

'AFSPA likely to be lifted from Assam by year end'

PTI ■ DERGAON

Retired army personnel will be appointed as Additional Superintendents of Police to impart training to the police force in Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here on Monday.

Sarma also reiterated that Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was likely to be lifted completely from the State by the end of this year as the law and order situation in the state has improved considerably.

The Chief Minister who was speaking at the first Commandant's Conference at the Lachit Barphukan Police Academy here, said, "We are aiming at withdrawing AFSPA completely from Assam by the end of 2023. We will also rope in military personnel to train our police force."

He also said, "This will facilitate replacement of central police with Assam police battalions." The AFSPA which gives



armed forces the right to arrest and search without warrants as well as use force without a magistrate's permission, has been lifted from most Assam districts except 8 districts and one sub-division.

Sarma also said that attention will be given to ensure that the personnel belonging to different battalions are not used for any purpose other than those exclusively connected to bonafide policing.

Steps will be taken to ensure that there is positive change in the mindset of the forces, it will also be ensured

that good and professional police officers are posted as Commandants, he said.

"Adequate steps will be taken to empower the Assam Police Battalions so that they can deal with law and order in the state.

"They will also be reoriented to control the mob without using lethal weapons or using them to the minimum extent possible," the Chief Minister said.

Sarma said that the Commandants' Conference will be organised every six months to bring about positive changes in the rank and file of the battalions and give a more result oriented police force to the state.

Director General of Police G P Singh, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Samir Kumar Sinha, Principal Secretary to Home and Political Niraj Verma, Special DGP Harmeet Singh and other senior police officers were present on the occasion.

Opp in Maha alleges vendetta as ED quizzes NCP leader Jayant

PTI ■ NAGPUR/MUMBAI

The questioning of NCP leader Jayant Patil by the ED on Monday evoked strong reactions with party MP Supriya Sule claiming that Opposition leaders are being targeted while Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Aaditya Thackeray alleged that the country was heading towards dictatorship.

Patil, who heads the Maharashtra unit of the Nationalist Congress Party, is being questioned by the Enforcement Directorate at its office here in a money laundering case linked to alleged financial irregularities in the now-bankrupt financial services firm IL&FS. He reached the ED's office at around 11.50 am.

Before heading for the ED's office in south Mumbai, Patil had said that one faces such suffering for being part of the opposition.

"Those who side with the truth, which is sometimes against the government, are

being pressurised with the help of central probe agencies, and this pattern can be seen across the country. I am afraid that the country is transitioning from democracy to a dictatorial regime," Aaditya told reporters at Nagpur airport.

Speaking about Patil's questioning, NCP leader and Lok Sabha member Supriya Sule said, "Of all the ED or CBI cases in the last few years, 90 to 95 per cent are against the Opposition leaders in the country. This has been widely reported by the media as well. The one who is in opposition easily gets notices from the probe agencies."

Sule, however, defended officials of the probe agencies.

"Those poor officials are not at fault. Previously (during the UPA regime), the probe agencies were autonomous, but now they are run by some invisible hand. Everyone who speaks against the current dispensation invites a notice," the NCP leader said.

Maha CM to flag off bus for MTHL trip tomorrow

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde will flag off a bus for a short journey on the newly completed Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) on May 24.

To mark the 180 meter slab deck installation, Shinde will show the flag off a bus carrying MMRDA officers and engineers to go on a symbolic short drive.

The 22 km sea-link will be thrown open for traffic in November 2023.

After the token deck installation ceremony on May 24, work will proceed to the remaining stages like installing crash barriers, asphaltting the deck, erecting view-cutters, setting up the open toll collection centres, security and surveillance systems, markers and signages, waterproofing the engineering structure, lights and reflectors, etc. over the next four-five months.

The project involves construction of a 22 km six-lane bridge with three lanes on



either side of the bridge. An approximate 16.5 km of the bridge will be in sea while 5.5

kms is on land. In other words, it will be at least 16.5 km long creek bridge with 5.5km via ducts on land on either side.

The MTHL will cut down the travel time from the Island City to Navi Mumbai by 30 minutes. The sea bridge will be 27 meters in width, in addition to edge strip and crash barrier. This bridge will have two interchanges at Shivaji Nagar in Shwari and another at village Chirle near national highway 4B.

NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL PALIKA KENDRA : NEW DELHI ELECTRIC ESTABLISHMENT!

Filling up the 17 posts of Executive Engineer (Electric) in New Delhi Municipal Council on deputation basis

New Delhi Municipal Council proposes to fill up 17 posts of Executive Engineer (Electric) on deputation basis in the pay level 12 under 7th CPC pay matrix.

2. The last date for receipt of application is 23.06.2023 (Friday).

3. Further details and application form can be downloaded from NDMC website i.e. <https://www.ndmc.gov.in/vacancy.aspx>

(Sanjay Prasad) Director (Personnel)



Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, along with his wife Sudesh Dhankhar, met his schoolteacher Ratna Nair who was overjoyed to see her pupil after so many years. Dhankhar is on a two-day visit to Kerala, and met his schoolteacher who now lives in Panniyannur Gram Panchayat in Kannur. Dhankhar was her pupil at Sainik School Chittoor boarding school.

MUNICIPAL JOB SCAM Calcutta HC upholds single Bench order of CBI probe into scam

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court on Monday upheld a single Bench order directing CBI investigation into the multi-crore municipal recruitment scam.

The municipal services recruitment scam is the latest addition in the list of cash-for-job scams during the Trinamool Congress regime.

The scam came to the fore by chance while the Enforcement Directorate officials investigating the school level recruitment scam were conducting raids in the house of one Ayan Sil, a businessman and close associate of arrested TMC youth leader Kuntal Ghosh — known for his close proximity to the highest level of the ruling party.

OMR sheets and other documents, pen-drives, hard discs etc were recovered from Sil's house. The finds led the ED to tell the court that they had recovered a "goldmine" of information not only related to the school level recruitment scam but also a new scam related to municipal services in more than a dozen municipalities of the State.

After the single Bench of the High Court ordered a CBI investigation into the municipal recruitment the Division Bench of Justice Biswajit Basu too on Monday upheld the earlier order.

The High Court order comes hours after the central agency questioned Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee for more than nine hours in relation to the school level recruitment case which recently saw the High Court terminating the services of 32,000 teachers on charges of illegal appointment.

In its order the Court observed that the "jobs were sold like commodities."

Thousands of eligible and empanelled teachers from primary to secondary to higher secondary level — as also several thousand Group C and D

candidates — had cleared their competitive examinations but failed to get appointment as vacant posts were mostly sold for lakhs of rupees to the incompetent candidates most of whom even had submitted blank OMR sheets in the recruitment exams.

The empanelled candidates had been sitting on dharna for the past more than two years. Acting on writ petitions filed by the eligible candidates the High Court had not only the Enforcement Directorate and CBI to investigate the matters.

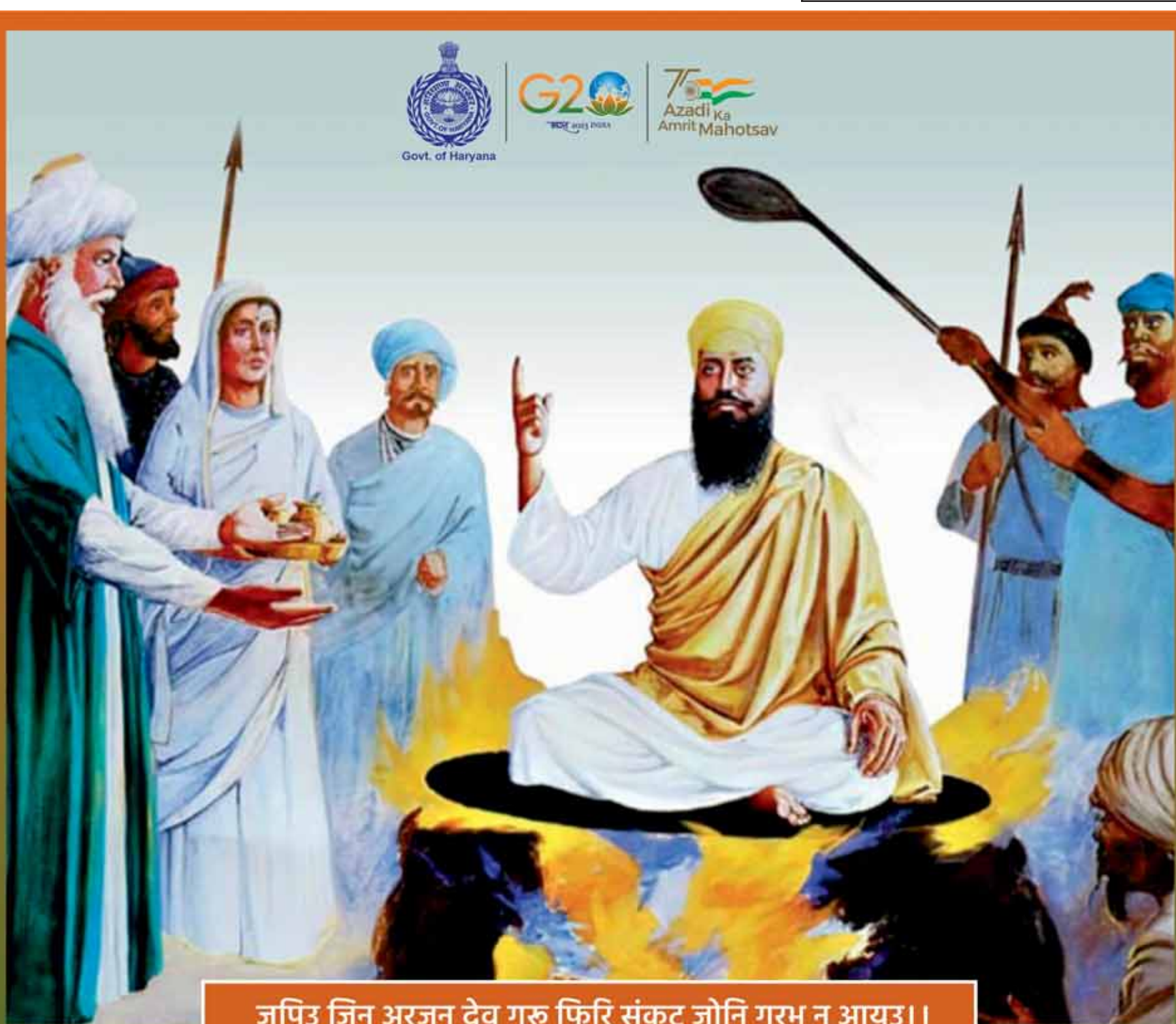
The recruitment scam that has seen a number of ministers, MLAs and top functionaries going to jail has not only become a big political issue in the State but has in a latest development threatens to take Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's family in its ambit. This, particularly after the interrogation of Abhishek Banerjee who is also her nephew.

BJP: TMC Govt spent ₹330 crore in defending Mins facing graft charges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Monday claimed that Trinamool Congress Government had spent ₹330 crore in defending its functionaries presently facing charges in various kinds of recruitment and other scams.

Adhikari a former powerful minister in the TMC Government besides being a blue-eyed-boy of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee till he joined the BJP in early 2021 on Monday claimed that "the TMC Government has spent ₹330 crore of public money to save its corrupt ministers and politicians involved in various kinds of scams."



जपित् जिन् अरजुन देव गुरु फिरि संकट जोनि गरम न आयड।।

Remembering Guru Arjan Dev Ji on his Martyrdom Day

May 23, 2023

“श्री गुरु अर्जन देव जी के शहीदी दिवस पर मैं उन्हें नमन करता हूँ। सेवा, शौर्य और त्याग से भरा उनका सम्पूर्ण जीवन, सभी के लिए प्रेरणा है।”
- नरेन्द्र मोदी



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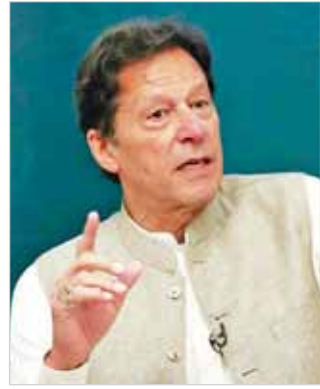
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Relying on popularity

Imran Khan believes that his popularity can be a shield, but Army deploys force, not popularity

Former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has moved the Supreme Court against the trial of civilians allegedly involved in the May 9 attacks on Army installations in military courts. The party has informed the apex court—which seems to be favourably disposed towards Khan—that terming the trial in military courts is a “clear violation” of the constitutional guarantees of due process and fair trial. The PTI's petition adds another element to the political crisis in Pakistan; the crisis is unprecedented because Khan has challenged the Army in a manner no politician in its 76 years of history ever did. He has expressed the possibility of getting arrested again when he goes to court in Islamabad on Tuesday to join the probe in the Al Qadir trust case, ARY News reported. The prospects could be worse if he and his supporters are tried in military courts. Cognisant of these prospects, he seems to have cooled down his anti-Army rhetoric. In a recent interview with an international channel, he said that he has “no problem” with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir: “I have no problem with him, but he seems to have a problem with me.” This is much different from his earlier remarks on the COAS.



Khan is the most popular leader of Pakistan, much more than any of his rivals in the Government; this is the reason that he has been demanding national elections which are due by November this year. This is not surprising, for he was already a national hero, because of his impressive achievements in cricket, when he joined politics in 1996. He had also endeared himself to the people of his country by the cancer hospital he built in memory of his mother. Starting literally from scratch, he built his PTI and made it a force to reckon with. While it is true that he became prime minister with the help of the Army only and his years in office did little to improve anything in Pakistan, it is undeniable that this didn't cost him popular support. If anything, he is more popular now than he was in 2018 when he became prime minister. Unsurprisingly, he is betting on his popularity, which he believes will help him take on the mighty Army which has ruled, directly or indirectly, the country for most part. But then, there won't be a popularity contest in Pakistan. As Husain Haqqani, Pakistan's former ambassador to the United States and currently a scholar at the Hudson Institute in Washington, told a news agency, “The military's power comes from its ability to deploy force, not popularity—Pakistan's generals like being liked but they like being in control even more.” Besides, Khan is facing many criminal cases, including of graft and terror incitement; conviction in any of them can result in his disqualification from participating in elections. Corruption in Pakistan politics is not unusual, but Imran has always claimed to be an honest and upright leader. It remains to be seen if his popularity can be as strong a shield as he thinks it is.

PICTALK



Foreign delegates pose for a photograph during a G20 meeting, in Srinagar

PTI

Words are energy; use them cautiously

Words are like hammers, one can either swing them around recklessly and break stuff or use them to build something worthwhile

In the words of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe “Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.”

Since childhood, we have all been told by our elders to never hurt the person using harsh words and instead be kind and give respect for we will be showered with the same.

The power of words is beyond expression, it defines what the person wants to express. Words form an important part of an individual's life. Different people use different words to communicate with their friends and family. They are used to conduct business and to discipline children. Politicians use words to convince others that they're the best candidate. Words form a huge part of every aspect of our lives. They carry an enormous weight that can either make the other feel good or humiliated. Words do give out energy, evoke emotions and set the tone for back-and-forth conversation. However, words form one of the reasons that one person lives a life of abundance while another lives a life of lack. Words can open



doorways that hands cannot. They can break down invisible boundaries. There is simply no value put on words, one can all speak them; they don't cost any money, as they are free to all and are simply not appreciated. When words no longer hold to their meaning, then communication is hampered and misunderstandings arise. It is the context of the usage of words that is important for understanding. It's only the words that create the world for both oneself and others. When a person changes the words, they change the outlook to a positive one. One must always look for hope and strive for more thoughtful words that inspire an individual to always want better and do better. Bruce Lee once said, never speak negatively about yourself, even as a joke. The body doesn't know the difference. Words are energy and cast spells, that's why it is called 'spelling'. Change the way you speak about yourself and you can change your life. What one is not changing, you are not choosing. Today, understanding the value of words has become

Effective instrument of state policy

It is a misconception that non-violence is synonymous with weakness. It is a bold and effective measure against misguided forces



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Hiroshima, Japan on May 20, 2023, as a symbol of friendship and goodwill between the two countries. The 42 inches tall bronze bust has been placed adjacent to the Motoyasu River, close to the iconic A-Bomb Dome that is visited by thousands of people—locals and tourists alike—every day, a location chosen as a mark of solidarity for peace and non-violence. “The location truly resonates with the principles and life of Mahatma Gandhiji, which continue to inspire the world and its leaders”, a statement from the PMO said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address also said that “The bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Hiroshima will take forward the idea of non-violence.”

In times of strife and conflict, the principles of peace, nonviolence, wellness, and mindfulness serve as guiding lights, illuminating a path towards harmony and understanding. The profound philosophies of the 6th-century saint Mahatma Buddha and 19th-century mass leader Mahatma Gandhi have had an indelible impact on humanity, transcending time and place. Their teachings have inspired countless individuals to strive for peace and embrace nonviolent means of conflict resolution.

Mahatma Buddha emphasized the importance of inner transformation as the key to achieving lasting peace in the world. Buddha's teachings revolved around the 'Four Noble Truths', which acknowledge the existence of suffering and the path to liberation from it through the 'Eightfold Path', such as right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The Buddha recognized that violence only perpetuates suffering and advocated for compassionate action as a means of resolving conflicts. Buddha's teachings encouraged individuals to cultivate empathy, understanding, and forgiveness, fostering harmony both within themselves and with others.



Mahatma Gandhi also drew inspiration from Buddha's teachings and adapted them to suit the context of his time. He combined the ideas of peace, nonviolence, wellness, and mindfulness by giving it the term 'Satyagraha', which was rooted in the principles of truth and nonviolent resistance. Gandhi's approach emphasized the need to address conflict through peaceful means, employing methods such as civil disobedience, boycotts, strikes, and fasts. He advocated for self-discipline, self-purification, and inner reflection as essential elements of nonviolent resistance. In their spiritual quest, both Mahatma Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi recognized the intrinsic worth and dignity of every human being and sought to promote universal peace and well-being. Their teachings emphasize the power of compassion, empathy, and nonviolence as transformative forces. They believed in the power of inner transformation as the foundation for external change and stressed the importance of self-reflection, self-discipline, and self-purification as prerequisites for cultivating peace and nonviolence. Buddha recognized that violence only perpetuates suffering, and Gandhi adapted this concept to advocate for nonviolent resistance as a pow-

erful tool for social and political change.

Renowned Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh expresses the connection between Buddha's teachings and Gandhi's philosophy and says that “Mahatma Gandhi applied the principles of non-violence and compassion to the social, economic, and political issues of his time, just as the Buddha taught his disciples to apply mindfulness and compassion to their daily lives. Both sought to alleviate suffering and promote harmony through peaceful means.”

The Dalai Lama, while emphasizing inner transformation said that “Gandhi and Buddha were united in their belief that peace in the world begins with inner peace. By cultivating love, compassion, and wisdom within ourselves, we become agents of positive change in society.”

Advocates of nonviolent resistance like Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela have been inspired by the Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi. King Jr. says: “Like Buddha and Gandhi, I believe that nonviolence is not passive resignation, but a powerful force for justice and freedom. Nonviolence is the embodiment of love in action and has the capacity to transform individuals, communities, and nations.”

Similarly, Nelson Mandela, the iconic anti-apartheid leader and former President of South Africa, acknowledges the profound influence of Gandhi's philosophy on his own struggle. He says, “Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence inspired me to pursue freedom and equality for all. His teachings showed us that nonviolence is not a sign of weakness but a courageous choice to seek justice without resorting to violence.”

In a world plagued by violence and conflict, the teachings of Buddha and Gandhi remind us of the power of nonviolent means for resolving conflicts. By promoting dialogue, understanding, and empathy, individuals can work towards peaceful resolutions, fostering harmony in diverse societies.

Also, the emphasis on mindfulness and self-care in Mahatma Buddha's teachings and social justice and equality, championed by Mahatma Gandhi remain relevant today as they encourage individuals to cultivate inner peace, well-being, and resilience, enabling them to navigate challenging circumstances with clarity and compassion. The question is, “When do we walk the path?”

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti)

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ADVOCATES OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE LIKE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AND NELSON MANDELA HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY THE BUDDHA AND MAHATMA GANDHI

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SUNDAY DISASTER

Sir — Several parts of the city witnessed heavy rains and hailstorms and the car that the family was travelling in got submerged in the water that gushed into the underpass. Bengaluru is facing such a disaster and this is the beginning of the rainy season. A few residents had quickly rushed to their help, throwing sarees and ropes to help them stay afloat. However, the water had almost fully submerged the vehicle by then. Emergency services personnel arrived shortly at the scene, and swimmers from the fire and emergency services department plunged into the water to rescue the individuals. This is a bad reflection on the civic amenities available in the so-called metro city. Even an hour of rain spoiled all the road traffic in total disarray and went away without any support. Within a few days of the new rule, all the loopholes are coming out. Now the blame game will start soon. Proper help and immediate medical care were not available for the family to come out of the rut and saw that their family member died in the flash flood and which paralysed the city and roads were flooded with water.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

THE WORLD OF E'S

Sir — In this world of E-mails, E-ticket, E-paper, E-recharge, E-transfer and E-governance, never forget E-shwar (God) who makes e-everything e-easy for e-everyone e-everyday. “E” is the most eminent letter of the English alphabet. Men and women don't exist without an “E” in them. House or home cannot be made without an “E” in it. Bread and butter cannot be found without an “E” in them. “E” is the beginning of “existence” and the end of “trouble”. It is not in “war” but it is twice in “peace”. It is once in “hell” but twice in “heaven”. “E” represents “emotions”. Hence, all emotional relations like father, mother, brother, sister, wife and friends have an “e” in them. “E” also represents “effort” and “energy”. Hence, to be “better” from “good”, both “e's” are added. Without “e”, we would have no love, life, wife, friends or hope and see, hear,

Karnataka Govt showers sops



Within hours after the Congress took charge of the government, the Karnataka cabinet met on Saturday and gave in-principle approval to the five “guarantees” (200 free units of power for all households under the Gruha Jyothi scheme; Rs 2,000 a month for each woman head of the family under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme; 10kg free rice per month for each individual in a BPL family under the Anna Bhagya scheme; free travel for women in government buses across Karnataka under the Uchita Prayana scheme; and a monthly unemployment allowance of Rs 3,000 for graduates and Rs 1,500 for diploma holders

— for up to two years or until they find a job, whichever is earlier — under the Yuva Nidhi programme) the party had promised the state's people before the May 10 polls. Though the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its then chief minister (CM) Basavaraj Bommai and other leaders said the Congress was making false promises and that these ideas were not practical, because implementing the guarantees would have serious financial implications for the state. But Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah said the implementation of the schemes is provisionally estimated to cost Rs 50,000 crore a year and expressed confidence the state would be able to generate the resources to cover the cost. Whatsoever, the people of Karnataka expect from the newly formed Congress government that it will fully fulfill the promises made in the manifesto, and give a clean and transparent administration to the people. By seeing the Siddaramaiah government's performance, the people of India should have second thoughts about voting for the BJP.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

smell or taste, as the eye, ear, nose and tongue are incomplete without an “e”. Hence, go with “E” but without having an “E-go”.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

THE BJP, PARTY WITH A DIFFERENCE

Sir — The biggest party in the world. Richest party in the world. Most popular party in the world. The party with the biggest majority in the world. Endowed with all these qualities, the cunning character and face of the BJP become exposed at this time. When his main objective remains whether it be a Panchayat election. Or local bodies and municipality elections. Whether it is elections to the Legislative Assembly or the Lok Sabha, at any cost, the saffron party wants to win the election at any cost. That's why the country's Defense Minister and Home Minister have to go for campaigning even in local body elections. This is the party that cannot live without

power and the power associated with it. That's why only a week ago, the apex court while restoring the rights of the Delhi government, asked the Center to look into matters related to law and order and land only. But this party is so much concerned about the service of the people of Delhi that on Friday late evening, it forcibly took transfer posting into its own hands by bringing an ordinance. Delhi minister Atishi rightly said that the central government deliberately chose the time to bring this ordinance when the Supreme Court is closed for vacation. The BJP could neither win the hearts of the people of Delhi in the assembly elections nor could it attract them in the MCD elections. Then why is the biggest party in the world, hitting herself in the foot by doing such an act?

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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RAVI VALLURI

“Are you happy Amma?” Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was to ask my mother when we went to seek his blessings at Art of Living International Centre, Bengaluru Ashram sometime in 2009. I had overcome my addiction to liquor through the breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya and the supreme grace of the Master. Today I have been sober for more than 16 years, which astonishes my friends, colleagues and family.

I had sent a mail seeking an assignment, post my retirement from the Indian Railway Traffic Service. My mind was gripped with uncertainty. But the Guru knows it all and scripts the events accordingly. Only when one surrenders unflinchingly does the grace flow. We need to expand our bowl for Him to shower blessings. He always says, “You will get what you need and not what you want.”

Back in Chennai I had undertaken the Happiness Programme conducted by the Master himself and was soon involved in seva activities. I could overcome the demonic thoughts by conducting follow-ups and organising a new programme called Har Ghar Dhyam. Through the help of the General Managers of Southern Railway and Integral Coach Factory, we were working on the courses for Railway personnel – officers and staff. Shortly, after a due selection process, I was posted as the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd and I am scheduled to upgrade my skills as a member of the faculty.



On 13th May 1956, in the bijou town of Papanasam in Tamil Nadu, a divine child was born to Visalakshi and R.S. Venkataratnam. He was named “Ravi”, which means “sun” because his birth was on a Sunday, and “Shankar” after the eighth-century Hindu saint, Adi Shankara, whose birthday happened to be on the same day. Gurudev’s first teacher was Sudhakar Chaturvedi, an Indian Vedic scholar who was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi.

Over the years the organisation has grown manifold and marks its presence in 180 countries across the globe. The bedrock of all the courses of the Art of Living is the Sudarshan Kriya. Alongside are yoga, pranayama, meditation and a host of seva projects.

The spiritual Master has focussed on sadhana, seva, Satsang, Sudarshan Kriya and meditation. These processes have metamorphosed the lives of millions of people in the world. There are innumerable accounts of His manifestations and realms have been written about them. Gurudev and the organisation have played an epochal role in troubled and violence-hit spots of the globe providing succour to people. “Happiness is an attitude. If you are used to being unhappy, even in the best of situations you will still grumble and be unhappy,” says Gurudev

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd, East west Railway Ltd and is a faculty of the Art of Living)

PM Modi is building modern India



SUMEET BHASIN

It has indeed been a remarkable journey under the leadership of PM Modi. His ideas that were put into action in Gujarat have been scaled up at the national level



Politicians mostly are known to work on their vote banks. Politics for them is the rope to climb to grab the fruit of power. Vote banks sustain power, and the vicious circle of status quo in polity and governance continue. For India to claim its rightful position on the high table in the global order, the status quo had to be broken and a new benchmark of governance for the overall wellbeing of the people had to be set.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been able to raise the bar of pro-people governance, as well as scaling up the capacity of India, to take that rightful position at the high table in the global order. His redefining Indian politics as a means of service to the people and nurse the national interests are now paying well-deserved dividends.

In some quarters, the debate is building up to measure the Indian gross domestic product in the ancient age when India traded with Rome, and the enterprising traders of southern parts of the country went on high waters of the Indian Ocean and even the Pacific Ocean, to touch bases in South-east Asia, east Asia and even North Asia. Some even claim that India accounted for 50 per cent of the global GDP before the Muslim invaders set their sights on the country.

India’s past was full of glory, and traditions commanded respect from all quarters. The people yearned for the best in life. Society chased excellence. India as a nation marched far ahead of others.

But somehow the colonial mindsets dominated the Indian psyche. The people were made to believe that they had rightly been subjugated by the foreign rulers. This surrender of Indian excellence to the foreign-bred world outlook arrested Indian growth in all walks of life. The economy was ruined. Innovation became rare. The people became dreaming of clerical jobs. The historians built on the servile mindsets of the people.

This was benefiting a particular class. One section of the political class sought to slip into the monarchical subjugation of the people by usurping democracy. Post-



PM MODI WILL BE INAUGURATING THE NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING, COMMISSIONED FOR CONSTRUCTION BY HIS GOVT, IN A FITTING TRIBUTE TO THE RECONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING OF A NEW INDIA

(Author is a political analyst)

Independence, they brought family-oriented politics to establish dynasties at the forefront. The head of the dynasty replaced the year-year monarchs and sought to rule the country with a divide-and-rule policy, which was used by the British with lethal perfection.

This kingship in politics in the garb of glorification of a few individuals got India into the status quo bind. The poor will remain poor. The middle class will remain middle class. The necessities will be scarce. The people by and large will always worry about the future. The risk-taking, which is inherently part of the Indian DNA, was coerced into perennial worry for the future.

India, thus, needs a psychological breakout from the binds of the past. The status quo had to be trashed. Social collectivism was required to be revived. The path to prosperity was to be laid for the people to climb the social and economic ladders. Politics was to be freed from dynasties. Democracy was to be handed over truly in the hands of the people who believed that politics was a means of service to the people.

PM Modi has been able to achieve most of the aforementioned challenges. In doing so, he has celebrated traditions and nudged the people to rediscover their roots. Now, sporting a tika on the forehead is normal. Construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, completion of the works of the Kashi Vishwanath corridor, Ujjain Mahakal Temple’s redevelopment along with further expansion of the facilities at the Somnath Temple have helped in the revival of the Indian cultural wealth and traditions. This is to the credit of PM Modi that all grand works of the redevelopment of some of the tem-

ples, which are integral to the Indian culture and traditions, have taken place under his watch and scrutiny.

PM Modi had put his forehead on the steps of Parliament after he was first elected as a Lok Sabha MP. For Him, parliament is also a temple. This is indeed the temple of democracy. The members must sit in this temple with utmost veneration because they channel the aspirations of millions of people. PM Modi demonstrated that the parliament as the temple of democracy must be a place only for genuine worshippers of democracy, as he built a popular narrative against dynasts.

Now, PM Modi will be inaugurating the new parliament, commissioned for construction by his government, in a fitting tribute to the reconstruction and building of a new India, which is not status quo, but takes steps to command a place on the high table in the global order.

The politics of poverty has been given a body blow by PM Modi. Under the watch of PM Modi, a record number of people were brought out of poverty, which has been endorsed by the multidimensional poverty index survey by Oxford University in collaboration with UNDP. Now, the poor of the country is covered under pension and insurance scheme under programmes such as Atal Pension Yojna, Jeevan Jyoti Yojna, etc., and the JAM trinity, with the underlying Aadhar architecture, has heralded unprecedented financial inclusion of more than one-third of the Indian population.

Financial empowerment has unleashed a digital revolution as a UPI-based payment system is a new normal for hawkers sitting on pavements even in small mofussil towns. This digital inclusion of the people,

which has been at the heart of PM Modi, has rightly been hailed by the global media and multilateral agencies as unprecedented, which has opened the potential of the most enterprising sections of society to partake in the Indian economy.

The banking system since the unveiling of the full might of the JAM trinity is reporting record profits and days of bad loans reported by them have been relegated to the pages of history. The faith of the Modi government in the sections of the population, which was condemned to the state of poverty perennially by the political dynasts, is paying rich dividends. The economy remains resilient. The United Nations has just stated that India will achieve a 6.7 per cent GDP growth in the current fiscal, which will be the highest in the world. It must be noted that China despite being a totalitarian state is struggling to meet even the five per cent GDP growth target.

It has indeed been a remarkable journey for India under the leadership of PM Modi, and ideas that were put into action in Gujarat when he was the chief minister of the state have been scaled up at the national level, which includes steps such as giving due recognition to the Anganwadi workers, who were awarded Yashoda Samman in Gujarat. The Anganwadi workers have proven to be the flag bearers of India’s strive to make healthcare universal by ensuring the speed of delivery of healthcare interventions, including vaccination during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thrust to revive the Indian toy and textile industries, with PM Modi enlisting the support of the people regularly, is now showing results, and they stand out as examples of India’s hunger to reclaim the position of glory as seen in ancient history.

Election day is the moment of truth for a political party

Every party has a particular moment that helps gain political support. The 137-year-old Congress, which has seen many ups and downs, is no exception

Last week, its landslide victory in Karnataka significantly boosted its workers and leaders. Will the Congress leaders build on the Karnataka victory, just as Late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi used her Chikmagalur moment?

Gandhi, who lost elections in 1977, won the Chikmagalur Constituency in a bye-election and returned to Parliament in 1978. Within two years, she also recaptured power. Incidentally, she used her Belchi moment to her advantage. In July 1977,

11 persons, including eight Dalits, were ruthlessly murdered by a gang in Bihar. She visited the victims in Belchi. She rode on an elephant and a tractor to reach them as the roads were cut off.



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The author is a senior journalist)

Karnataka was lucky for Indira’s daughter-in-law, Sonia Gandhi too. She won her first elections in 1999 from the Bellary constituency, a congress citadel. She became the Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in 2004 but declined to be the Prime Minister.

Winning such a prosperous and significant Karnataka is a big fillip to the demoralised Congress. But, it cannot afford to sit on the laurels of recent victory if the Party wants to revive itself. There are many challenges before the upcoming elections to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram later this year, and the Grand finale is in 2024.

The BJP’s high-voltage campaign in Karnataka, with

Prime Minister Modi as its mascot, did not click. The hardline Hindutva politics worked only within the coastal districts. There was a strong perception of corruption and a weak chief minister. There were only a few local issues the BJP could raise.

The Saffron Party must build solid second-rung leaders. Though the loss was a big jolt, the Party has already started working with double vigour. It may only experiment to split Congress MLAs with ‘Operation Kamala’ after a while. But Congress must keep its flock.

The Congress played its card well by raising the bread and butter and local issues. It paid dividends. It also gave the local leaders a free hand. The High command only assisted

in the campaign.

But then came the choice of the chief minister. Two solid aspirants were fighting for the throne. Had the Party’s top brass left the newly elected legislators to choose their chief minister, it would have been more democratic and clarified that the chief minister was not imposed from above. Instead, the legislature Party passed the usual one-line resolution leaving the choice to High Command, indicating that the Party has yet to learn any lesson.

The two aspirants, = former chief minister Siddharamaih and PCC chief D.K. Shiv Kumar = were cooling their heels in Delhi for four days. Ultimately a power-sharing formula was found with Siddharamaih as chief min-

ister and Shiv Kumar as his deputy. It was Sonia Gandhi who finally resolved the issue by mollifying Shiv Kumar.

Secondly, the real test will be how Congress handles its newly acquired clout, particularly when forming an Opposition coalition for the 2024 Election. The Party should refrain from showing its big brother attitude. Some 209 Lok Sabha seats are spread across 19 states, where the Congress and the BJP are in direct contact. Even a united non-BJP coalition can bring BJP down to 210 in a best-case scenario. So mere arithmetic alone will not work. Thirdly, Congress regained its lost vote bank of Muslims, Dalits and Backward classes in Karnataka. It should not only be preserved but also replicated in the

upcoming elections.

Fourthly, Congress must implement its poll promises before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls so the people would trust the Party. The Party has promised to supply 200 units of free power to all households,

Rs 2000 per month to the head of the family, and 10 kgs of free rice to every member of a BPL household. Congress has other headaches and must resolve the Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh Power struggles before the upcoming polls. The former Deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot wants to replace Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, but Gehlot is unwilling to go. There was a temporary truce, but the issue must be resolved.

A similar situation prevails in Chhattisgarh; there has

been a power struggle between chief minister Bhupesh Baghel and cabinet minister TS Singh Deo. Rahul Gandhi promised a rotational chief minister after two and a half years in 2018. Deo has been demanding the change. Finally, the loss of Karnataka means the BJP has no presence in the South.

The South has 129 seats, of which the BJP won only 29 in 2019. The Party needs to change its poll narrative to succeed in the South, as the Hindutva or Ram Mandir has no takers. The recent win in Himachal Pradesh and now Karnataka have shown Congress that unity in the Party and the Opposition, a robust organisation and a compelling narrative should be the new mantra.

La Liga was Cristiano and Messi, now it belongs to racists: Vinicius

AP ■ VALENCIA

Vinicius Junior said La Liga "belongs to racists" after suffering vile abuse on Sunday during Real Madrid's 1-0 defeat at Valencia.

The 22-year-old Brazilian winger faced off with home supporters and pointed directly to one after racist insults during the second half.

Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois said he heard

monkey chants near the start of the game, while Los Blancos coach Carlo Ancelotti said there was "a racist atmosphere" at Mestalla.

"It was not the first time, not the second and not the third. Racism is normal in La Liga. The competition thinks it's normal, the (Spanish) Federation also thinks it's normal and opponents encourage it," Vinicius wrote on Instagram on Sunday.

"The league that once

belonged to Ronaldinho, Ronaldo, Cristiano (Ronaldo) and (Leo) Messi, now belongs to racists.

"A beautiful nation, which welcomed me and which I love, but one which has agreed to export the image of a racist country to the world.

"I'm sorry for the Spaniards who don't agree, but today, in Brazil, Spain is known as a country of racists. Unfortunately, for everything that happens

every week, I have no way of defending it. I agree."

The Spanish top flight said they have been "proactive in the face of all racist incidents" involving Vinicius who was sent off in Sunday's game.

La Liga said they were investigating what happened at Mestalla and will take the appropriate legal action if a hate crime is detected. "La Liga has filed complaints (to relevant authorities) on nine occasions in

the last two seasons," said the top flight in a statement.

"La Liga has been fighting against this kind of behaviour for years and promoting the positive values of sport, not only on the pitch but also off it."

The Brazilian football federation (CBF) president Ednaldo Rodrigues also criticised the incident. "How long are we going to experience, in the middle of the 21st century, episodes like the one we just witnessed,

once again, in La Liga?" he wrote in a statement released by the CBF on Instagram.

"How long will humanity remain just a spectator and an accomplice in cruel acts of racism?"

Rodrigues offered the Madrid forward a message of support. "There is no joy where there is racism," he added.

"You have all our affection and that of all Brazilians, Vinicius."



Napoli beat Inter to continue Italian Serie A title party

AP ■ NAPLES

Napoli continued their Serie A title party on Sunday with a 3-1 home victory over 10-man Inter Milan that jeopardised the visitors' Champions League hopes.

Inter remained third in the table but only a point ahead of Lazio, who visit Udinese, and two clear of AC Milan.

Yet with two finals looming — against Fiorentina in the Italian Cup on Wednesday and Manchester City in the Champions League on June 10 — coach Simone Inzaghi made eight changes from the team that beat AC Milan in the second leg of their European semi-final last Tuesday.

Inter's task became even tougher when veteran centre back Roberto Gagliardini picked up a second yellow card in the 41st minute. Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa put Napoli ahead after 67 minutes, spinning and volleying a shot into the corner of the net.

Inzaghi threw on some regular starters and one of them, Denzel Dumfries, set up Romelu Lukaku for a close-range equaliser after 82 minutes.

Napoli skipper Giovanni Di Lorenzo curled a 20-metre shot into the top corner to restore the lead three minutes later.

As Inter pressed desperately, Gianluca Gaetano finished off a Napoli counter-attack with his first league goal for the club deep into added time.

Inter's European chances could be enhanced on Monday when second-placed Juventus face a second Italian Football Federation ruling on illicit transfer activity. An original 15-point deduction was later revoked by the country's highest sports court.

Fiorentina, who also have two cup finals coming up, against West Ham in the Conference League as well as the Italian Cup, drew 1-1 at Torino in the afternoon.



Valencia snatch vital win over Madrid

AP ■ VALENCIA

Valencia snatched a crucial 1-0 win over Real Madrid to boost their La Liga survival hopes on Sunday.

Youngster Diego Lopez struck for Valencia in the first half but the chaotic second period saw Vinicius square off with home fans at Mestalla. He was later sent off in added time at the end of the game for hitting Hugo Duro during a brawl.

Midway through the second half, play was delayed for several minutes after Vinicius appeared to be racially abused by a Valencia supporter.

The Brazilian forward stood in front of the fans behind the goal and pointed to one, with team-mate Eder Militao by his side.

Referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea spoke to stadium officials, who made an announcement calling for racist insults to stop before play resumed around 10 minutes later.

Valencia striker Justin



Kluivert apologised to Vinicius on behalf of his club.

"I apologise from us, all of Valencia, because this is not football. It's very bad," he told Movistar.

The delay led to 10 minutes being added on at the end, with Giorgi Mamardashvili producing a stunning save to deny Fede Valverde.

The Valencia goalkeeper then made another spectacular stop to tip Toni Kroos's free kick over the bar.

Players from both sides ended up in a brawl in stoppage

time which ended with a red card for Vinicius for lashing out at Duro with his arm.

Vinicius left the pitch making a gesture with his hands indicating Valencia were heading down to Spain's second division.

Earlier, Diego Simeone's Atletico overtook Real by a point with a 3-0 win against Osasuna.

Valencia rose to 15th, five points clear of the relegation zone, sparking celebrations at full-time, with the team almost safe.

Champions Man City feel unstoppable, says Grealish

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Jack Grealish claimed Manchester City feel "unstoppable" as the Premier League champions set their sights on an historic treble.

City celebrated their fifth title in six seasons by beating Chelsea 1-0 at a jubilant Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola's side were crowned champions on Saturday when second placed Arsenal lost 1-0 at Nottingham Forest.

After trailing Arsenal for much of the season, City blew the Gunners away with 12 successive league wins to make it three consecutive titles.

Asked if City have felt invincible during their blistering run, Grealish said: "We have. It's mad because I spoke to some of the lads not long ago and I said, 'Imagine if someone would have said to you to win the league you've got to go and win 12 games in a row.'"

"I'm not saying I didn't think we could do it but it was going to be difficult. We've got so much talent in this squad and I think at the moment we feel unstoppable. And it doesn't stop here, we've still got some massive games coming up."

City are enjoying a period of Premier League dominance not seen since Manchester United won five titles in six seasons between 1996 and 2001.

Their dynastic credentials are already well established, but emulating United's 1999 treble triumph would lift City into even more rarified air as one of



English football's greatest ever sides.

City face Manchester United in the FA Cup final at Wembley on June 3, then take on Inter Milan in the Champions League final in Istanbul seven days later.

"We can enjoy it with our fans and think about the FA Cup final and Champions League final. We want to win all three. We are going to work a lot and will do our best to get those trophies," City midfielder Bernardo Silva said.

City have never won the Champions League, losing the 2021 final against Chelsea.

Guardiola is searching for a third Champions League crown and his first since winning it with Barcelona for the second time in 2011.

In his second season with City, Grealish has grown to admire the intense Spaniard's unique managerial style.

"I can't speak high enough of him. It's a bit weird the way he just knows everything," Grealish said. "There's certain games I come into and I think, 'what's he going to come out with today', and he just comes out with different tactics every game. He's a pleasure to work with and I love him."



Edin Terzic praises Haller 'miracle' with title in sight

AP ■ DORTMUND

Borussia Dortmund manager Edin Terzic said the return of striker Sebastian Haller from cancer was the season's "biggest miracle" as his side moved to the brink of the Bundesliga title.

Haller scored twice in Dortmund's 3-0 win at Augsburg, which took them two points clear of Bayern Munich with just one game to play.

The Ivory Coast striker missed the first half of the season as he battled testicular cancer, returning in January.

Since Haller's return, Dortmund have lost just one of 18 league matches.

"That he's back with us is a pure miracle" Terzic said after the game, praising the forward's

"important" presence "in the dressing room".

Dortmund can seal their first title in a decade with a win at home against Mainz on Sunday and will also lift the trophy if they equal or better Bayern's result away at Cologne.

The manager said the 28-year-old Haller scores "important goals" but "also lets the others next to him shine".

Terzic said he hoped Haller would replicate his success next week "then he'll be the hero of the season. But we're already very happy with him anyway."

Dortmund sporting director Sebastian Kehl, who made the decision to bring Haller to the club from Dutch side Ajax, praised "Sebastian's special story. He deserves extra credit."

Never thought I could win clay title: Medvedev

AP ■ ROME

Daniil Medvedev on Sunday said that ending this long-standing clay court title jinx was almost equal to capturing the 2021 US Open.

The Russian added a first clay trophy to his 19-title collection with a 7-5, 7-5 win over Holger Rune in the Italian Open final in Rome.

It was his fifth title of the season and sixth career Masters trophy from six different venues.

"In a way, it's the number one career honour," said the 27-year-old.

"I would never (have) thought I would be able to make this. But I have to be honest — a Grand Slam is always bigger."

He added: "This one is special because I didn't think it was going happen, I still kind of don't believe - not that I won it, but I played so well this week."

Medvedev, who had been 0-3 in his three previous trips to the Italian capital, had knocked out 2017 champion Alexander Zverev and 2022 runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas on his way to Sunday's final.

"I didn't think I could win a Masters 1000 on clay in my career because usually I hated it, I hated playing on it. I didn't feel good on it and nothing was working."

The world number three, who rose to second in Monday's rankings, admitted he was now warming to the slowest surface in the sport.

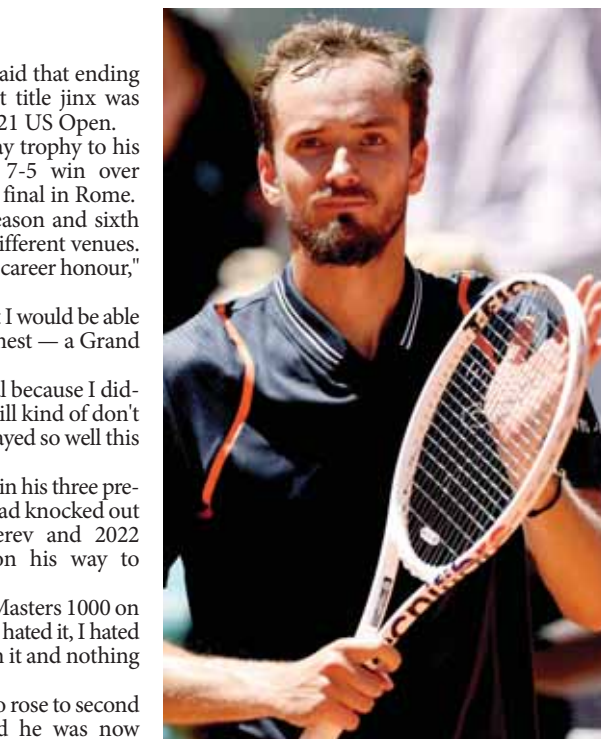
"I don't love clay, but let's call it a friendship," said Medvedev after his one-hour, 41-minute win over 20-year-old Rune.

"My tennis love is hard court, but I like clay more now."

Medvedev will be seeded second at the French Open, which starts next weekend, behind Carlos Alcaraz with two-time Roland Garros winner Novak Djokovic in third.

Rafael Nadal, the 14-time champion, has already withdrawn due to a hip injury suffered in January.

"I guess it's better to be number two — Carlos and I don't play for sure before the final, and Novak (there is) maybe a 50 per cent chance he's not in



my draw," said Medvedev.

"At the same time I haven't been further than the quarters in Roland Garros."

Medvedev was an opening-round loser in the French capital in all his first four visits before making the quarter-finals in 2021 and last 16 in 2022.

On Sunday, Medvedev was playing his second clay final after Barcelona in 2019 where he lost to Dominic Thiem.

Rune was trying to become the youngest player to win the title in Rome since then-19-year-old Nadal lifted the trophy in 2006.

He defeated Djokovic and Casper Ruud en route to the final and had been hoping to win a second Masters after triumphing at Paris last year.

Mbappe goals see PSG all but secure Ligue 1 title

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain all but secured the Ligue 1 title on Sunday as a Kylian Mbappe brace gave them a 2-1 win away to Auxerre that left the Qatar-owned club six points clear at the top of the table with two games remaining.

PSG had hoped to officially confirm a second straight championship triumph, and a ninth in the last 11 seasons, but they needed closest rivals Lens to slip up earlier in the day.

Lens won 3-1 at Lorient, and so PSG still require one point from their final two matches to secure a French record 11th title overall.

However, a goal difference advantage of 16 over Lens

means they are almost certain to win the title even if they end the season level on points with their closest rivals.

PSG, whose final two matches are away at Strasbourg and at home to Clermont, will move ahead of Saint-Etienne's previous record of 10 titles which they equalled last year.

Mbappe's goals both came in the first eight minutes in Burgundy as he moved on to 28 for the season, two ahead of Lyon's Alexandre Lacazette on top of the Ligue 1 scorers' chart.

He struck in the sixth minute, collecting a Fabian Ruiz pass and turning home defender Gauthier Hein inside out before shooting high into the net.

It was 2-0 two minutes

later, as Hugo Ekitike left a Lionel Messi pass for Mbappe to rifle in a shot from the edge of the area.

Auxerre saw Rayan Raveloson hit the bar late in the first half and Lassine Sinayoko pulled one back six minutes after the break.

"My players have their hands on the trophy. Now we need to finish on a high in the next two matches and lift the trophy at home on the last day," PSG coach Christophe Galtier told broadcaster Amazon Prime.

Galtier and PSG have come in for criticism during a challenging second half of the season, in which they have lost six times in Ligue 1 and were knocked out of the Champions League by Bayern Munich in the



last 16.

"When we look back and analyse the season, we had a very difficult period after the World Cup with injuries to key players," Galtier added.

"Our squad was severely weakened in big games and that led to us playing badly, but believe me, it is still a performance to win the league."

LENS SET FOR CL

Lens came from behind to win their game and move a step closer to securing a place in next season's Champions League group stage.

Romain Favre put Lorient ahead inside six minutes, pouncing to score after Lens goalkeeper Brice Samba was put under pressure at a throw-in.

Yet Lens came roaring back to record a fifth straight victory, equalising when a Florian Sotoca shot deflected in on 20 minutes.

Adrien Thomasson capitalised on poor defending to put Lens in front five minutes later, with captain Seko Fofana wrapping up the points late on.

Lens have won nine of their last 10 games, the exception being a 3-1 defeat away to PSG.

They have been chiefly focused on securing second place and direct qualification for next season's Champions League group stage, a level the club last appeared at two decades ago.

They are five points ahead of third-placed Marseille with two games to go. Third place

enters the Champions League in the third qualifying round.

"There is no such thing as 'almost' in the Champions League in the mind of a coach," said prudent Lens manager Franck Haise.

"You are either qualified or you're not, and for the moment we are not."

Rennes kept alive their hopes of qualifying for Europe as Amine Gouiri scored a hat-trick in their 5-0 win at already-relegated Ajaccio.

Rennes remain sixth with two games left, and with only the top five qualifying for Europe.

However, they are just a point adrift of Lille and three behind fourth-placed Monaco, who they face next.



CSK FACE GT IN QUALIFIER 1 TODAY

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The astute tactician in Mahendra Singh Dhoni will dig deep into his reserves to counter Indian cricket's new 'Crown Prince' Shubman Gill as four-time champions Chennai Super Kings will meet their match in current title holders Gujarat Titans in Qualifier-1 of the IPL here on Tuesday.

Gill, who almost single-handedly knocked out a star-studded Royal Challengers Bangalore with a century for the keeps, has overshadowed Virat Kohli and will certainly force one of India's greatest captains to go back to drawing board and make plans for him.

Gill is in the midst of a dream season and what will be Dhoni's tactical ploy to stop the dashing 'Mohali Marauder' is there to be seen. This season, Gujarat Titans haven't played at the Chepauk, which hasn't behaved in a singular manner during CSK's seven home games and that prompted head coach Stephen Fleming to raise apprehensions about what to expect.

What makes this battle even more interesting is the fact that GT is a team that seems closest to being a proto-type of what CSK had been all these years in IPL.

A solid management and an administration team that stays in the background and never interferes in cricketing matters, which is left to the trio of Ashish Nehra, Gary Kirsten and Vikram Solanki.

A captain, who swears that his understanding of leadership is cut from Dhoni's 'captaincy cloth', and head coach Nehra, who just like his former teammate doesn't believe in too many changes even if a couple of games go wrong.

They don't field players based on their auction worth — remember CSK bought Krishnappa Gowtham for nearly Rs 10 crore and he got a single game as he didn't

fit the combination.

Similarly, GT has current India T20 pacer Shivam Mavi on its roster for a whopping Rs 6 crore but the team management has preferred veteran Mohit Sharma, who is executing the slower deliveries beautifully. It's all about who fits what role.

So, it becomes more interesting when two teams with similar philosophy are pitted against each other.

The teams which don't make long-term promises that are difficult to fulfil but focus on immediate process and know the roles of players required for slots.

For Gujarat, tackling the slowness of the Chepauk track will be a challenge and how well they negotiate Deepak Chahar's power-play overs and Matheesha Pathirana's slingers at the back-end, will determine the outcome of the match.

And herein, Pandya and Nehra will find Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka's inputs handy as he has handled both Pathirana and spinner Maheesh Theekshana for the national team.

While Shanaka might be used more as an all-rounder, Titans depending on the toss can also try out left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore, who knows these conditions well.

There is a chance that Irishman Joshua Little will be back in playing XI in place of Shanaka and Sai Kishore comes in place of Yash Dayal, who is yet to get back his confidence after the five sixes assault on him by his state-mate Rinku Singh.

For CSK, a good start by the crack pair of Devon Conway and Ruturaj Gaikwad will be important. But at the Chepauk, even Ajinkya Rahane could become a factor while Shivam Dube would love to add to his 33 sixes for the season.

Conway and Gaikwad have provided brisk and substantial starts for CSK, the middle-order hasn't exactly got going. With GT



bowling led by Mohammed Shami and Rashid Khan (24 wickets each so far) things won't be easy for the home team's batters, Conway and Gaikwad included.

How the CSK opening duo handles the relentless Shami may prove vital and it would be important for the under-performing middle-order to step up in a crunch game.

The pitches at Chepauk so far have been a bit up and down, with a few being slow in nature while some have been good to bat on. CSK head coach Fleming said as much after the win over Delhi Capitals, claiming that the team is unsure about the conditions (at home).

If a sluggish pitch is rolled out for the match, the spinners in the two teams would have a huge part to play. If CSK has Ravindra Jadeja, Moeen Ali and Theekshana, the Titans boast of a line-up that includes Rashid and Noor Ahmad.

TEAMS (FROM):
Chennai Super Kings: MS Dhoni (c/wk), Akash Singh, Moeen Ali, Bhagath Varma, Deepak Chahar, Devon Conway, Tushar Deshpande, Shivam Dube, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Rajvardhan Hangargekar, Ravindra Jadeja, Sisanda Magala, Ajay Mandal, Matheesha Pathirana, Dwaine Pretorius, Ajinkya Rahane, Shaik Rasheed, Ambati Rayudu, Mitchell Santner, Subhanshu Senapati, Srimangal Singh, Nishant Sindhu, Prashant Solanki, Maheesh Theekshana.
Gujarat Titans: Hardik Pandya (c), Shubman Gill, David Miller, Abhinav Manohar, Sai Sudharsan, Wriddhiman Saha, Matthew Wade, Rashid Khan, Rahul Tewatia, Vijay Shankar, Mohammed Shami, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Pradeep Sangwan, Darshan Nalkande, Jayant Yadav, R. Sai Kishore, Noor Ahmad, Dasun Shanaka, Odean Smith, KS Bharat, Shivam Mavi, Urvil Patel, Joshua Little and Mohit Sharma.



We didn't deserve to be in semis: Faf

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Faf du Plessis made a critical assessment of his side's performance in the IPL this season, saying it "wasn't one of the best teams in the competition" and "didn't deserve to be in semifinal".

RCB's campaign in the IPL ended prematurely yet again with Shubman Gill's blazing century helping Gujarat Titans to a six-wicket victory here on Sunday.

RCB have never won an IPL trophy and it would have rankled Faf all the more as, despite leading the run-getters' chart, his efforts went in vain.

"I am so disappointed that our season ends there. If we take a hard look at ourselves, we'll be honest in saying that we weren't one of the best teams in the competition," said Faf, who took over as RCB captain this season.

"We were lucky that there were some really good performances throughout the season but, as a whole (and) as a team, we probably don't deserve to be in the semifinal, if you look at the period of 15-14 games," said the South African in a post-match video posted by RCB on Monday.

A win for RCB would have denied Mumbai Indians a spot in the playoffs but GT, thanks to Gill's heroics, chased down a competitive 198 set by the home team with five balls to spare.

"It (defeat) still hurts. I mean, we tried really hard tonight

(Sunday) and unfortunately just fell short. Looking at some real positives in the form of Maxi (Glenn Maxwell) this year, the partnerships we had between myself and Virat (Kohli)... A 50-run partnership in probably every game, the consistency was remarkable.

"(Pacer Mohammed) Siraj had a great campaign, so some really, really high positives and some areas in the game where we were consistently not great, I think," added Faf. RCB head coach Sanjay Bangar said the team's early exit despite some outstanding performances from Kohli, Faf and Siraj was difficult to comprehend.

"It is indeed very disappointing because there were some outstanding performances. We had to finish a couple of close games but couldn't. We found ourselves in a very tight corner towards the end but (it) doesn't take away anything from the guys who performed."

Kohli ended up with two centuries and six half-centuries, while Faf scored eight half-tens, though the poor performance of the middle order ultimately cost them the season. However, Bangar said that he was happy the team played some "attractive" cricket throughout the tournament.

"The performances put (up) by the team... We were really a fighting unit, a very attractive unit throughout the tournament, just that very disappointed that we could not progress in the tournament," he added.

We have a great bowling attack for that Chennai wicket: Gill

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Gujarat Titans' batting mainstay Shubman Gill feels that his recent success in international and franchise cricket is primarily due to a thorough understanding of his own game and knowing the player that he is.

The Gujarat Titans opener's 52-ball-104, studded with eight sixes knocked Virat Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore out of the IPL as the table toppers successfully chased down 198 in just 19.1 overs here on Sunday.

"I know my game... For any player it's important to know who you are," Gill, who has a good shot at the 'Orange Cap' with 680 runs under his belt (50 short of Faf du Plessis' 730) said after his team's victory.

"The new ball was holding on a bit. It was getting wet due to the dew. I thought Vijay Shankar was trying to go too hard. Once he found the momentum, he hit it a long way," he added.

He also sounded a warning to Chennai Super Kings with a scintillating century and an assertion that they have a great bowling attack to challenge MS Dhoni's team "on that wicket" at Chepauk in the playoffs.

"I think we have a great bowling attack for that (Chennai) wicket. It's going to be an exciting one, playing against Chennai in Chennai. Hopefully, we'll make it to the final for the second time," Gill said at the post-match presentation.

Speaking about his century, the player of the match said, "It's all about getting a start and converting it into a big one. Thankfully, it's working out for me in the business end. You have to keep applying your-



self, that's important.

Besides Gill, GT skipper Hardik Pandya also lauded his teammates for the "calmness" in the dugout.

"The calmness which the boys had was terrific. We wanted to keep the momentum going. We have ticked a lot of boxes."

On Gill, the captain said, "He knows when he plays those cricketing shots, it's a different Shubman Gill. He doesn't give any chance and that gives confidence to the other batter as well."

He added, "We would have taken 197 at the start, but we didn't bowl well. Special innings from Kohli, but we went too early for the death overs."

"I can't ask anything better from the boys. Last year, everything went well for us. We were expecting people to challenge us. The boys showed tremendous character."

People think my T20 game is declining, but I am at my best again, says Virat

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Virat Kohli sustained a niggle on his right knee during Royal Challengers Bangalore's last league match against Gujarat Titans, said head coach Sanjay Bangar, who asserted that there is nothing to worry about. After treating fans with a sensational hundred, Kohli took a brilliant catch to dismiss Vijay Shankar but hurt his knee in the process.

The talismanic India batter was seen limping after the catch. A physio examined him with Kohli subsequently walking off the field. He watched the last five overs of the game from the dugout.

"Yeah, he had a bit of a niggle in his knee. But I don't think there is anything serious," Bangar said at the post-match press conference.

Kohli has been in supreme form, scoring back-to-back hundreds in the last two games against Sunrisers Hyderabad and Gujarat Titans.

"Having scored two back-to-back hundreds within a gap of 4 days. He is somebody who not only wants to contribute with the bat but even when he is fielding. He did a lot of running around. 40 overs a couple of days ago and today, for 35 overs he was on the field.

"He was giving his best. So it is going to bother at some point but I don't think it's anything serious," Bangar added.

Hyderabad and Gujarat Titans, taking him atop the list of highest number of century makers in the cash-rich league.

"I'm just enjoying myself. This is how I play T20 cricket, I

Kohli sustains knee niggle but RCB coach says it's nothing serious

look to hit gaps, hit a lot of boundaries and then the big ones towards the end if the situation allows me to," said Kohli, who is closing in on 12,000 career T20 runs.

"Also if we play against a select county XI, it will comprise mostly second team or development squad players, as first team players are not released during the championship. Playing against a weak opposition doesn't help in quality practice," a BCCI source told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

While the majority of the Indian team players are going into the title clash after two months of IPL, only three WTC-bound Australians played in



Hazlewood declared 'fit and available' ahead of WTC final

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Cricket Australia on Monday declared the country's seasoned speedster Josh Hazlewood "fit and available" for the upcoming World Test Championship (WTC) final against India and the Ashes series against old rivals England.

The WTC final is scheduled to be held at the Oval in London from June 7-11, which will be followed by the five-match Ashes from June 16 to July 31.

The 32-year-old Hazlewood returned to Australia after reporting "minor side soreness" after his recent Indian Premier League outing for Royal Challengers Bangalore two weeks ago, raising concerns about his participation in the forthcoming international assignments.

However, CA said he is fit to travel to the UK.

"Josh Hazlewood returned home from the IPL last weekend after experiencing minor side soreness after the completion of his most recent IPL match," a CA spokesperson said.

"After a brief and precautionary rest period, Hazlewood returned to high intensity bowling last week and will continue to increase his bowling workloads in preparation for the WTC and Ashes series. Hazlewood is considered fit and available for the WTC and Ashes Series."

In a relief for the pacer, scans have revealed no damage as he returned to bowling ahead of the Australian squad's departure for the UK.

Hazlewood played the last of his three games for Royal Challengers Bangalore on May 9 and bowled a total of nine overs in the ongoing IPL from which his team was knocked out by Gujarat Titans following a six-wicket loss in Bengaluru on Sunday night.

Known for his accuracy and often compared to the legendary Glenn McGrath, his presence will be a huge boost for the Australian bowlers when they go up against the likes of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Cheteshwar Pujara at the Oval.

The experienced Hazlewood has battled injuries over the last two years and had a four-month layoff from bowling to recover from an Achilles injury sustained in the Sydney Test in January.

Bought for Rs 7.75 crore by RCB during the 2022 IPL auction, Hazlewood has missed games with side strains over the last two home Test summers and suffered the Achilles injury during the SCG Test against South Africa in January.

Hazlewood's return to cricket during the IPL was also delayed thanks to the injury, with the pacer only featuring in his first match halfway into the tournament.

Kohli among first batch of players to leave for WTC final

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli will be among the first batch of India players to leave for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against Australia in London, departing in the wee hours of Tuesday.

Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore teammate Mohammed Siraj will also board the same flight, a day after their team was knocked out of the IPL. Spinners R Ashwin and Axar Patel, and all-rounder Shardul Thakur, will also be on the flight as well as the team's support staff led by Rahul Dravid.

The two other players who complete the first list of seven cricketers are Kolkata Knight Riders pacer Umesh Yadav and Lucknow Super Giants' Jaydev Unadkat, who is recovering from a shoulder injury.

The final will be played at the Oval from June 7-11.

"There will be two or three departures in total. The first batch leaves at 4.30 am tomorrow," said a BCCI source.

The seven players, who will



stay back in India for the IPL playoffs, include skipper Rohit Sharma, Ravindra Jadeja, Ishan Kishan, Shubman Gill, Mohammed Shami, K S Bharat and Ajinkya Rahane.

Cheteshwar Pujara is already playing county cricket in England and will link up with the squad in London. It must be mentioned that India won't play any warm-up game as the English County Championship is on and also this being an ICC event, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is under no obligation to arrange practice