालय प्रधान महाप्रबन्धक (अधिकांशक)-एस्ट
उपग्रह राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
ए-१/१, वसुंधरा, कानपुर

ई-निविदा सूचना

एस्ट द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न जनपदों में स्थित औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों के विस्तृत अनुसूचना एवं रख-रखाव कार्यों हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/परिचर्य/नगर निगमों में पंजीकृत एवं अहं ए/श्रेणी में विद्युत लाइसेन्सी एवं अनुमति देकेदारों/फर्मों से ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है जो निम्निक 24.03.2023 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 11.04.2023 को अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। निविदा को दिनांक 12.04.2023 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे खोला जायेगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा शपथ पत्रों की मूल प्रतियाँ दिनांक 15.04.2023 को सांरा 5:00 बजे तक कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है। ई-निविदा के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जा रही वाली निविदा सम्बन्धी विवरण निम्नस्त है—

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत (लाख में)
1	Upgradation of Street Light Network along with AMC for Three Years Under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at I.A. MG Road (Hapur)	316.86

नोट— 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदा में समस्त कर एवं जीएसटी/सीएसटी दरें अंकित करें। अलग से कोई कर देय नहीं होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्यों हेतु निविदादाताओं को निविदा अपलोड करते समय "विद्युत सुरक्षा विभाग" उपग्रह शासन, लखनऊ में श्रेणी 'क' अनुमतिपत्र लाइसेन्स अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा, अन्यथा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा।
निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी प्राधिकरण की [website: www.onlineupsida.com](http://www.onlineupsida.com) पर स्थित ई-लिक एवं यूटिलीटी की [website: http://tenderup.in](http://tenderup.in) पर देखी जा सकती है।
बतियत प्रबन्धक (युग) विद्युत, उपग्रहऔद्योगिक, कानपुर



Vishwakarma Co-operative Group Housing Society Limited
(Regn. No. 460/G/H)
Regd. Office: Plot No. B-17, Vishwakarma Apartments, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096, Office Tel. No. 49502141, 22621625

Notice for Membership clearance in RCS Office. This is to inform that the registrar of co-operative society (RCS) has verified & cleared the list of 100 members out of 124 of the society and recommended the same to DDA. The balance 24 members list as below is being sent to RCS Office for clearance. Objection if any against any member's clearance should be notified within 7 days from the date of this notice. Secretary

SN	Flat No.	Membership No.	Member name	SN	Flat No.	Membership No.	Member name
1.	02	225	Vijay Mala Gulati	13.	66	208	V. K. Sharma
2.	10	222	Ashok Sikka	14.	73	258	Abraham Ooman
3.	11	94	M L Razdan	15.	78	108	J. S. Bedi
4.	13	199	Manohar Lal	16.	79	163	A. K. Gupta
5.	16	113	Sushila Sharma	17.	84	253/221	La/ita Aggarwal/ VK Aggarwal
6.	19	67	P. K. Jain	18.	87	69	K. K. Aggarwal
7.	20	167	Bhupinder Kaur	19.	88	188	R. A. Garg
8.	21	202	N. K. Gupta	20.	94	227	J. K. Aggarwal
9.	28	152	M. K. Verma	21.	96	53	R. P. Singhal
10.	31	151	P. K. Mittal	22.	97	229	P. K. Gupta
11.	41	198	S. K. Ahuja	23.	109	212	Shreshtha Mishra
12.	46	228	Manoj Gupta	24.	110	166	A. K. Balwani



कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, खटीमा
ऊधमसिंह नगर
ई-निविदा सूचना

पत्रांक : 352 / ई-निविदा / 2022-23 दिनांक : 23.03.2023

मुख्य महाप्रबन्धक उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, देहरादून की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान में पंजीकृत फर्म/देकेदारों से ई-निविदा (टू बिड सिस्टम) आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से संबंधित सभी सूचना www.uktenders.gov.in पर दिनांक 29.03.2023 की सायं 05:00 बजे से उपलब्ध होगी।

क्रमांक	विकास खण्ड	कार्य का नाम
1	खटीमा	खटीमा नगरीय पेयजल योजना के अन्तर्गत वार्ड नं०-7 एवं 8 (अमाद) में पेयजल योजना के निर्माण हेतु नलकूप छिद्रण, ऊर्ध्वजलाशय निर्माण, पाइप लाईन एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य।

नोट— उपरोक्त निविदा सूचना में यदि कोई संशोधन किया जाता है तो, संशोधित सूचना www.uktenders.gov.in पर अपलोड की जायेगी, संशोधित सूचना का प्रकाशन समाचार पत्र में नहीं किया जायेगा।
अधिशासी अभियन्ता

Palestinian killed in Israeli military raid in West Bank

Jerusalem (AP): Israeli security forces killed a Palestinian militant during a raid in the northern West Bank on Thursday, Palestinian health officials said, the latest escalation of violence in what has been the deadliest start of a year for Palestinians in the occupied territory in more than two decades.

Israeli forces stormed into the northern city of Tulkarem, home to an emerging militant group with ties to the armed offshoot of the nationalist Fatah party. The Palestinian Health Ministry said that 25-year-old Amir Abu Khadija was shot multiple times in the head and legs. The Tulkarem branch of Fatah's Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed Abu Khadija as its leader.

The Israeli military said Abu Khadija was wanted for recent shooting attacks on Israeli settlements and security forces. Troops raided his hideout apartment in Tulkarem and shot and killed Abu Khadija when he drew his gun, the military said, adding that the army confiscated an M-16 assault rifle and the car he allegedly used to carry out drive-by shooting attacks. Security forces said they also arrested another member of the militant group.

The militant group said Abu Khadija died in an "armed clash" with Israeli forces.

Israel parl passes law protecting PM Netanyahu amid protests

Tel Aviv (AP): Israel's parliament on Thursday passed the first of several laws that make up its contentious judicial overhaul as protesters opposing the changes staged another day of demonstrations aimed at ringing an alarm over what they see as the country's descent toward autocracy.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition approved legislation that would protect the Israeli leader from being deemed unfit to rule over his corruption trial and claims of a conflict of interest surrounding his involvement in the legal changes.

Critics say the law is tailor-made for Netanyahu, encourages corruption and deepens a gaping chasm between Israelis over the judicial overhaul.

The legal changes have split the nation between those who see the new policies as stripping Israel of its democ-



Israeli police use a water cannon to disperse Israelis blocking the freeway during a protest against plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to overhaul the judicial system in Tel Aviv, Israel on Thursday. AP/PTI

atic ideals and those who think the country has been overrun by a liberal judiciary.

The government's plan has plunged the nearly 75-year-old nation into one of its worst domestic crises. "Either

Israel will be a Jewish, democratic and progressive state or religious, totalitarian, failing, isolated and closed off. That's where they are leading us," Tzipi Livni, a former foreign minister and a prominent sup-

porter of the protest movement, told Israeli Army Radio. The opposition is rooted in broad swaths of society — including business leaders and top legal officials. Even the country's military, seen as a beacon of stability by Israel's Jewish majority, is enmeshed in the political conflict, as some reservists are refusing to show up for duty over the changes. Israel's international allies have also expressed concern. The law to protect Netanyahu passed 61-47 in Israel's 120-seat Knesset, or parliament. It stipulates that a prime minister can only be deemed unfit to rule for health or mental reasons and that only he or his government can make that decision. It comes after the country's attorney general has faced growing calls by Netanyahu opponents to declare him unfit to rule over his legal problems.

Pak Punjab polls postponed

Constitution violated, says Imran Khan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's top election body has delayed assembly polls in the politically crucial Punjab province by more than five months, citing deteriorating security situation in the cash-starved country, a move criticised by former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party chairman Imran Khan. In a late-night order issued on Wednesday, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) said that after considering the reports, briefing and material brought before the commission, it has concluded that it is impossible to hold and organise the elections — originally scheduled for April 30 — “honestly, justly, fairly, in a peaceful manner and in accordance with the Constitution and law.” The ECP said that it “hereby withdraws the election programme and fresh schedule will be issued in due course of time with poll date on October 8.” The assemblies in Punjab and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces were dissolved on January 14 and 18 respectively by the erstwhile governments of Khan's party. The ECP said the decision was taken after briefing of the government and different departments and intelligence agencies informed that “the law and order situation in the country don't permit to hold elections at any province at this point of time.”



According to the ECP, it contacted the interior and finance ministries for a meeting on March 9, where the special secretary of interior had said that “free, fair and peaceful elections are not possible due to deteriorating law and order situation, charged political environment and serious threats to political leaders.”

The finance secretary had cited a paucity of funds and the ongoing financial crunch as a reason for a lack of funds for the elections.

The ECP said that several senior-level members of the security agencies, including the police and the defence minister, and the federal government had recommended delaying the elections. Khan condemned the ECP's move to postpone the elections till October, calling it a violation

of Pakistan's constitution. “Today everyone must stand behind the legal community – the judiciary & lawyers – with expectation that they will protect Constitution. For if this is accepted today then it is the end of Rule of Law in Pakistan,” he said in a tweet early Thursday.

“We dissolved our 2 provincial legislatures with expectation that elections would be held in 90 days as clearly given in our Constitution.

We did not take this action to allow a bunch of fascists to impose a reign of terror, violating the Constitution & Rule of Law,” he said in another tweet. On March 1, the Supreme Court ruled that elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces should be held with-

in 90 days of the dissolution of the assemblies, as stipulated by the Constitution. In a letter to President Arif Alvi, the ECP proposed April 30 as the date for elections in Punjab. Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor Ali fixed May 28 as the date for polls in the province but subsequently backtracked on his decision while calling for “key challenges” to be addressed before a new date is announced.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Wednesday said there were differing opinions on conducting elections, and parliament needed guidance from the government and other institutions in this regard.

“Regarding the 90-day limit in the Constitution, I mentioned that April 30 is beyond that timeframe but have elections not been held after 90 or 60 days in the past?” Sanaullah asked.

The cricketer-turned-politician was ousted from power in April last year after losing a no-confidence vote, becoming the first Pakistani prime minister to be voted out by the National Assembly.

Since his ouster, Khan has been asking for early elections to oust what he termed an “imported government” led by prime minister Shehbaz Sharif. Sharif has maintained that elections will be held later this year once the parliament completes its five-year tenure.

Anger at Macron mounts as protests intensify

AP ■ PARIS

Labour strikes upended travel in France on Thursday as French trade unions held their first mass demonstrations since President Emmanuel Macron inflamed public anger by forcing a higher retirement age through parliament without a vote. Big crowds have started marching in the major cities of Marseille, Lyon, and Nantes as more than 250 protests were organised across France. The Paris march was scheduled to start at 2 pm from the Bastille plaza.

Protesters blocked train stations, Charles de Gaulle



Airport in Paris and refineries. High-speed and regional trains, the Paris metro and public transportation systems in other major cities were disrupted.

About 30 per cent of flights at Paris Orly Airport were cancelled. The Eiffel Tower and the Versailles Palace were closed Thursday due to the strikes.

Thursday's events were the ninth round of nationwide demonstrations and strikes called by France's eight main unions since January. Violence has intensified in recent days at scattered protests against the pension reform and Macron's leadership.

The French leader is stubbornly resisting the discontent on the streets, and said Wednesday that the government's bill to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 must be implemented by the end of the year. Critics attacked Macron for the statement, describing him as “self-satisfied,” “out of touch” and “offensive.”

Sri Lanka receives first tranche of IMF bailout

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has received USD 330 million as the first tranche of the IMF bailout programme, which will pave the way for the debt-ridden country to achieve better “fiscal discipline” and “improved governance”, according to President Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday approved a USD 3 billion bailout programme to help Sri Lanka overcome its economic crisis and catalyse financial support from other development partners, a move welcomed by Colombo as a “historic milestone” in the critical period.

Sri Lanka has been hit hard by a catastrophic economic and humanitarian crisis, sparked by years of mismanagement and the raging pandemic.

The cash-strapped country has received the first tranche of USD 330 million of the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF), Daily Mirror Lanka newspaper quoted state finance minister Ranjith Siyambalapitiya as saying.

“This sets the stage for the country to achieve better fiscal discipline and improved governance,” President Wickremesinghe told Parliament on Wednesday.

Finland's President seals NATO bid

AP ■ HELSINKI

The Finnish president on Thursday formally sealed the Nordic country's historic bid to join NATO by signing into law the required national legal amendments needed for membership in the Western military alliance.

The move by President Sauli Niinistö means Finland has completed national measures needed to join NATO, and is now just awaiting approval from Turkey and Hungary, the only two of NATO's 30 existing members that haven't ratified its bid.

In Turkey on Thursday, a parliamentary committee approved Finland's NATO application, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported, bringing Helsinki a step closer

to joining the alliance.

Members of the Turkish parliament's committee on foreign affairs voted in favor of Finland's bid a week after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country would move forward with ratifying it.

Finland's application could be ratified by the full Turkish assembly, where Erdogan's party and its allies hold a majority, as early as next week.

Turkey has presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for May 14, and ratification is expected before that.

Admitting new countries requires unanimous approval from the alliance members, and the parliaments in Ankara and Budapest haven't yet given the green light.

Johnson says sorry again over Partygate scandal

London: Boris Johnson has once again apologised over the Partygate scandal, this time for “inadvertently misleading” the British Parliament over the COVID law-breaking parties at Downing Street during his time as prime minister.

Johnson was grilled for hours on Wednesday by the House of Commons Privileges Committee, which is investigating whether he knowingly misled the Parliament over the Partygate scandal of gathering that breached the lockdown rules. “I apologise for inadvertently misleading this House, but to say that I did it recklessly or deliberately is completely untrue, as the evidence shows,” he told the committee.

During a heated session, the 58-year-old senior Conservative Party MP insisted the events that came under the purview of the scandal were “essential” during the lockdown period as Downing Street doubles up as a workplace and residence.

“I believe it was absolutely essential for work purposes,” he said when questioned about a particular event in November 2020. Johnson said the meeting, which happened while social distancing rules were in place, was “necessary” because two senior members of staff were about to leave “in potentially acrimonious circumstances.”

“I accept that perfect social distancing is not being observed but that does not mean that what we were doing is incompatible with the guidance,” he said. In his opening remarks, Johnson swore “hand on heart, I did not lie to the House” after taking an oath on the Bible to tell the truth during the session. PTI

Sunak paid over GBP 1mn as tax since '19

London: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has released his tax returns, revealing that the British-Indian leader paid more than GBP 1 million to the Exchequer since becoming a frontline politician in 2019. The tax release is part of a transparency commitment the UK premier made in November last year. Sunak, among the wealthiest British politicians, on Wednesday, revealed that he earned a total of GBP 4.766 million between 2019 and 2022 and paid GBP 1.053 million in tax - at a tax rate of around 22 per cent.

Over the last tax year, when he was the finance minister, the 42-year-old leader paid GBP 325,826 in capital gains tax and GBP 120,604 in UK income tax on a total income of GBP 1.9 million. “I published my tax returns in the interests of



transparency, as I said I would, and I am glad to have done that,” Sunak said during a visit to north Wales on Wednesday.

“I think ultimately what people are interested in is what I am going to do for them,” he added. Sunak came under pressure to publish his tax returns after his financial affairs came under the spotlight during the Conservative Party leadership election campaign last year, which he

lost to Liz Truss before being elevated as Prime Minister after Truss's short-lived tenure at 10 Downing Street. It followed the controversy around the non-domicile tax status of his wife, Akshata Murty, who has since relinquished the legal position, which meant she paid tax on her Indian earnings in India. Murty, the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy said in April last year that she took the action to avoid the issue becoming a “distraction” for her husband, who was the UK chancellor of the exchequer at the time.

The Opposition Labour Party, which has often raised Sunak's wealth in Parliament to claim he fails to fully empathise with those struggling with a cost-of-living crisis in the country, questioned the “much delay” of their publication. PTI

Prince William pays tributes to Poles who lost lives in wars

Warsaw, (AP): Britain's Prince William paid tribute on Thursday to Poles who lost their lives in past wars, and expressed gratitude to the nation for what it is doing today to provide humanitarian and military support to Ukraine.

The heir to the throne's visit to Poland underscores Britain's support for both Ukraine and Poland, an ally on the front line of efforts to help refugees displaced by Russia's war and to assist the Ukrainian military in fighting off the invasion.

William laid a wreath in Poland's national colours, white and red, at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and bowed his head solemnly.

The memorial honours

Poles who lost their lives in wars including World War II, when Polish and British soldiers were allies.

A note on the wreath that he left read: “In memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.”

“He later headed to the presidential palace for a meeting with President Andrzej Duda, who has been a prominent ally of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than a year ago.

Duda's office said their talks focused on humanitarian aid for Ukraine. “The Prince of Wales thanked the Poles for their generosity and hospitality,” Duda's office said.

Bill against caste-based discrimination introduced in California

Washington (PTI): A bill seeking to explicitly ban caste discrimination has been introduced in the California Senate by a Democratic lawmaker, which, if passed, could make America's most populous state also the country's first to outlaw law caste-based bias.

State Senator Aisha Wahab, the first Muslim and Afghan American elected to the state legislature, introduced the bill on Wednesday. The move came exactly one month after Seattle became the first US city to outlaw caste discrimination after its local council passed a resolution moved by an Indian-American politician and economist. The resolution, moved by Kshama Sawant, an upper-caste Hindu, was approved by the Seattle City Council by six to one vote.

“This historic legislation is about workers' rights, women's rights, queer rights, and civil rights,” said Wahab after introducing the legislation. “We want to ensure organisations and companies do not entrench caste discrimination in their practices or policies, and in order to do that we need to make it plainly clear that discrimination based on caste is against the law,” she told reporters at a news conference in Sacramento, California. California, a western US state located along the Pacific Coast with nearly 39.2 million residents, is the most populous US state and the third-largest by area.

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that , Smt. Rashmi Chawla wife of Late Shri Navin Chawla, resident of 213, SFS Apartments, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016 have lost/misplaced the original possession letter issued by DDA in respect of Flat no. 213, Hauz Khas Apartments, DDA SFS Flats, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016 and have also lost/misplaced original documents in respect of Scooter Garage no. 92, allotted along with the above-mentioned flat, issued by Delhi Development Authority vide File No. F-11(24)79/SFS. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in PS-Crime Branch, Delhi bearing LR No. 257083/2023 dated 19/03/2023. Any person (s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact above named person at above address or through phone no. 9810221449 or to Dr. Director (SFS), Vikas Sacan, INA, New Delhi, within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Achin Sharma (Advocate)
G-2/210 and 210A, Tulsi Tower,
Alaknanda Market, New Delhi-19

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that my client Navjeet Singh & Gunvir Kaur are in process to purchased the Entire Ground Floor without roof rights Part of the Property bearing No. A-73 (WZ-3), area measuring 150 sq. yd. in Block-A, situated at Shivaji Vihar, Janta Colony, New Delhi-110027 from Jatinder Singh who is the owner of the said property by virtue of Sale Deed dated 16.03.2011 (Doc No. 2387) executed by Satnam Kaur daughter in law of Late Bhagwanji (who inherited the entire property by virtue of two will deeds dated 11/5/1994 and 20.06.1994) All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Unit No. 2F, First floor, Mahaluxmi Metro Tower
Sec-4, Vaisali, G-2, U.P., Mob. 9810063551

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल
पर्यावास भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर,
अटल नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.) 492002
// सर्व संबंधित को सूचना //
भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली की अधिसूचना दिनांक 14.09.2006 (यथा संशोधित) के तहत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेसर्स महावीर कोल वॉशरी प्राइवेट लिमिटेड, ग्राम- खराहनी, तहसील-कोटा, जिला- बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) द्वारा कुल क्षेत्रफल - 16.37 एकर में कोल वॉशरी भवना- 0.99 मिलियन टन प्रतिवर्ष से बढ़ाकर 2.48 मिलियन टन प्रतिवर्ष डेट टाईन के पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति हेतु लोक सुनवाई बाबत छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल में आवेदन किया गया है । उक्त प्रस्तावित परियोजना के संबंध में आपत्ति / सुझाव / टीका-टिप्पणी इस अधिसूचना के जारी होने के दिनांक से 30 दिवस के अंदर क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, छ.ग. पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, बिलासपुर के कार्यालय में मौखिक अथवा लिखित रूप से कार्यालयीन समय में प्रस्तुत की जा सकती है। इस परियोजना के लिए पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति हेतु लोक सुनवाई दिनांक 10/05/2023 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे ग्राम- खराहनी, तहसील- कोटा, जिला- बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) के ग्राम पंचायत भवन के पास स्थित मैदान में नियत की गई है । यह भी सूचित हो कि लोक सुनवाई के दौरान भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली के ऑफिस मेमोरेडम F No. 22-25/2000-IA, III दिनांक 14.09.2020 तथा कोराना वायरस के नियंत्रण एवं रोकथाम हेतु शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-निर्देशों का अक्षरशः पालन कराया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।
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सदस्य सचिव
छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल,
नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Office of the Principal Chief Materials Manager
Headquarters Office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001
Mail ID : salenr365@gmail.com
No: 117-S/Sale/Auction Programme/2023-24
Date: 22.03.2023
Corrigendum in April- 2023 Auction Programme of Northern Railway
Following amended dates of the auction programme for the month of April 2023 will be as under:

Sr. No.	Depots	Existing	Amended date for e-auction
1.	DY.CMM/JUDW 01732-252388	04.04.2023	05.04.2023
2.	Sr.DMM/LKO 0522-2234756	04.04.2023	05.04.2023

All other auction dates and terms & conditions advised earlier will remain same. For further details regarding e-auction please visit Railway website 'www.ireps.gov.in.'

887/2023

(Om Kumar)
Dy. CMM/S&P

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
NO/DTM/OPN/PL07/150/591, dtd.20.03.2023
Name of the Work: "Allotment of vacant halls (02 nos.) at 2nd floor of newly constructed building near Gate-3 inside Port Prohibited area on Annual Premium Basis." **Annual Premium:** Rs. 43,63,238/- . **Period of allotment :** 5 years, Last date of submission of bid: 10.04.2023 upto 17.00 hrs. **Date and time of opening (technical bid):** 11.04.2023 at 16:00 hrs. Refer our website for <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> & <http://paradipport.gov.in/>.
Sd/- Traffic Manager
Paradip Port Authority
PPP/PR/235/2022-23 dtd.23.03.2023

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल
पर्यावास भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर,
अटल नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.) 492002
// सर्व संबंधित को सूचना //
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सदस्य सचिव
छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल,
नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

Small business' NPAs declined in Sept 2022

Quarter saw fall despite high credit growth: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) from the small businesses segment have witnessed a decline in the September quarter of this fiscal despite high credit growth, a report said on Thursday.

The micro, small and medium enterprises' (MSME) NPAs declined to 12.5 per cent as of September 2022, as against 13.9 per cent in September 2021, after the devastating second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the report by Transunion Cibil said.

The overall disbursements, which excludes loan renewals, grew 24 per cent during the quarter, led by an over 54 per cent in the micro industries segment which have a credit exposure of up to Rs 1 crore, the credit information company said.

The average loan size for the micro segment increased by 34 per cent, and to the small segment by 4 per cent, Cibil said, adding that the same was down 1 per cent in the case of businesses classified as medium primarily because of the emergency credit-linked guarantee scheme loans made during the pandemic.



ic.

When it comes to credit demand from the MSME segment, which is very crucial for the economy as it supports a bulk of the jobs and has big contributions to the GDP and also exports, there was high activity, the CIC said.

Demand for MSME loans, which is measured in terms of the number of commercial credit inquiries, accelerated to about 1.7 times the demand of two years ago during the pandemic, Cibil said.

The total MSME exposure for lenders was up by 10.6 per

cent at Rs 22.9 lakh crore as of September 2022, the CIC said, adding that this excludes Rs 2.5 lakh crore of loans which it classifies as doubtful and the ones in loss category because they have not been paid for over 720 days.

As of now, the top-10 States account for nearly three-fourths of the overall credit to MSME, the company report said. Gujarat saw the maximum growth at 15 per cent, while States like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Delhi and Tamil Nadu were between 6-8 per cent growth in portfolio.

Sensex halts 2-day gains, falls 290 pts to close below 58K

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex declined 290 points in a volatile session to settle below the 58,000 mark on Thursday due to a sell-off in banking, financial and IT stocks amid a mixed trend in global equities.

Besides, heavy selling in index heavyweight Reliance Industries added to the pressure, traders said.

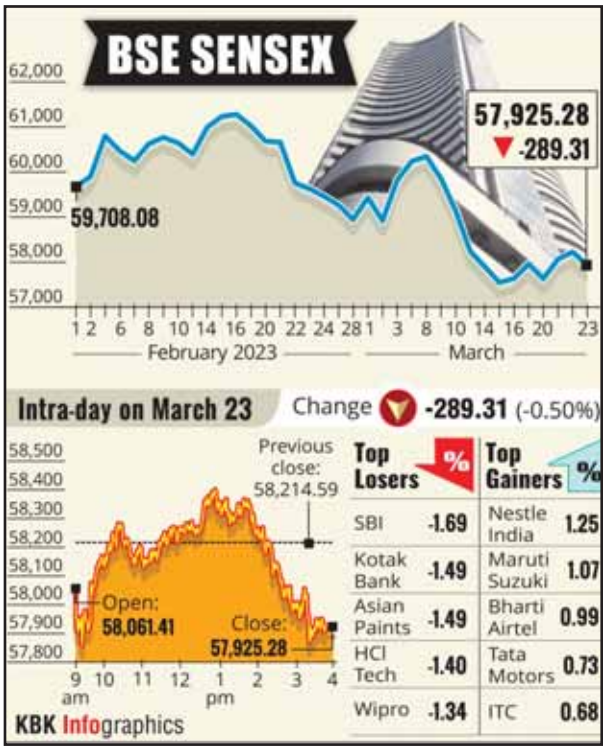
After rallying for two straight days, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 289.31 points or 0.50 per cent to settle at 57,925.28, with 16 of its constituents posting losses.

During the day, the index witnessed a high of 58,396.17 and a low of 57,838.85.

The broader NSE Nifty dipped 75 points or 0.44 per cent to end at 17,076.90, with 30 of its scrip ending in the red.

"Markets traded volatile and lost nearly half a per cent amid mixed cues. After the initial downturn, the Nifty recovered gradually in the first half however fall in the heavyweights around 17,200 levels again pushed the index in the red. Consequently, it closed at 17,076.90 levels.

"Continued pressure in the IT majors and profit-taking in banking and financial counters turned the tone negative," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd. State Bank of India was the



biggest loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 1.69 per cent, followed by Asian Paints, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries, Wipro, IndusInd Bank, Infosys, Power Grid and HDFC twins.

In contrast, Nestle, Maruti, Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, ITC and Hindustan Unilever were among the gainers.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.45 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.15 per cent.

"Although the Fed's decision to increase rates by 25 basis points was in line with expectations, concerns were raised by the US Treasury Secretary's statement that blanket insurance for all deposits was not being considered.



'ITC to go for climate risk modeling for food business'

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Diversified conglomerate ITC Limited is going for climate-risk modelling to identify the hotspots owing to extreme weather conditions, its Chairman Sanjiv Puri said on Thursday.

Puri said that a team of experts is engaged in this job of modelling comprising big data analytics.

Speaking on the sidelines of a CII event, Puri told reporters: "ITC is trying for a climate risk modelling to identify the hotspots. Then steps will be taken to mitigate these issues. A team of experts is working using big data analytics".

Puri said ITC had already done this in 2020 on a macro basis, adding that this exercise will now be conducted on a granular basis and site-specific for its food business.

"Some years back, we had started to work on climate-smart agriculture. After a few years, nearly 70 per cent of the villages where ITC is working with the farmers will be covered. The farmers will benefit from high yields resulting in better farmers' incomes," he said.

Puri said this practice will also reduce the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

ITC is working on popularising millet-based products in all categories of its food business in the next few months. Millets are able to withstand extreme weather conditions and are also nutritious, Puri added.

Referring to commodity inflation, Puri said it is cooling off now.

The ITC chairman said presently urban demand is growing at a fast pace while rural demand is expected to pick up.

Earlier, he said that the company has been reporting on the triple bottom line for sustainability on environmental, social and financial costs as well.

According to Puri, it is important to bring resilience to agriculture. He also said the energy transition from coal to renewables will involve social and financial costs as well.

TRAI to meet telcos on pesky marketing calls, messages

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is scheduled to meet telecom companies on March 27 on the development and implementation of Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC) detect solutions, as the regulator continues its offensive against pesky marketing calls and messages.

The TRAI further said that the exploitation of the DLT (Distributed Ledger Technology) platform to bring all access providers (telcos) together with respect to UCC detect solutions will be a positive step in this direction.

The formulation of a framework for sharing of UCC data detected by access providers on DLT platform, strict action on Principal Entities and Registered Telemarketers for non-compliance of Regulation, use of AI/ML-based anti-phishing system, implementation of RegTech solution on DLT platform for promotional Voice calls, implementation of Digital Consent Acquisition and updates of the 'Regulatory Sandbox' established for UCC Detect will be discussed in the meeting.

"As part of a multipronged approach to address this problem through technical solutions, regulations, directions



and close monitoring a meeting with all access providers on the development and implementation of UCC detect solutions by them will be held under the chairmanship of P.D Vaghela, Chairman TRAI...On 27th March 2023," TRAI said in a statement.

UCC is a major source of inconvenience to the public and impinges on the privacy of individuals, the regulator noted.

To curb the menace, TRAI issued the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (TCCPCR) on July 19, 2018, which put in place a framework for controlling pesky, unsolicited

NMDFC makes loan process digital, launches MILAN software

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As part of the Digital India programme, the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) on Thursday launched software MILAN for digitising loan and accounting processes.

The prime mandate of NMDFC, which comes under the minority affairs ministry, is to provide concessional finance to the minorities for self-employment/income generation activities.

As per the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, the notified minorities are Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains. Under the NMDFC programme, preference is given to artisans and women. Since its inception, NMDFC has disbursed an amount of Rs 7,803.19 crore and covered 21 lakh beneficiaries under its various schemes.

MILAN (Minority Loan Accounting Software for



NMDFC) will digitise loan and accounting processes between applicants, State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) and NMDFC.

This will increase efficiency and transparency and access to NMDFC's scheme, the financial services firm said in a statement. The portal will enable the submission of online applications by the prospective beneficiaries, it said.

Speaking at the launch, NMDFC chairman and managing director Rakesh Sarwal said this customised software will

bring greater transparency and speed of transactions in the loaning and accounting process of NMDFC and its SCAs.

This software will empower and facilitate the prospective applicants to apply for a loan from anywhere in India through online mode and they will be able to track their applications, disbursement and repayment status, he said.

This software is responsive from both sides — beneficiary as well as state channelising agencies, it added.

Govt to exercise green shoe option for HAL OFS; likely to raise ₹2,800 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Thursday decided to exercise the green shoe option as the offer-for-sale of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has received a good response, with the issue subscribed 4.5 times on day one.

"Offer for Sale (OFS) of Government shares in HAL got great response on day one. Issue subscribed 4.5 times of base size at a clearing price above the floor price by non-retail investors. Government has decided to exercise the green shoe option. Retail investors get chance to bid tomorrow," DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said in a tweet.

The OFS comprised of base issue size of 1.75 per cent or 58.51 lakh shares, with an option to retain over-subscription of an equal quantum.

The Government on Wednesday proposed to sell up to a 3.5 per cent stake in HAL at a floor price of Rs 2,450 a share, if fully subscribed, the OFS would fetch about Rs 2,800 crore to the exchequer.

On the first day of OFS, shares of HAL closed 4.87 per cent down at Rs 2,497.40 each on BSE. The floor price is at a discount of around 6.7 per cent over the closing share price of HAL on BSE.

The Government currently holds 75.15 per cent of HAL, which is a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Defence Ministry. The proceeds from HAL OFS would add up



to the government's disinvestment kitty for the current fiscal.

The Government has so far mopped up Rs 31,106.64 crore from disinvestment and share buy-back in CPSEs.

The Government had last month pegged lower revised estimates of disinvestment revenue estimates for the current fiscal at Rs 50,000 crore, against the budget target of Rs 65,000 crore.



DP World launches rail-linked container freight station

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Dubai-based logistics firm DP World on Thursday announced the launch of a new rail-linked container freight station (CFS) at Hazira, in Gujarat. The facility is capable of handling up to 36,000 containers annually and will serve as a hub for consolidating and de-consolidating cargo, DP World said in a statement. Besides, it will also facilitate customs clearance, and provide warehousing and distribution services to customers.

"The new CFS represents a significant investment in the region's infrastructure and logistics capabilities. Our goal is to help our customers navigate the complexities of global trade," said Ranadhir Reddy, CEO of Rail, and Inland Terminals at DP World.

DP World said it will also offer value-added services, such as labelling, repackaging, and quality control, to meet the diverse needs of customers in the region. The new rail-linked CFS will boost economic growth and competitiveness, as well as help drive overall logistics efficiencies in the region, it stated.

"The Port of Hazira is a vital gateway for trade and commerce along the western coast of India.

G20 second Framework Working Group to discuss global macro-economic issues: CEA

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A host of global issues pertaining to inflation, energy security and climate change would be discussed in the G20 second Framework Working Group meeting scheduled to begin Friday, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said here on Thursday.

India along with the United Kingdom would play a 'facilitator role' in discussing the issues with member countries during the two-day summit, he said.

"The Framework Working Group of the G20 Finance Track will discuss global macro economic issues of relevance today. It will deliberate on how international policy cooperation can be enhanced to achieve strong sustainable balance and inclusive growth across G20 nations," Nageswaran told reporters.



He said the first meeting of the Framework Working Group was held in December 2022 in Bengaluru and "significant progress" was made.

"Some of the goals that Indian G20 Presidency is pursuing

includes international cooperation to address macro-economic impact of food, climate change and energy transition," the CEA said.

The schedule of the two-day meeting is spread across themat-

ic sessions with one global outlook focused on inflation and macro economic consequences of food and climate change, he said.

"This meeting will be chaired by myself, and United

Kingdom Chief Economic Advisor to the Treasury Clare Lombardelli will be the co-chair," he said.

There would be a distinguished panel of speakers from the G20 countries, and the delegates would be hosted for a conversation over dinner and they would get to experience the rich and cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu as well its diverse cuisine. The deliberations of the two-day event would inform the second G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meeting scheduled to be held in Washington DC in April, Nageswaran said.

To a query, he clarified that the discussions of the meeting do not necessarily mean that the countries participating should adhere to the recommendations made. "They are non-binding by nature," he said.

Recruit more field officers for reliable data collection: Par panel to Statistics Min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary panel has asked the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation to recruit more field officers in the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) on mission mode for more accurate data collection. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance in its 58th Report on Demand for Grants (2023-24) of the Ministry expressed concern over the shortage of manpower in the Ministry, especially in the senior and junior statistical cadre. The report was tabled in Parliament on Thursday.

The panel noted that on November 30, 2022, as many as 266 vacancies exist, which is 33 per cent of the total sanctioned strength. The panel recommended the Ministry to pursue the matter of recruitment with the

Staff Selection Commission (SSC) vigorously so that the vacancies can be filled within this financial year.

Regarding the shortage of manpower in the Field Operation Division of the NSSO, the committee suggested to recruit more field-based staff on a mission-mode basis for accurate and reliable data collection.

The panel also asked the Ministry to expedite data collection for the 7th Economic Census at the State-level and also provide additional resources to those, who are facing statistical capacity constraints in terms of providing data.

The panel noted a decrease in budget allocation for support for the statistical strengthening (SSS) sub-scheme from Rs 52.63 crore in 2022-23 to just Rs 10.31 crore in 2023-24, indicating a decline of 80 per cent.

NITU, NIKHAT TO FIGHT FOR GOLD

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prominent Indian pugilists Nitu Ghanghas and Nikhat Zareen produced monumental displays to record contrasting victories and reach the finals of the Mahindra IBA Women's World Boxing Championship at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex here on Thursday.

With three consecutive Referee Stops Contest (RSC) wins under her belt, Nitu (48kg) continued her remarkable run at the tournament against the reigning Asian champion Alua Balkibekova of Kazakhstan with a hard-earned 5-2 win on points after the bout was reviewed. Having suffered a defeated against the Kazakh in the quarter finals of the last World Championships, the 22-year-old Indian had a point to prove this time round.

Both pugilists were neck and neck in all three rounds and while Balkibekova kept Nitu throughout the bout, the 2022 Commonwealth Games champion kept her cool to get the better of her opponent. The southpaw smartly landed accurate punches and showcased immense grit to reach the finals of the competition for the very first time.

Nitu will now take on the 2022 Asian Championships bronze medalist Lutsaikhana Altantsetseg of Mongolia in the final on Saturday.

Contrary to Nitu's fiercely contested bout, Nikhat (50kg) had an easy day at the office as she continued her quest for back-to-back World Championships gold medals by outpunching the veteran Rio Olympics bronze medalist Ingrid Valencia of Colombia and securing a 5-0 win. Being at the top of her game, the 26-year-old star pugilist utilized her quick movement and stellar strength to control the bout from the word go.

She maintained her composure going into the next few rounds and dominated the bout, giving her Colombian opponent no chance to



make a comeback and sealed the win by unanimous decision. Nikhat will now face the two-time Asian champion Nguyen Thi Tam of Vietnam in the final on Sunday.

Later tonight, the Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) and three-time Asian medalist Saweety Boora (81kg) will be competing in their respective semi-finals bouts. While Lovlina will face the 2018 World Champion and two-time Olympics medalist Li Qian of China,

Saweety will square off against Emma Sue Greentree of Australia.

The on-going prestigious event is witnessing the participation of 324 boxers, including several Olympic medalists, from 65 countries fighting for the titles in the 12 weight categories. The tournament has a massive prize pool of INR 20 crore.

'MORE SPONSORS'

Most pugilists compete at the World Championships to bring honour

and glory to their country but for Australian indigenous boxer Marissa Williamson, a good result in the tournament could also open up sponsorship opportunities, which will help keep her boxing dream alive.

From being moved around to 16 foster-care homes in five years to finding herself living on the streets during the COVID lockdown in Melbourne, life has dealt Marissa — a proud Ngarrindjeri woman — a difficult hand.

"I am from South Australia. I belong to the First Nations tribe in Australia. I grew up in foster care. I had 16 placements in five years all over Victoria. It was pretty rough. I was labelled a pretty naughty kid," Marissa, 21, who competes in the 64kg category, said.

"I attended five different high schools. It was extremely sporadic and some of the placements were pretty violent."

Training for the women's Australian Football League (AFL), Marissa developed a liking for boxing at the age of 16 and switched sports despite being named the U-16 AFL sports person of the year in 2018. "I used to play AFL. I was playing at a pretty high level. I was under-16 AFL sports person of the year. One day I was sent to a gym for adverse youth, to keep away from detention basically. I just started boxing and I loved it."

Within a year of taking up boxing, Marissa won the Victoria State Championship and became the Australian National Youth champion. But in 2020 when COVID-19 struck and Australia was put under lockdown, Marissa found herself without a home.

"When I was 17, COVID-19 hit. Melbourne became the most locked-down city in the world. I ended up living on the streets. It was a very difficult period."

"I got a second boxing coach then and he allowed me to stay in his boxing gym. The environment wasn't ideal."

Since boxing doesn't pay much in Australia, boxers have to take up full-time jobs to keep their sporting dream alive. But working 40 hours a week and also training six days a week takes a toll on the body.

"It's really hard because we have to work in Australia, we are not full-time athletes. We are expected to perform in sports but also work full-time. It's very difficult working 40 hours a week and training twice a day, six days a week."



Sindhu, Prannoy advance to pre-quarterfinals of Swiss Open tournament

PTI ■ BASEL

Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy beat All England Championships finalist Shi Yu Qi of China to storm into the men's singles pre-quarterfinals at the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament here. World number 9 Prannoy continued his good run as he recovered from a second game slump to notch up a 21-17, 19-21, 21-17 win over Shi Yu Qi, who is a 2018 world championships silver medalist, in the men's singles opening round.

9, 21-16 in a lop-sided opening round of women's singles.

Prannoy will next face France's Christo Popov, while Sindhu will take on 20-year-old Indonesian Putri Kusuma Wardani, who was part of the gold medal winning team of the 2022 Asia Team Championships.

Also in action on Thursday will be Kidambi Srikanth against Hong Kong's Lee Cheuk Yiu. National champion Mithun Manjunath takes on Chia Hao Lee of Chinese Taipei and second seeded men's pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will face Taiwanese pair of Fang-Chih Lee and Fang-Jen Lee.

India bag silver, bronze in mixed team events at shooting World Cup

PTI ■ BHOPAL

India bagged a silver and a bronze in the ISSF Pistol/Rifle World Cup, with the air pistol mixed team pair of Varun Tomar and Rhythm Sangwan clinching the second spot, while the pair of Rudranksh Patil and R Narmada Nithin securing the third spot in air rifle event here on Thursday.

India have taken their medals tally in the competition to four, including one gold, a silver and two bronze.

China won both the gold medals on offer on day two of the competition at the MP Shooting Academy Range.

Varun, following his individual bronze-winning effort in air pistol on Wednesday, teamed up with Rhythm to give a tough fight to the Chinese pair of Qian Wei and Liu Jinyao, before going down 11-17 in the air pistol mixed team gold-medal round.

In the initial stages of the final, it looked like the Chinese would enjoy a cakewalk, but the Indians made a strong comeback, going from 7-15 to 11-15 before the Chinese clinched the 15th series to seal the gold.

Earlier in the qualification round, Qian and Liu had topped the nine-team field with a score of 586, while Varun and Rhythm had finished second with 581.

"We all try our best and keep our best foot forward and silver is a medal as well. Gold would have been great but we are happy that we got a silver and we will try to better next time," said Rhythm, one of the most promising pistol shooters in the country, having won four junior team and individual gold medals at the 2021 World Championships in Lima.

The second Indian team in



the event comprising Divya TS and Sarabjot Singh missed the bronze by a point, finishing fifth with a score of 574.

Reigning men's air rifle world champion Rudranksh Patil and R Narmada Nithin, who had combined to clinch gold at the ISSF World Cup in Cairo last month, couldn't recreate the same magic at home, finishing with a bronze.

The pair had a combined score of 632 in qualification and finished third, thereby qualifying for the bronze-medal match against China's Zhang Qiongyue and Yu Haonan, who finished fourth with the same combined score in the 19-strong field.

In the bronze-medal match, Rudranksh and Narmada beat the Chinese pair 16-8 in what was a much closer match than the scoreline suggests.

Both the pairs did not shoot a single shot below the 10-

mark. The high point came in the sixth series when both Rudranksh and Narmada shot perfect 10-9s.

"There was pressure obviously, but then we had a really good match — the competition was so good and we quite enjoyed it," said Narmada after the match.

Rudranksh said there was no lack of motivation even if they did not win gold.

"We were just asked to focus on our process and if we would have got gold we would have been motivated, but the bronze motivates us even more to do better next time," he said.

The second Indian pair in the event — Hriday Hazarika and Tilotoma Sen — shot 628.1 in qualification to finish ninth.

The Chinese team of Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao won gold, defeating Hungary's Istvan Peni and Denes Eszter 16-2.

We could've won by bigger scoreline: Stimac

PTI ■ IMPHAL

India edged Myanmar 1-0 in the Opening game of the Tri-Nation International Football Tournament but head coach Igor Stimac said the scoreline could have been better, given the hosts' complete dominance in the game.

Two decisions involving captain Sunil Chhetri — an apparent foul on him not given as a penalty in the first half and a goal disallowed for offside -- led Stimac to state, "For me, the result is 3-0, not 1-0."

"I cannot say anything to my players as they did everything we agreed upon. Goalkeeper Amrinder was excellent tonight, and Sunil was unfortunate not to score. He was hungry for goals and could've had a hat-trick," said the Croatian in a release.

While many would not have expected Chhetri to play the entire 90 minutes in Imphal just four days after a gruelling ISL final, the skipper's hunger and determination to get back to national duty was what helped Stimac make the decision.

"Sunil was the first player to make it to the camp after the ISL final. He did not waste a minute but rather rushed to join the national team. That proves his hunger and commitment. He is one of the fittest players in the squad and can play continuously for three days," the coach said.

In the pre-match press conference, Stimac said one of the elements of these friendlies will be to celebrate the players' achievements in the ISL and recognise their good performances.

In line with that, he handed out



three national team debuts to Mehtab Singh, Naorem Mahesh Singh and Ritwik Kumar Das.

Mehtab, who was named in the starting XI, had a mixed debut according to Stimac.

"He was great but sometimes too nervous. But he will get used to the pressure as we only had one training session before the match."

But the debutant who impressed the Croatian the most was Naorem Mahesh Singh, who was in fact a last-minute call-up due to Sivasakthi Narayanan's withdrawal following injury.

"Mahesh was a big surprise. I saw what he's capable of in the ISL, but when players come from the ISL to the national team, it's a different type of pressure. He was brilliant tonight and everything he did was perfect by the book," Stimac said.

Raducanu faces new injury concern after Miami exit

AP ■ MIAMI

Emma Raducanu faces more injury worries after exiting the Miami Open in the first round and saying she will seek fresh input on her troubling painful wrist.

Canadian Bianca Andreescu beat Raducanu 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 on Wednesday in a clash of two former US Open champions which produced some moments of quality from the British 20-year-old.

But Raducanu was visibly troubled by her wrist and after leaving the court she said that it was time to consider whether it was no longer an injury she could simply try to play through. "It's something I have been managing for some time. I just need to review after this tournament really and figure out what my next steps are," she told reporters.

"We have been managing it, keeping on top of it. I'm able to play in the short-term. But the current solutions aren't very viable long-term," she added.

The wrist problem will be particularly frustrating for Raducanu



after she showed signs of being on an upward trend with her run to the last 16 at Indian Wells.

Since winning the US Open in sensational fashion in 2021, Raducanu has been plagued by injuries and fitness problems and they show no signs of ending any time soon.

"I think that I'm doing the right things day to day, which brings me confidence. This year has been difficult in the sense that I have been managing a few existing injuries."

"Yeah, that has been annoying

and frustrating because I've been working as best as I can. But I feel like I'm enjoying the competition," she added. Raducanu said her injury was behind her decision not to play in the Billie Jean King Cup tie against France on hard courts in Coventry in mid-April.

The 20-year-old will play on clay in Stuttgart in the following week.

"Because of my existing injuries, the best medical advice was to not switch surfaces at such short notice. So that's what I've been told," she said.

ANOTHER INJURY BLOW FOR MONFILS

AP ■ MIAMI

French veteran Gael Monfils was forced to retire during his first round match at the Miami Open dealing a blow to his return from a lengthy injury absence.

The 36-year-old left the court, wincing in pain with his match with compatriot Ugo Humbert at 3-3 in the first set.

At Indian Wells, Monfils lost to Jordan Thompson in straight sets in the first round, in what was his first tournament in seven months.

Last year Monfils had heel surgery after missing the French Open and the entire grass season.

His return from a three months absence, in Montreal, saw him suffer a foot injury and he subsequently announced the end to his season in October.

Monfils said that while the injury was painful he would have to wait for scans before knowing more.

"We will have the exams and see what's happening," he said.

But after another blow after his long road back to competition, Monfils said he may have to consider his future despite his desire to carry on.

Vani Kapoor ends three-year title drought, wins 7th leg of Hero WPGT

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

A little over three years after her last win on the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour (WPGT), Vani Kapoor drilled a crucial birdie on the very last hole to card 3-under 69 and take the lead in the seventh leg of the ongoing season.

That slender edge was good enough as Gaurika Bishnoi, who led for a major part of the day, was unable to find a birdie over the last seven holes and also bogeyed the Par 4 14th.

Vani finished at 2-under 214 for three days and Gaurika (72) ended at 1-under 215 to be second. Ridhima Dilawari, who played alongside Gaurika, too, had a chance as she birdied the 16th and 17th. She needed a birdie to force a play-off

with Vani, but instead double-bogeyed the last hole and fell to third place.

Ridhima totalled 1-over 217. Overnight leader Tvesa Malik (77) ran into rough weather in the final round and was fourth, while amateur Vidhatri Urs (76) and Asmitha Sathish (73) were tied for fifth.

Playing in the final group, Gaurika had a chance to force a play-off as she stood on a birdie putt, which however, was not a straightforward one. The ball went past the hole and Gaurika was left in second place.

Vani, who started the day three behind the 36-hole leader Tvesa Malik, had one birdie and one bogey on the front nine. As the lead group of Tvesa, Gaurika and amateur Vidhatri turned into the back

nine, Gaurika held the pole position.

Vani turned the tide on the back nine with birdies on 10th and 12th and then added a vital final one on the 18th.

"It is great to get back to winning, more so on my home course with my family and friends present. I also want to thank everyone here including my coach, Anitya Chand, and my parents," said Vani, who has been playing mostly on the Ladies European Tour (LET) and elsewhere in the past three years.

Gaurika, who started the final day one stroke behind the leader, was unlucky with many of her putts, including the one on the 18th, where she faced a tricky eight-footer. Gaurika, playing in the final group, did well to come back from a double bogey on Par-5 fourth as she birdied three of the next four



holes.

But things did not go her way in the closing stages. On one occasion on the 17th, the ball stopped right at the edge of the cup, and she only got a par, where she deserved a birdie.

It was Vani's day, more so on the back nine. She not only birdied three times but also saved a couple of very good pars to snatch a fine win.

Ridhima was in the mix till the very end before a double bogey pushed her down the leaderboard.

Overnight leader Tvesa had an early birdie on the third and stretched her lead at the top. However, after that nothing went right for her. She bogeyed the fifth, eighth, 11th and 14th and had a double bogey on the par-4 sixth for a 77.

Seher Atwal (73) and Aman-

deep Drall (73) were sixth and seventh, while Lakhmehar Pardesi, who had seven birdies in her 71, was tied eighth alongside Rhea Jha (75) and amateur Anvvi Dahhiya (77).

Vani, who won her first title on the Hero WPG Tour as an amateur more than 10 years ago, has since won more than 35 trophies, most of which have come between 2014 and 2018.

Since then, she has been playing a lot in Australian, South African and Ladies European Tours, as she searches for her first pro win on the international circuit.

Sneha Singh, who had a disappointing week in tied 21st place, continues to lead the Hero Order of Merit. Vani, who won Rs 2,84,000 from the season's highest purse of Rs 23 lakhs, moved into third place, while Seher Atwal is second.

You cannot look too much into it: Rohit on Surya's 3 golden ducks

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Considered one of the best players in the T20 format, Suryakumar Yadav registered three successive golden ducks against Australia, but captain Rohit Sharma hinted that the Indian team management is not looking too much into his failures in the ODI series. The 32-year-old Suryakumar was trapped by Australian left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc in the first two ODIs. The team management backed him and included him in the playing XI for the series-decider here on Wednesday, but he was again dismissed first ball, this time by left-arm spinner Ashton Agar.

"He (Suryakumar) played only three balls in the series. I don't know how much you can look into it. He got three good balls," Rohit said after India lost the third and final ODI by 21 runs to concede the series 1-2 to Australia.

"(On Wednesday) I didn't think it was that great a ball. He just chose the wrong shot. He should have, maybe, come forward. He knows best."

Suryakumar has featured in 23 ODIs after his debut in July 2021, scoring 433 runs at a below-par average of 24.05.

Rohit said Suryakumar was initially slotted to bat at number 5 but the team management held him back to face the Australian attack in the last 15-20 overs. Suryakumar actually came out at number 7.

"He plays spin really well

which is why we wanted to hold him back and give him the last 15-20 overs where he could play his game. But it's really unfortunate he could only play three balls in the series. That can happen to anyone. The potential, the quality, is always there. He is just going through that (lean) phase right now.

"Once we played the first 10 overs, the ball did not swing at all. There was no question of swing where Surya could be troubled or anything like that. It was a tactical move. We wanted to use his potential at the back end along with Hardik. These two players would have been ideal for us but unfortunately they got out."

'DIDN'T WANT RIGHT-HANDERS TO GET STUCK'

Rohit also explained why Axar Patel came out to bat at number 5 ahead of Suryakumar.

"When KL (Rahul) and Virat (Kohli) were batting, they (Australia) were operating a leggie and a left-arm spinner. Surya was actually slotted to go in at five. But we thought the ball is taking some turn, and we didn't want our right-handers to get stuck, which is why we wanted a left-hander (Axar).

"Axar, being in the form that he is, we wanted to ask him to go in and bat the way he does and take the spinners on. That is why we pushed him up the order. Hardik is obviously the best player at No. 6. We wanted to keep him there and then see between Surya and Jadeja, who



we can ask to go before."

The ploy of sending Axar at number 5, however, did not work. Axar was run out for two in a mix-up with Kohli.

Kohli (54) and Rahul (32) added 69 runs for the third wicket to take India on course of overhauling the target of 270. But quick wickets on two occasions put paid to India's hopes.

"KL and Kohli were trying to stitch a partnership. When you see some kind of help from

the pitch (to opposition bowlers), you got to understand that you cannot play shots every ball, you have to respect the conditions as well. They were doing that in the middle," Rohit said.

"Having said that one of those guys should have batted longer and things could have been very different. The wickets of Kohli and Surya in the span of two balls put us back in the game, we were very much on the course of getting the target up

until then."

Rohit also defended the team management's decision to pick three spinners in the playing XI, saying Axar's presence bolstered the batting department.

"We have spoken about creating depth in our batting. So we played with three spinners. Looking at the wicket, I thought it is definitely a three spinner pitch. It's also about match-ups and combinations the opposi-

tion is playing. I thought two left arm spinners will be ideal choice because I had not thought the Australians will make two changes.

"(Cameron) Green who bats at number 6 was not available as he was sick and I thought Maxi (Glenn Maxwell) will also play. So looking at the batting line-up they have got, six or seven right handers, we thought taking the ball way from them will be an ideal choice which is why we went with Axar."

'CONSISTENT CRICKET'

Rohit said the conditions were not "alien to us" and it's about adapting to them and being fearless as well.

"Nine games is decent enough to analyse what we did right or wrong. We played consistent cricket up until this series. From the last two games we can understand what we need to do as a team against quality opposition, there are definitely a lot of things to look at. "On this kind of pitches which turns a bit, it's about understanding and adapting to the methods of scoring runs. Eventually you have to score runs no matter how the pitches are.

"If it's swinging around, you cannot let the bowlers bowl at one particular spot. We have also to look at ways how to play better against spin if the pitches are turning. Someone will have to bat out of skin to take the team away from opposition and stitch big partnerships. That is something we will look at."



Rohit doubts any national team player will opt out of IPL to manage workload

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Indian team's growing injury list is "concerning" but captain Rohit Sharma doubts any player will opt out of the IPL games to manage workload when the high-profile T20 league begins on March 31.

From Jasprit Bumrah to Shreyas Iyer, the number of injured national team players is mounting, and Rohit said the onus is on the IPL franchise owners and players themselves to manage workload ahead of the ODI World Cup the country is hosting in October-November.

"It is concerning. We are missing the players who are actually the playing XI players," Rohit said after India lost the third ODI against Australia by 21 runs on Wednesday to concede the series 1-2.

"They (players) are all adults. So they have to look after their body and just if they feel that it's getting a little too much, they can always talk about it and have a break in one or two games. I doubt (if) that will happen but..." the captain said without mincing words.

Following the IPL which ends on May 28, the Indian players will get little over a week to get ready for the World Test Championships final to be played at the Oval in London from June 7.

Rohit said the Indian team management has given "indications" to the IPL franchise owners about workload management of the players, keeping the 50-over showpiece in mind.

"It's all up to the franchises now. The franchises own them (the players) now, so we've given some indications or some kind of borderline kind of thing to the teams.

"At the end of the day it's up to the franchise and, most importantly it's the players, they have to take care of their own body."

While India missed the services of Bumrah for the entire bilateral series against Australia, Iyer's back injury resurfaced during the fourth

and final Test in Ahmedabad and he missed the subsequent three ODIs. "Honestly, everyone is trying their best to get everyone on the park. We've been focusing a lot on management of the players, which is why we have to rest certain players at certain point of time," the captain said.

"From our side, we could do our best in terms of handling them. But, I am not a specialist to tell you why recurring injuries are happening. The medical team of ours is looking into all of this and making sure that, come the World Cup, we've got our best 15 players ready."

Iyer first felt discomfort on his lower back last December and then missed the ODI series against New Zealand at home and the opening Test against Australia.

Iyer, who captains Kolkata Knight Riders, is likely to miss some games of the IPL due to the recurring injury.

"Obviously when you play so much cricket injuries are bound to happen. So not looking too much into it... what's available to you, what's in your hand, you can control that, and we are just trying to control all of that," Rohit said.

"Players are frustrated as well. They want to play, they don't want to miss out. So it's a little sad, but at the end of the day, you cannot really do too much."

Rohit said the medical team is doing everything possible to ensure the well being of the players.

"I can see, and I can vouch for it, that the people working behind the scenes are working really hard with all these players, and freakish injury can happen at any point in time, like Shreyas (Iyer) was the best example.

"He was sitting the whole day and he just went to take a knock and the injury happened to him. And there's nothing you could do about it, the only thing we can keep in mind is managing players and giving them enough breaks. And I think from our side we're doing that."



Bairstow to miss entire IPL, Livingstone cleared: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prolific England batter Jonny Bairstow will miss the entire IPL this year as his cricket board refused to grant him No Objection Certificate (NOC) to play in the high-profile T20 league beginning on March 31, according to a report.

The 33-year-old Bairstow is recovering from a leg injury he sustained in September last year.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), however, cleared all-rounder Liam Livingstone, who is coming back after recovering from his knee and ankle injuries, to play in the IPL.

Punjab Kings had bought Livingstone and Bairstow for Rs 11.50 crores and Rs 6.75 crores respectively during the IPL auction.

"Punjab Kings have some bittersweet news as England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has cleared Liam Livingstone for participation in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) but has stopped Jonny Bairstow from taking part," a report in cricbuzz said on Thursday.

"...Given the long injury

lay-off, the ECB has decided not to issue him (Bairstow) the NOC for the season, which kicks off on March 31."

Bairstow missed England's T20 World Cup-winning campaign and Test tours of Pakistan and New Zealand after sustaining multiple fractures following a freak slip on the golf course in September 2022.

Bairstow, who underwent surgery on his broken leg and dislocated ankle in October last, is expected to be up and running in a couple of weeks' times, according to the report. The 29-year-old Livingstone too had a stop-start season in 2022 after hurting his ankle during the Hundred tournament in the UK. He has been out of action since the Rawalpindi Test last December because of injuries.

He was part of the Lancashire County Cricket Club's off-season training recently in Dubai. The report also said that Sam Curran, who was the most expensive buy at the IPL auction earlier this year, will be available for Punjab Kings, who splurged Rs 18.50 crore for the fast bowling all-rounder.

Bangladesh beat Ireland by 10 wickets, seal ODI series



AP ■ SYLHET

Fast bowler Hasan Mahmud claimed his maiden five-for as Bangladesh defeated Ireland by 10 wickets and took the one-day international series 2-0 on Thursday.

Bangladesh won the first match by 183 runs for its largest ODI victory and the sec-

ond match was washed out. This was the first time Bangladesh beat any team by 10 wickets.

Opting to bat first under overcast conditions, Ireland was bowled out for 101 in 28.1 overs.

The Bangladeshi pacers claimed all 10 wickets for the first time in its history. Hasan

had figures of 5-32, Taskin Ahmed 3-26, and Ebadot Hossain 2-29.

The hosts knocked off the target effortlessly, making 102 without loss in just 13.1 overs.

Liton Das was 50 not out off 38 balls after hitting 10 fours for his ninth fifty. Skipper Tamim Iqbal hit the winning single in a run-a-ball 41 that included five fours and two sixes.

Only two Ireland batters reached double figures: Curtis Campher made a team-best 36 and Lorcan Tucker added 28.

Hasan ran through the Ireland top order with an impressive display of pace bowling. Ireland was 22-3 in the ninth over when Taskin Ahmed got into the act.

Taskin had skipper Andrew Balbirnie caught by Najmul Hossain at first slip for 6 to open his tally.

Tucker and Campher provided some resistance until Ebadot intervened to trap Tucker.

Hasan's second spell ended Campher, who pulled a slower delivery and was caught by Taskin at deep fine leg. Hasan completed his five-for and ended the Irish innings when he got Graham Hume leg before for 3 through video review.

IPL coming but Aus ODI series loss shouldn't be forgotten: Gavaskar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian team shouldn't commit the mistake of forgetting the ODI series defeat against Australia amid the noise created by the high-profile Indian Premier League (IPL) beginning on March 31, said the legendary Sunil Gavaskar.

India lost the third and final ODI by 21 runs in Chennai on Wednesday to concede the series 1-2 to Australia, and batting legend Gavaskar said Rohit Sharma's men could be up against the same opponents in

the 50-over World Cup which the country is hosting in October-November.

"Of course, now the IPL starts (March 31). This (series defeat) shouldn't be forgotten. India sometimes makes the mistake of forgetting this, but this one shouldn't be because in the World Cup, we may face Australia again," said Gavaskar on Star Sports.

"It (defeat in 3rd ODI) was (due) the pressure created (by Australians). The boundaries had dried up and they (Indian batters) weren't even getting



per feels that he needs to change his eleven as per demands of the situation, he is free to do that till the match starts.

Solanki, the former England international, said the new rule will change dynamics of the IPL.

"We will just have to wait and see. It is going to be an interesting change to the dynamics, it might bring (forth) some tactical decisions to be made.

"But essentially the way we are looking at it at the moment is that you can name your eleven or a bigger squad of 15 after the toss and that has a different bearing on it.

"Initially we are starting to have discussions around it but it will bring an interesting dynamic to the IPL this year. It will be interesting to see how different teams adapt to the rule."

Solanki said there are no injury concerns in the Gujarat Titans squad with star batter David Miller being the last player to join the squad.

Miller will miss the opening game against Chennai Super Kings due to national commitments. "In terms of preparations, all teams are on the

same page. We are setting out to give ourselves the best opportunity of giving a good account of ourselves. Chennai will be no different, we are no different. Chennai will be in equal amounts of pressure as us in that first game."

With India hosting the ODI World Cup in October-November, workload management of the key national players will be important.

Mohammad Shami is one such player, who is coming into the IPL after playing three Tests and as many ODIs against Australia and Solanki said that the franchise will monitor the India pacer.

"He was quite outstanding for us last year. You just have to wait and see what the situation is, we have to be respectful of the fact that fast bowling is a very demanding job," Solanki said.

"He is coming off a lot of cricket, we got to make sure we do the best for Mohammad Shami so that he can, in turn, do the best for Gujarat Titans. He will be one of those players we will monitor carefully with every preparation, every resource so that he is in best possible place for every game."

Shubman can be future leader for Gujarat Titans: Solanki

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Young India opener Shubman Gill has "smart cricketing brain" and can emerge as leader of the Gujarat Titans in the future due to his conduct and work ethics, said the IPL team's director of cricket Vikram Solanki on Thursday.

Gill has become an integral part of the Indian side over the last six months or so given his all-round performances which includes a double century against New Zealand in ODIs. He also had a successful outing with the Gujarat Titans in their title-winning campaign last year.

While Pandya is set to continue as GT skipper in their second IPL season, Gill is also being seen as a leader within the core group.

"Shubman is a leader in his own right for the simple fact that he takes on a lot of responsibility. In my mind, it is not important that you play with an asterisk next to a player's name," Solanki told reporters during a virtual media session on Thursday.

"Shubman adapted the leadership role last year,

by his conduct, by the way he goes about, with his professional attitude towards the game."

The right-handed batter finished just four runs behind Gujarat Titans captain Hardik Pandya in the list of highest run-getters, smacking 432 runs in 16 matches at 132.32 with four fifties.

"Do I think that Shubman will be a leader in the future? Yes absolutely, but no decision has been made about that as yet. He has leadership qualities and is very mature who has an abundant amount of talent," Solanki said.

"He has a very smart cricketing brain and we will continue to have conversations with Shubman and invite his opinion on every decision we make."

GT will open their campaign against four-time title winners Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on March 31.

According to the new IPL playing conditions issued by BCCI, "Each captain shall nominate 11 players plus a maximum of 5 substitute fielders in writing to the IPL Match Referee after the toss."

This effectively means that after the toss, if a skip-

