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CHAPPELL URGES ROOT TO PLAY HIS NATURAL GAME 12 SPORTS

## SC: AAP Candidate is Chandigarh Mayor



AAP councillor Kuldeep Kumar speaks to PTI after the Supreme Court declared him as winner and Mayor of Union Territory of Chandigarh, in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declared defeated AAP-Congress alliance candidate Kuldeep Kumar the Mayor of Chandigarh after overturning the result of the controversial poll where the BJP nominee had emerged an unlikely winner, in an unprecedented order to set right an attempt

by the returning officer to rig the election. It ordered prosecution of returning officer Anil Masih, a BJP leader, for "serious misdemeanour" for making an allegedly false statement before the court that he had invalidated eight ballots because they had been defaced. Exercising its plenary power under Article 142 of the Constitution to do

complete justice, the apex court said the result declared by the returning officer, a nominated Councillor, was clearly contrary to law. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said in such a case, the top court was duty bound, particularly in the context of its jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution, to ensure that the process of electoral

democracy is not allowed to be thwarted by subterfuge. The bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said the court must step in where exceptional situations develop to ensure that the basic mandate of electoral democracy is preserved. "We accordingly order and direct that the result of the election as declared by the presiding officer (Masih) stands quashed and set aside. The petitioner (Kumar) is declared to be the validly elected candidate for election as Mayor of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation," the bench ruled. The SC said in each of the eight ballot papers, which were invalidated by Masih, the votes were duly cast in favour of Kumar. The Congress hailed the Supreme Court decision on the "farfetched election", saying it saved democracy from the fangs of an "autocratic BJP" that resorted to dirty election manipulation. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the "institutional sabotage" is only the "tip of the iceberg in Modi-Shah's devious conspiracy to trample democracy."

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## Delhi braces up for fresh Farmer assault on Centre

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI/ CHANDIGARH

The borders surrounding Delhi are poised for renewed tensions from Wednesday as protesting farmers have rejected the Government's proposal for a five-year contract on the purchase of maize, cotton, and three types of pulses at the existing minimum support prices. The possibility of chaos akin to the earlier disruptions on key entry points to Delhi looms large, with farmer groups from Noida and Greater Noida announcing plans to march to the Capital on Friday, demanding developed plots and increased compensation for their acquired land. After rejecting the five-point out-of-the-box formula for the minimum support prices, farmers' leader Sarwan Singh Pandher on Tuesday urged the Centre to convene a one-day Parliament session and bring legislation on MSP guarantee. He announced that they would be heading to Delhi on Wednesday. His statement came a day after the farmer leaders participating in the "Delhi Chalo" agitation rejected the Centre's proposal for allowing the assembly of farmers in such large numbers. In a related development,



Farmers sit as they listen to an address by a farmer leader during their protest at the Punjab-Haryana Shamshu Border in Patiala district on Tuesday

accounts and links related to the farmers' protests on Monday to maintain "public order," which include 35 Facebook links, 35 Facebook accounts, 14 Instagram accounts, 42 Twitter accounts, 49 Twitter links, 1 Snapchat account, and 1 Reddit account. While orders to Facebook and Twitter (now X) are commonplace, this is the first blocking order issued to Snap. The protesting farmers on Tuesday received support from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who claimed that "lies" are being spread that the MSP guarantee is not feasible under the government's budget. In a post in Hindi on X, Rahul claimed that ever since the Congress resolved to provide legal guarantee for MSP, "Modi's propaganda machinery and media friendly to him have spread a barrage of lies on MSP. Lie — It is not feasible to provide legal guarantee for MSP in the budget of the government of India." According to CRISIL, giving MSP to farmers in 2022-23 would have resulted in an additional burden of Rs 21,000 crore on the government, which is only 0.4 per cent of the total budget, Rahul said in his post.

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## Maharashtra reaches out to Maratha Community

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid a serious doubts whether the contentious legislation would pass the scrutiny of the Supreme Court, both the Houses of the Maharashtra Legislature on Tuesday passed a Bill granting 10 per cent reservations in education and government jobs to the Maratha community in the State. The Maharashtra Assembly and Legislative Council unanimously passed the Maharashtra State Socially and Educationally Backward Bill, 2024. Dubbing the Bill as a "farce" being enacted by the Shinde Sena-BJP-NCP (Ajit Pawar) Government during the election, leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Vijay Wadettiwar said that the Bill would not stand the scrutiny of the Supreme Court. The Marathas account for nearly 30 per cent of the total 11 crore population of Maharashtra. Currently, the Maharashtra has 52 per cent reservations (Scheduled Castes 13 per cent, Scheduled Tribes 7 per cent, Other Backward Classes 19 per cent, Special Backward Classes 2 per cent, Vimukta Jati -3 per cent, Nomadic Tribes (B) 2.5 per cent, Nomadic Tribes (C) 3.5 per cent and Nomadic Tribes (D) 2 per cent). The 10 per cent reservation granted to the Maratha community will take the total reservations to 62 per cent. It may be recalled that on November 29, 2018, both the Houses of the Maharashtra Legislature had passed a Bill granting reservations 16 per cent in education and government jobs to the Maratha community in the State. Later on May 5, 2021, the SC had set aside the Act on various grounds, which included breaching of the 50 per cent cap on the reservations. Continued on Page 2

## Modi sends message to Mamata

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/ KOLKATA

### Sandeshkhali on the radar



"land-grabbing and sexual assault" under coercion. A senior BJP leader confirmed that the PM's visit is imminent, likely to occur in early March before the announcement of general elections, as the model code of conduct will be enforced. "Modi will visit West Bengal soon as several projects are in the pipeline. Of paramount importance is his concern about the incident in Sandeshkhali, and the party is planning the first-ever all-women's rally, as the NDA Government has been

particularly focused on women's welfare and related schemes. The final tour program will be announced shortly," said the party leader. West Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar said the PM is likely to visit Barasat. Last week, Majumdar had to be hospitalised with injuries after BJP workers clashed with police personnel when they were prevented from going to Sandeshkhali. The State BJP president, along with other party leaders and a Central fact-finding team, has been stopped by police from visiting the area. Preparations for Modi's visit to Sandeshkhali are currently in the early stage, as the exact date and time of the visit are yet to be finalised. Continued on Page 2

## Article 370 history, J&K integration assured: PM

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the foundation stone laying and inauguration ceremony of multiple developmental projects, in Jammu on Tuesday

Kick-starting BJP's Lok Sabha campaign from the land of Dogras, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged the people "to help the BJP win 370 seats and the NDA 400 seats in elections". Addressing a jam-packed gathering here at Maulana Azad sports stadium in Jammu after inaugurating developmental projects worth Rs 32,000 crore, Modi said that Article 370, which was scrapped in 2019, was the biggest "roadblock" in the development of Jammu & Kashmir. Expressing his vision for a flourishing (Viksit) Jammu & Kashmir, Modi vowed to construct infrastructure to the level of international destinations like Switzerland. "We have pledged a developed J&K and I have full faith that we will make Jammu & Kashmir more developed and fulfill all your dreams within the next few years... We will create such infrastructure in Kashmir that people will forget going to Switzerland," he said amid thundering applause. Modi highlighted the surge in investments from Gulf countries following a G20 event held in the region last

year, which brought global attention to its scenic beauty. He informed that Jammu & Kashmir recorded more than 2 crore visitors last year while the number of pilgrims visiting Amarnath and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi has reached a record in the last decade. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that the number of tourists is only going to increase considering the fast-paced development of infrastructure. Before addressing the gathering, Modi recited a famous Dogri couplet of Padma Sachdev "Mitthdi-e-Dogri Di Boli Te Khand Mithe log dogre". A large number of people from Rajouri and Poonch attended the public rally in response to the passage of the bill which granted Scheduled Tribe status to the Pahari ethnic group. Senior Pahari leaders Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Syed Mushtaq Bakhari and Shehnaz Ganai attended the public rally. In his over half an hour-long speech, Modi also targeted the dynastic rulers. He said, "The dynastic rulers were only concerned about their interests. They had no concern for the future of the youth and their families as they were only concerned about their own families. The government whose priority is the welfare of just one family cannot think of the welfare of the common people," Modi said in an apparent reference to the Congress, the National Conference, and the PDP who ruled the erstwhile State in the past seven decades. Continued on Page 2

## New Rajya Sabha members elected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Marking her first stint in the Rajya Sabha, senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was elected unopposed to the Upper House of Parliament from Rajasthan on Tuesday. BJP national president JP Nadda, Union Ministers Ashwini Vaishnav, L Murugan and other candidates from different parties were declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. In Gujarat, all four candidates of the BJP were elected to the Rajya Sabha



uncontested. BJP national president JP Nadda, diamond baron Govindbhai Dholakia, Mayank Nayak, and Dr Jaswantsinh Parmar have been declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat. As no other candidates had filed their nominations for the Rajya Sabha elections from Gujarat on four vacant seats, the three leaders were elected to Rajya Sabha unopposed. Debashish Samantaray, Subhashish Khuntia, and Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, all the three candidates in Odisha were elected unopposed. Continued on Page 2

## Congress and SP yet to find meeting ground

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Congress-led Opposition alliance, INDIA Bloc, formed to challenge the BJP juggernaut in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, has hit a deadlock following the standoff between Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and the Congress. The rift emerged after Yadav declined to join Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, demanding an immediate seat adjustment agreement from the Congress. Initially, the Congress sought 15 seats in Uttar Pradesh, but

with the RLD's exit, the demand has been revised to 20 seats, while the Samajwadi Party is only willing to concede 17. Amid this deadlock, both parties remain adamant, exacerbating the stalemate. While RLD, led by Jayant Chaudhary, has already exited the INDIA Bloc, Yadav's insistence on the seat-sharing agreement before participating in the Yatra has complicated the matter. Despite earlier indications of joining the Yatra in Amethi or Rae Bareilly, Yadav remained absent in both districts, signaling his discontent with the ongoing negotiations.

The conflicting statements from both the Congress and the Samajwadi Party have added to the uncertainty surrounding the alliance. While the Congress portrays the partnership as nearly finalised, sources within the Samajwadi Party express skepticism about its feasibility. Congress general secretary KC Venugopal remains optimistic about the seat-sharing talks, hinting at a positive outcome soon. However, insiders in the Samajwadi Party camp suggest that the alliance talks in Uttar Pradesh are on the verge of collapse, citing



Yadav's reluctance to participate in the Yatra without a finalised agreement. Recent developments, including Bahujan Samaj

Party chief Mayawati's decision to reject the Congress offer and contest independently, have further exacerbated the discord within the Opposition ranks.

Key battlegrounds like Bijnor, Amroha, and Sambhal have become focal points of contention in the seat allocation negotiations. With neither party willing to compromise, the impasse persists, exacerbated by the departure of the RLD from the alliance. Reflecting on past alliances, the failed 'UP ke Ladke' poll alliance in the 2017 Assembly polls and the unsuccessful SP-BSP-RLD coalition in the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections serve as cautionary tales. Despite concerted efforts, the transfer of votes between allied parties failed to materialise, resulting in

electoral setbacks. In light of these experiences, the Samajwadi Party perceives the Congress as a hindrance rather than an asset in countering the BJP's dominance in Uttar Pradesh. However, the complexities of UP's electoral landscape underscore the challenges of going solo. With 80 Lok Sabha seats at stake, the SP faces logistical and strategic constraints in contesting all seats independently against the BJP. As the deadlock persists, the fate of the INDIA Bloc hangs in the balance, leaving the Opposition in disarray ahead of the crucial elections.

# Mamata writes to PM on Aadhaar deactivation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi drawing his attention to alleged reports that the Aadhaar cards of a number of people in Bengal had been deactivated.

Referring to how the people were getting letters from the Centre that their Aadhaar cards were being deactivated, Banerjee wanted to know as to why such incidents were taking place.

Saying that she had received a number of representations from the citizens about their Aadhaar cards being cancelled causing "chaos and hue and cry among the residents," Banerjee said, "I would like to know from you the causes for such a move. Is it just for the sake of depriving the eligible beneficiaries or to create a panic situation among the people at large just before the Lok Sabha elections."

The Chief Minister had earlier claimed that the BJP-led Centre was 'deactivating'



Aadhaar cards of people of Bengal to deprive them from getting the benefits of various State Government schemes like Laxmir Bhandar, Swathya Saathi etc. She earlier said that though the Aadhaar cards were being deactivated her Government would create new cards for the victims so that they were not deprived of the government schemes. The BJP however hit back saying such allegations were wild and no such initiative had been taken from the Centre. "Everyone's Aadhaar is safe and if there is some glitches then that will be taken care of by

tonight... I am speaking to the right authorities," Bengal BJP president Sukanto Majumdar said. The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) too clarified that no Aadhaar card was being deactivated. "In the course of activities undertaken to keep the Aadhaar database updated, intimations are issued from time to time to Aadhaar number holders. In this connection, it is clarified that no Aadhaar number has been cancelled," it said. Earlier people from Burdwan and Nadia districts complained that they were receiving letters that their Aadhaar cards were being deactivated.

# AAP hails SC order on Chandigarh Mayoral polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Terming it a big victory for democracy, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday hailed the Supreme Court order on Chandigarh mayor elections, which declared the party's candidate Kuldeep Kumar as the winner and demanded that BJP leaders apologise to the country for its "dishonesty" during the elections.

Terming the decision historic, AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at a press conference said that this was big victory for the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). "The message of this poll is that if INDIA bloc parties remain united and work strategically, they can defeat the BJP," he said. "We thank the Supreme Court...dictatorship is going on in the country...democracy is being trampled upon, all institutions are being trampled upon. In such times, this ruling by the SC is very important for democracy and to save democracy. It's a very important decision," said Kejriwal. Hitting out at the BJP, Kejriwal said if it can "steal" eight votes out of 36 in the Chandigarh mayoral polls, what will it do in



the upcoming elections in which 90 crore votes will be polled. "Thank you SC for saving democracy in these difficult times," he said in a post on X earlier Tuesday. "Those who say BJP can't be defeated...BJP can be defeated with unity, good planning and strategy and diligence. This election result (Chandigarh mayor polls) has proved that. It's a victory for the people of Chandigarh. It's a victory for the whole country. Entire nation saw how the BJP stole this election," he added further. In a separate press conference, AAP spokesperson and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said the Supreme Court's order has exposed the BJP and shown it the mirror. And it's leaders should apologise to the country if they have any shame left.

"It is a matter of grave concern that if the BJP and its central government can do such open stealing and dishonesty in such a small poll, what would they do in other elections where there are no microphones and CCTV cameras," Bharadwaj said. The BJP won the Chandigarh mayoral polls on January 30 defeating the comfortably placed AAP-Congress alliance candidate after the returning officer declared as invalid eight votes of the coalition partners, drawing accusations of tampering with ballots. Manoj Kumar of the BJP defeated Kuldeep Kumar after polling 16 votes against his rival's 12 to bag the mayor's post. Sonkar, however, resigned subsequently, while three AAP councillors defected to the BJP.

# Modi to open 3 day Raisina Dialogue today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Wednesday inaugurate the three-day Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-strategy.

It is being organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with Observer Research Foundation (ORF).

The ninth edition of the Dialogue will be held till February 23.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Dialogue on February 21. Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (Greece), Kyriakos Mitsotakis, will join the inaugural session as the Chief Guest, and deliver the keynote address," the MEA said. The Raisina Dialogue will witness participation of representatives from over 100 countries including ministers, former heads of State and heads of government, military commanders, captains of the industry, technology leaders, academia and scholars on strategic



affairs. The theme of the 2024 edition is "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create". Over the course of three days, decision makers and thought leaders of the world will engage each other across conversations in various formats, the MEA said in a statement. The six thematic pillars of the conference are Tech Frontiers: Regulations and Realities; Peace with the Planet: Invest & Innovate; War and Peace: Armouries and Asymmetries; Decolonising Multilateralism: Institutions and Inclusion; The Post 2030 Agenda: People and Progress; and Defending Democracy: Society and Sovereignty.

# Global researchers develop tool to assess kidney transplant patients ability to engage in activities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A global team of researchers from Australia, the USA, UK, France, Korea, and the George Institute India has collaborated to develop SONG-LP, a tool to assess life participation of individuals who have undergone kidney transplants. Kidney failure often severely limits patients' ability to engage in daily activities, making kidney transplantation a crucial treatment option, as it offers freedom from many of these restrictions.

This tool, developed through a consensus workshop involving 249 adult recipients from 20 countries, measures engagement in leisure, family, work, and social activities. This questionnaire serves as a core patient-reported outcome



measure, specifically designed to evaluate the ability of kidney transplant recipients to engage in various aspects of life, including leisure, family, work, and social activities. The questionnaire itself is user-friendly, featuring a scale from 0 (never) to 4 (always) for participants to rate their engagement in each aspect of life. The

total score is then calculated as the average of all four answers, providing a comprehensive assessment of the individual's life participation post-transplantation. Speaking about the SONG-LP tool, Prof. Vivekanand Jha, Executive Director, The George Institute for Global Health, India, said, "The SONG-LP

tool was designed to be to be user-friendly for kidney transplant recipients, and its high completion rate shows that it's easy for patients to use. It has proven to be reliable and consistent over time, making it a valid measure for repeated assessments. The process of developing this tool was quite rewarding, and it was educational to hear patients' and caregivers' voices and understand their priorities. We hope that clinicians and researchers around the world including in India will use it to improve the quality of care so that it becomes more patient-centred and informs patient-relevant research." The team aims to conduct future research to include a more diverse group of kidney transplant recipients, ranging from those facing health issues

to those in good health. This will help determine whether the observed high levels of life participation are consistent across the entire kidney transplant recipient community or if they apply more to specific. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a growing global public health problem in terms of mortality, disability, and financial costs. Globally, around 13 per cent of the general population have some form of CKD. A significant proportion of patients with CKD progress to end stage renal disease. Currently, renal dialysis and kidney transplantation are the only two types of treatment available for patients with end stage renal disease. Globally, the number of dialysis patients is projected to increase to 4.9 million by 2030.

# Maharashtra reaches out to Maratha...

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Subsequently, a five-judge bench of the Supreme court had in April 2023 refused to re-examine the apex court's order of May 2021 by which it had declared a Maharashtra law to grant reservation to Marathas "unconstitutional". In a related development, Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil, whose fast-unto-death agitation had prompted the state government to introduce the Maratha reservation Bill in the State Legislature, refused to call off his 11-day-old agitation, by saying that the passed legislation amounted to the "betrayal to the Maratha community", since the quota should have been provided under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category and not separate. Jarange-Patil has called a meeting of the representatives

of Maratha community at noon on Wednesday to decide on his future course of action. Earlier, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that his government had all been committed to giving reservations to the Maratha community. "All of us have similar views on the Maratha reservation. With the co-operation of you all, we could do it. I kept my promise which I made to the Maratha community. I thank all my colleagues including my both deputy chief ministers and other ministers. Today is a day of fulfilment of our promises." "We want to give reservation to the Maratha community without touching the existing quota of the OBCs in the state. The Marathas have been struggling for the last over 40 years to get reservation benefits," Shinde

# Modi sends message...

From Page 1

The visit will also involve the inauguration and commissioning of numerous projects by the PM. Sheikh has been missing since January 5 when a mob attacked Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers during a raid at his residence in connection with an alleged ration scam. TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has blamed the BJP for orchestrating an incident in the area alongside the ED and the media. "An incident has occurred (in Sandeshkhali). It was orchestrated. First, they (BJP) sent the ED, and then the BJP entered Sandeshkhali along with some media, which started creating a commotion," Mamata said.

# Jaishankar: Buying oil from Russia stabilises global energy market

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has defended procuring oil from Russia and said following the Ukraine conflict India's energy suppliers in the Middle-East gave priority to provide petroleum products to Europe that paid higher prices. New Delhi did not have any option but to procure Russian crude oil which in turn stabilised the global energy market, he asserted.

Jaishankar also said India has had a "stable" and "very friendly" relationship with Russia, and that Moscow never hurt New Delhi's interests. Making these points in an interview to German economic daily Handelsblatt, Jaishankar also suggested that India was open to play the role of a mediator to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict if approached, but at the same time, said New Delhi does not believe that it should initiate anything in this direction on its own.

He asserted that just as India does not expect Europe to have a view of China that is identical to New Delhi's, Europe should understand that India cannot have a view of Russia that is identical to the European one.

The external affairs minister said India has had a "stable" and "very friendly" relationship with Russia, and that Moscow never hurt New Delhi's interests. "We, on the other hand, had a politically and militarily much more difficult relationship with China, for example," he said. Jaishankar strongly justified India's procurement of Russian crude oil. "When the fighting started in Ukraine, Europe shifted a large



part of its energy procurement to the Middle East -- until then the main supplier for India and other countries," he said. "What should we have done? In many cases, our Middle-East suppliers gave priority to Europe because Europe paid higher prices. Either we would have had no energy because everything would have gone to them. Or we would have ended up paying a lot more because you were paying more," he said. In a certain way, we stabilised the energy market that way, he added. The external affairs minister's response came when asked about criticism in Europe against India that its procurement of Russian crude oil is detrimental to the effectiveness of the Western sanctions imposed on Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine. He argued that if no one had bought the crude oil from Russia and everyone had procured it from the other countries, prices on the energy market would have shot up even further. "Global inflation would have been much higher -- and that would have been a huge political issue in lower-income countries," he said. "If Europe had wanted to maximize the damage at the time, it would have had to stop all economic relations with Russia completely. But it didn't," he said.

# SC: AAP Candidate is Chandigarh...

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Slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi following the verdict, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "Masih (the returning officer for the poll) is just a 'pawn' in the BJP's conspiracy to murder democracy, behind which is the 'face' of Modi." The Supreme Court has saved democracy in these "difficult times", Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said. Terming the decision historic, Kejriwal said it was a big victory for the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). "The message of this poll is that if INDIA Bloc parties remain united and work strategically, they can defeat the BJP," he asserted. The BJP had won the Chandigarh mayoral polls on January 30 defeating the comfortably placed AAP-Congress alliance candidate after the returning officer declared as invalid eight votes of the coalition partners, drawing accusations of tampering with ballots. Manoj Sonkar of the

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) defeated Kuldeep Kumar after polling 16 votes against his rival's 12 to bag the mayor's post. Sonkar, however, resigned subsequently, while three AAP Councillors defected to the BJP. In its verdict, the apex court noted that as per the result declared on January 30, Kumar had got 12 votes and his tally of votes now goes up to 20 after adding the eight which were invalidated. The bench said Masih had evidently put his own mark on these eight ballot papers for the purpose of creating a ground for treating them as invalidly cast. "That apart, it is evident that the presiding officer (Masih) is guilty of serious misdemeanour in doing what he did in his role and capacity as presiding officer," it said. The bench said Masih had made a deliberate effort to deface eight ballots which were cast in favour of Kumar so as to secure a result where Sonkar would be declared elected. "During the course of these proceedings, for the above reasons, we have come to the conclusion that the result which was declared by the presiding officer is clearly contrary to law and will have to be set aside. We order accordingly," it said.

# New Rajya Sabha...

From Page 1

Uttarakhand BJP chief Mahendra Bhatt was elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha. His unopposed election to the Upper House seat was a foregone conclusion as no other candidate entered the fray. All six candidates from Maharashtra in the fray for Rajya Sabha elections, including Congress turncoat Ashok Chavan, were declared elected unopposed. Among the six, the BJP had fielded three nominees, including Chavan, and the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and NCP one each. The Opposition Congress had fielded one nominee. The BJP nominees declared elected unopposed include Chavan, former MLA Medha Kulkarni, and RSS worker Ajit Gopchade. The nominees of Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party are ex-Congress MP Milind Deora and Praful Patel, respectively. The Congress had nominated Dalit leader Chandrakant Handore, the lone candidate from the Opposition. All six candidates for Rajya Sabha

polls in Bihar, three of them from BJP-led NDA and as many belonging to the opposition INDIA bloc, were declared elected unopposed to the Upper House of Parliament. The Vidhan Sabha secretariat handed over certificates to JD(U)'s Sanjay Kumar Jha, besides ally BJP's Dharmshila Gupta and Bhim Singh. Certificates were also handed over to RJD's Manoj Kumar Jha and Sanjay Yadav, in addition to Akhilesh Prasad Singh of the Congress. While Manoj Kumar Jha and Akhilesh Prasad Singh, who heads the state unit of Congress, will enjoy second consecutive terms, the remaining four shall be making their parliamentary debut. All five candidates in the fray for Rajya Sabha polls from Madhya Pradesh, including Union minister L Murugan and three others from BJP, were unopposed elected. All five candidates, including four from the BJP and one from the Congress, were declared elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha by the Returning Officer on Tuesday.

# Article 370 history...

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"We have seen the days when only disappointing news used to come from J&K. Bombs, guns, kidnapping, and separatism had become its misfortune. Today, we are seeing a new J&K with balanced and holistic development," Modi said. Despite the rain, thousands of locals attended the rally. It was Modi's second visit to the Jammu region after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. Earlier he had addressed a public rally in the Village Palli of Samba district in April 2022. The Prime Minister said that the Constitutional promise of social justice finally reached refugee families, Valmiki Community and Safai Karamcharis. Valmiki Community attained SC status in what the Prime Minister termed as fulfillment of years-old demand. Paddari, Pahari, Gadda Brahmans and Kolis have been included in the Scheduled Tribe category. Pointing out the reservation for ST in the Legislative Assembly and OBC reservation in Panchayats, and urban local bodies, the Prime Minister said, "The

Mantra of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas is the foundation of the development of Jammu & Kashmir." Taking on the Congress, Modi said this party only believed in lip service to the armed forces and it was his government that fulfilled promises like 'One Rank One Pension', benefiting soldiers. Earlier, the PM engaged with the newly recruited government employees and beneficiaries of various schemes during which he underscored the government's commitment to a developed and inclusive future for Jammu and Kashmir. During such an interaction with a woman from a remote area of Jammu region, the PM sought the support of the country's women and in making one crore women in India "lakhpati didis". Referring to the projects which he either inaugurated or laid the foundation stone for, Modi said it was a remarkable day for Jammu and Kashmir. "The projects in Jammu and Kashmir will propel holistic development of the region," he said.

# Delhi braces up for...

From Page 1

In a country where bank loans worth Rs 14 lakh crore have been waived and corporate tax exemption of Rs 1.8 lakh crore given, why is even a little expenditure on farmers irking them, he asked. With the legal guarantee for MSP, investment in agriculture will increase, demand will increase in rural India, and farmers will also gain confidence in growing

different types of crops, which is a guarantee of the country's prosperity, Gandhi argued. "Those who are spreading confusion on MSP are insulting Dr Swaminathan and his dreams," the former Congress chief said. Talking to reporters at the Shambhu border point between Punjab and Haryana on Tuesday, Pandher, who represents the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, said the farmers have three big demands -- a legal guarantee on the MSP for all crops, the implementation of the "C2 plus 50 per cent" formula as recommended by the Swaminathan Commission, and loan waiver. Replying to a

question, Pandher said at a meeting with the Union ministers, the farmers proposed that a law on the MSP be enacted by convening a special session of Parliament. On the issue of loan waiver, he said according to government reports, farmers have a total debt to the tune of Rs 18.5 lakh crore. He requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make an announcement that the farm loans would be waived, while a mechanism for the same could be worked out later. "The BJP claims that the present prime minister is a strong prime minister. If he makes an announcement on

waiving the debt of 80 crore farmers and farm laborers, it will stamp the BJP's claim that he really is a strong prime minister," Pandher said. He asked the Union ministers to give their response to the various demands of the farmers. Replying to a question on the "Delhi Chalo" march, the farmer leader said "our announcement (of going to Delhi on Wednesday) stands". To another question, he said no demand of the farmers has been accepted by the Centre. He said at the meeting with Union ministers Arjun Munda, Piyush Goyal, and Nityanand Rai, the farmers proposed that a law on the

MSP be enacted by convening a special session of Parliament. On the issue of internet suspension in certain areas of Punjab, Pandher said the state government should make its stand clear on this. Ashok Bulara, another farmer leader, said the government should frame a law on the MSP, waive farm loans, and give rates in accordance with the "C2 plus 50 per cent" formula recommended by the Swaminathan Commission. "Either accept our demands or we should be allowed to move towards Delhi for a peaceful protest," he said. On Monday evening, SKM (Non-Political) leader Jagit

Singh Dallewal had said, "After holding discussions on two of our forums, it has been decided that the Centre's proposal is not in the interest of farmers and we reject it." Asked if their call for a march to Delhi still stands, Pandher had said, "We will move to Delhi peacefully at 11 am on February 21." The protesting farmers have been staying put at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana, after their "Delhi Chalo" march to press the BJP-led Centre for various demands, including a legal guarantee on the MSP for crops, was stopped by security forces.

# St Stephens suspends unruly students on campus, revokes it later

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After receiving criticism for suspending over 100 students and barring them from appearing for examination for not attending the morning assembly, the Stephens College on Tuesday withdrew the decision clarifying that the email sent to students was "incorrectly worded" and "miscommunicated".

In an email addressed to students and their parents, Stephens College principal John Varghese clarified that there will be no suspension with regard to attendance for the morning assembly. "On Saturday, 17th February 2024 an email was sent from my office. It was a miscommunication, incorrectly worded and my sincere apolo-

gies for that. I was also not copied on that email, a practice which is normally followed when I instruct my office to communicate, in written mode, on my behalf. Let me therefore set right the matter through this email," the email by Varghese read.

The principal also stated that the morning assembly held in the college is an old tradition and not organised as a religious exercise while pointing that small portions from several religious and philosophical texts are read out during the assembly.

Every college has its unique set of practices and traditions, and St Stephens College is no different. The morning assembly in College is an old tradition of the College. It is not a religious

event even though small portions from several religious and philosophical texts are read out," he wrote in the email.

He added that students, especially those studying in first year, are expected to attend the morning assembly to "understand the history, traditions and practices" of the college. Varghese also said the students were addressed to parents of students to keep them informed about the performance of their wards.

"Parents are important stakeholders in the broad-based, wholesome education that College provides, and it is in this spirit that parents were addressed in the incorrectly worded email. Inadvertent and serious errors crept into that email. My apologies for that," he wrote, while adding that the col-



lege will continue to engage with parents of students for their welfare.

Varghese further asked parents who were not able to meet him to fix an appointment with his office to discuss the matter with them.

"Students are encouraged to attend the morning assembly and parents will continue to be kept informed of the performance of their wards," he said. Earlier in the day, teachers and students raised concern over suspension of first year students

and an email barring them from attending second semester examination for not attending morning assembly at the college. The students said their parents were asked to meet the principal over the issue failing which the students were barred from sitting for the exam.

The students had said setting up an appointment was not feasible for many "since their parents do not live in Delhi-NCR and, hence, it wasn't possible for them to travel all the way to Delhi at short notice due to prior commitments, scheduling issues, and financial issues".

"Regrettably, due to non-compliance with the request, I inform you that the students will not be allowed to sit for the upcoming examination as consequences of the suspension,"

the email sent to the students' parents and guardians read. The students claimed that their attempts to fix appointments without their guardians were also rejected. The move drew flak from all quarters including teachers from the college who said it was against university rules to "force" students to take part in a religious activity.

The teacher had also demanded disciplinary action against the person concerned who sent the email.

Sanjeev Grewal, head of the college's economics department, said in an email dated February 20 (Tuesday) to Principal Varghese, "I am quite shocked to know that a large number of students have been suspended from college and it has been threatened that they will also be

debarred from appearing in the examinations. In my opinion, students can be debarred from appearing in the examinations only on the grounds explicitly stated in the university rules and regulations. To the best of my knowledge, the shortage of attendance in the morning college assembly is not a ground for debarring students from appearing in the examinations."

The morning assembly is a convention specific to St. Stephens College and is not recognized by the university (not to talk of it being a requirement for appearing in the examinations), nor does the failure to attend morning assembly, in my humble opinion, constitute a legitimate ground for suspension from the college, the HOD added.

# AAP MLAs protest against stalling of one time water bill settlement

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP MLAs trooped into the Well of the Delhi Assembly and protested against the stalling of the one-time settlement scheme for rectifying water bills, leading the speaker to adjourn the House for the day on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri claimed that he was misbehaved by AAP MLAs during the House proceeding on Tuesday. He lodged a complaint with the Speaker Ram Niwas Goel demanding action against the AAP legislators.

After the special mention of issues related to the constituencies of the MLAs under Rule 280, the AAP members trooped into the well of the House and raised slogans against the BJP, accusing it of putting pressure on officers to stall the scheme. They demanded that the Lt Governor suspend the officers responsible for obstructing the scheme. The Speaker tried to pacify the AAP members and asked them to take their seats. But as the protesting MLAs refused to budge, he adjourned the House for half-an-hour. When the House reconvened, the AAP MLAs again trooped into the well and raised slogans.

Goel again requested the MLAs to go back to their seats



but they kept on raising slogans. Finally, the Speaker adjourned the House till 11 am on Wednesday. Delhi Cabinet Minister and senior AAP leader Ms Atishi said the most burning issue faced by the people of Delhi today is their absurdly inflated water bills. This problem has been going on for the last one and a half years.

Senior AAP Leader and Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said that there are

27 lakh consumers of Delhi Jal Board in the national capital. Among these, 10.60 lakh consumers, approximately 40%, haven't paid their water bills for months. "The reasons these consumers have conveyed that the bills are exorbitant, much higher than their water consumption, and have been issued incorrectly," he said.

Bidhuri, who was the lone BJP MLA present in the House at the time of second adjournment, alleged that the AAP

MLAs came to the well of the House and raised "objectionable slogans" against him and leaders of his party. Bidhuri said he has lodged a complaint with the Speaker requesting appropriate action against the AAP MLAs.

"The BJP MLAs were suspended from the House just for expressing their views. Why is there no action against the ruling party MLAs?" he questioned.

Bidhuri said when the House

proceedings were going on, about one and a half dozen Aam Aadmi Party MLAs came to the well. They had placards in their hands and reached the seat of the Leader of Opposition. They surrounded him and started waving placards. Not only this, some MLAs put these placards in front of his face and kept making noise, Bidhuri said adding they not only used abusive language against him but also used objectionable language towards BJP and the top leadership. This conduct of theirs should be clearly termed as cheap and hooliganism, Bidhuri said.

Bidhuri later met the Speaker and told him that seven BJP MLAs were indefinitely suspended from the House only because they stood on their seats during the Lieutenant Governor's address and said the tunnel was built by Modi ji, the ration to the poor is being provided by Modi ji's government and 1650 electric buses to Delhi are also the central government's gift.

Since the credit for this was being given to the Kejriwal government in the Lieutenant Governor's address. The conduct of the BJP MLAs, on the one hand, was termed as objectionable and referred to the Privileges Committee and they were suspended from the House.

# MLA Madan urges Govt to bring nomadic tribes into mainstream

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP MLA Madan Lal on Tuesday demanded implementation of recommendations of the Idate Commission on de-notified and nomadic tribes in Delhi so that such communities can be brought into the mainstream.

In his address in the Delhi Assembly, the Kasturba Nagar MLA also said these communities, which belonged to a large group of different castes, had been "targeted" and treated brutally during the colonial rule. He said these De-notified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) were targeted using Criminal Tribes Act. Either their properties were confiscated or their members were jailed and ill-treated by the British rulers.

In 1952, this Act was repealed, thus de-notifying the DNTs as "Criminal Tribes". "In 2015, under the then government, a commission led by B R Idate was set up. In 2018, it submitted its recommendations for the benefit of such communities," Lal said.

There were 198 such communities and many of them were targeted during the colonial rule as they had raised their voice against the unjust rule, the AAP MLA said. "Today in Delhi there are 29 such communities. I appeal to you (the House), and the chief minister (Arvind Kejriwal) to implement the recommendations of the Idate Commission in Delhi so that such communities can be brought into the mainstream and get the due benefits," Lal said.

Another AAP MLA, Somnath Bharti, in his address raised the issue of alleged ill-treatment of the members of the Dalit community in the last 10 years since the BJP came to power at the Centre. There was no immediate reaction from the BJP. Bharti alleged that a temple dedicated to Bhagwan Valmiki in south Delhi area was "dismantled" as this community and the locals "do not vote for them (BJP)". He, however, did not elaborate the issue any further.

"They do not feel ashamed. On the one hand they talk of

Lord Ram but on the other hand they raze a Valmiki temple. But I will get that temple reconstructed," Bharti asserted in his address. Before the beginning of the proceedings of the assembly, Speaker Ram Niwas Goel read out a condolence message mourning the passing away of renowned Jain monk Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj.

A two-minute silence was also observed in the House to pay respects to the seer. The Jain monk breathed his last on Sunday at Chandragiri Teerth in Dongargarh in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district after undertaking 'sallekhna'.

Sallekhna is a Jain religious practice involving voluntary fast-unto-death for spiritual purification. Tilak Nagar MLA from AAP, Jarnal Singh, spoke in Punjab about the victims of 1984 anti-Sikh riots and a subsidy scheme for their families. He urged the government to expedite the process so that the affected families, who are entitled to subsidies but are not able to avail them, can do so.

# Cops hold mock drills ahead of farmers Capital march

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police directed security personnel deployed at the city's Tikri, Singhu and Ghazipur border points to stay alert and conducted mock drills on Tuesday, a day ahead of protesting farmer's proposed march towards the national Capital. The move came a day after the protesting farmers rejected the Centre's proposal to buy pulses, maize and cotton crops through government agencies at minimum support price (MSP) for five years, and announced to continue with their 'Delhi Chalo' agitation on Wednesday.

In the fourth round of talks with the farmer leaders on Sunday, a panel of three Union ministers proposed that government agencies would buy pulses, maize and cotton at the MSP for five years after entering into an agreement with farmers.

Farmer leaders refused the proposal, saying it was not in favour of farmers. Delhi Police



officials said security personnel deployed at the three borders were on Tuesday asked to stay on alert. They said commuters might face traffic congestion. Protesting farmers and Haryana police personnel clashed at the Punjab-Haryana border near Amabala on February 13.

The two border points of Delhi

and Haryana - Tikri and Singhu - are sealed with the heavy deployment of police personnel and multi-layered barricades of concrete and iron nails.

Two lanes of the Ghazipur border have also been shut with multi-layer barricades and police personnel.

An official said if required, the

Ghazipur border may also be shut on Wednesday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (outer) Jimmy Chiram said there was sufficient deployment of the force, besides paramilitary personnel, at the Delhi-Haryana borders. Another officer said the Delhi Police was prepared to stop the farmers at the Delhi borders.

Security personnel have been directed to not allow even a single protester or vehicle to enter Delhi, he said, adding that mock security drills were conducted during the day.

The Delhi Police has already stocked up 30,000 tear gas shells.

The officer said that checking vehicles on various roads leading to the central part of Delhi may lead to traffic congestion on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, a Delhi Police team including top IPS officials visited the Shambhu border between Punjab and Haryana, where thousands of protesting farmers are camping, to gain a firsthand understanding of the situation.

According to sources, the visit aimed to assess the Haryana Police's strategy in containing the farmers' advance towards Delhi.

The Haryana Police deployed concrete slabs, iron nails, barricades, barbed wires, and both police and paramilitary personnel across strategic points on the border with Punjab.

# Protesting farmers detained in Gurugram

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

At least 50 farmers were detained by the Gurugram Police in Manesar when they tried to march to Delhi to protest "unfair" compensation for over 1,800 acres of farmland sold to the state government. The protesters were taken to the Manesar Police Lines in two buses, said police.

The farmers alleged that they were not given the right price for 1,810 acres of land in five villages in Manesar and decided to protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi on Tuesday. Police, after getting information, sent notices to many farmer leaders late Monday evening, but the farmers still gathered Tuesday morning under the banner of Dakshin Haryana Kisan Khap Samiti, ready to march.

More than 500 policemen were deployed in Manesar to stop

the farmers from marching to the national capital, an officer said. The entire Manesar area was converted into a cantonment in the morning. At around noon, when farmers started moving towards Delhi, police took them into custody.

Farmer leaders called the Haryana government a dictatorship over the police action. "The government wants to loot the farmers' land by taking it at throwaway prices," said Mahendra Singh, a farmer leader. "Today, the farmers wanted to march peacefully to Delhi but the government adopted a dictatorial attitude and did not allow the farmers to go beyond Manesar. They are afraid of the farmers' movement, but until the demand for MSP is not met, the farmers' movement will continue," Santokh Singh, one of the protesters, said.

# Dilli Durbar festival from February 23 to 25

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Dilli Gharana, an excellent organisation that strives hard for the preservation of musical traditions of Indian Music, is all set to organise the "Dilli Durbar 2024" third edition between February 23 to 25. The festival is all set to show off the resurgence of Indian Classical Music. Dilli Durbar 2024 will conduct a comprehensive range of activities like performances, discussions, workshops, and exhibitions. Hence, attendees will get to engross themselves in a rich tapestry of spirituality. Previously, Dilli Gharana had organised two editions of this exquisite festival, the "Dilli Durbar — Back to Classics" in 2019 and then again in 2023. The first edition of this show was conducted at the IGCNA New Delhi for two days, i.e., 16th & 17th March 2019. The second version was held at the Kartavya Path, India Gate, between February 10 and 12, 2023.

# LG inaugurates island fountains, storm water channels in Dwarka

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday inaugurated island fountains and storm water channels (SWC) 2 and 5 in Dwarka. The rejuvenated channels will provide a green and clean, refreshing environment for the public to go out for walks, jogging, cycling and daily commute to and from work.

This is as per the commitment of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to develop world class infrastructure along with green space and beautify the Dwarka sub city. West Delhi MP Parvesh Sahib Singh and South Delhi MP Ramesh Bidhuri, and other senior officials of the DDA were also pre-

sent. The project has been completed by DDA at the cost of Rs 300 crore. The SWC 2 has capacity of 7 MLD and SWC 5 has 9.5 MLD capacity to treat sewage. The rejuvenation of storm water channels 2 and 5 to address the issue of drainage system, provide green space, add to the public amenities and beautify the Dwarka sub-city. SWC2 and SWC5 Channels pass through many sectors (8, 9, 20, 23, 19, 24 and Sectors 3, 13, 14, 16) of Dwarka before merging with Najafgarh drain which further falls into River Yamuna. SWC2 has length of 5.2 Km and SWC5 has a length of 3.8 Km. Over the past few years, these channels have been subjected to discharge of domestic waste waters from adjoining colonies and other

areas lacking sewerage facilities. The channels became open sewers and resulted in inhospitable situations in the near-by areas.

To address these pollution issues and boost the overall environmental wellbeing, DDA executed this project to rejuvenate the channels by sewerage interception and treatment along with area development of adjacent green buffer zones and open areas. The channels to act as greenways connecting metro stations to the residential areas and major public areas like Golf Course, Bharat Vandana Park, sports complex etc. along the entire length of 9 km and also incorporate a solar arcade consisting of 44 nos. of solar flower with the capacity to generate 203KWp



and 30 nos. of solar tree each having capacity of 1KWp for harnessing solar energy to be used for the lighting in the project area. All the solar power facility is on grid.

Speaking at the event, Lt

Governor said that beautification work of Delhi has just begun and it will continue at a faster pace in the days to come, adding that lots of developmental work have been undertaken in the national capital in

the recent past. "I compliment DDA for their hard work and completing the work in a time bound manner," he said. He further added land has been allotted for Diplomatic Enclave and state bhawans in Dwarka, which will give national and international recognition to the sub-city.

The street light poles all along the cycle track and walk way is also provided along with the facility of CCTV for the security and surveillance of the communities. There is inclusion of amenities such as a cycle track, mooram path, natural trails, and walkways, provision of daily necessities like an open air food court, open air theatre, yoga pavilion, children park, and easily accessible public toilets. Furthermore,

there are riverfront activities including viewing decks, pergola bridges, check dams. The 4 cascade-type horse fountains of 12 feet each, constructed at the intersection of sector 1/7 and sector 2/6 Dwarka, to further add to the aesthetic beauty of the place. The fountains have redeveloped green areas and barrier free ramps.

The DDA has been working on mission mode under the consistent guidance of Delhi LG towards the development of Dwarka sub-city and has recently accomplished many projects in this location, constructed affordable to premium houses, built a state-of-the-art DDA Sports Complex at Sector 17 for health and fitness enthusiasts, foot-over-bridges for

pedestrian safety, utsavpandal to provide an economic festivity option to the residents of Delhi.

"Further developmental projects in Dwarka includes 200 acre Bharat Vandana Park that would add to the green cover of the city, Centres of Excellence are being developed in multiple sports like wrestling, weight lifting, boxing, etc. and a huge public golf course to further the public health and wellness. All these projects will be completed this year. The work on the construction of UER-II is fast nearing completion, given the rapid pace of execution, the allocations for 2023-24 have been enhanced from Rs. 920 crore to Rs. 1590 crore," the authority said in a statement.

# Modi, Shah embrace Arunachal, Mizoram

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday greeted the people of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram on their Statehood day and lauded their culture. Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram were granted Statehood on this day in 1987. Prime Minister Modi said in a post on X, "The people of Arunachal Pradesh are making rich contributions to India's development. The culture of the state is also greatly admired, particularly the vibrant tribal traditions and the rich biodiversity. May Arunachal Pradesh keep prospering for years to come. Greeting the people of Mizoram, he said, "India is very proud of Mizoram's unique cultural tapestry, its rich beauty and the warm-hearted spirit of its people. The Mizo culture is very inspiring, embodying a blend of tra-



dition and harmony. Praying for the continuous progress, peace and prosperity of Mizoram." In his message to the people of Arunachal Pradesh, Home Minister Shah wished that the state will touch new heights in development under the leadership of Chief Minister Pema Khandu. Shah also conveyed his greetings to the people of Mizoram on its statehood day. "Statehood day greetings to our sisters and brothers in Arunachal Pradesh. PM Shri @narendramodi ji's policy of all-inclusive development has contributed immensely to

unlocking the economic potential of the state blessed with stunning natural beauty and vibrant cultural diversity," he said in a post on X. "May the people of Arunachal Pradesh in the times to come touch new heights in development under the leadership of @PemaKhanduBJP ji," he said. In his message to "sisters and brothers in Mizoram", Shah said the State is a vibrant spot on the diverse mosaic of the country's cultural tapestry. "All my best wishes are with them on the path toward further progress and wellbeing," he said.

# Engaged with India on Pannun case: US

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

The US is engaged with India on the issue of alleged failed plot to kill a Sikh separatist and it is looking forward to the findings of the high-level committee appointed by New Delhi to probe the matter, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Verma said on Tuesday. In December, Washington said it thwarted an alleged plot hatched by an Indian agent to kill Sikh separatist Gurbhaur Singh Pannun on American soil. India has already constituted a probe committee to investigate the allegations. "On the issue that was raised, look, we raised our concerns with the government of India. There is a committee of inquiry looking into the matter and we will stay engaged with the government and look forward to their findings and they've taken it very seriously. And we're grateful for that," Verma said. The former US Ambassador to India was responding to a question at an interactive session organised by the Observer

Research Foundation (ORF). Delving into various geo-political challenges, he also lauded the Indian Navy's role in strategic waters in view of attacking Houthi militants attacking various commercial vessels in the Red Sea. "We appreciate everything India has been doing in the Red Sea with its Navy and the incredible support that they have provided. I am grateful to all of our US military partners or other coalition partners," he said. In the last few weeks, the Indian Navy extended assistance to a number of merchant vessels in the Arabian Sea following attacks on them. India has not joined any coalition including the one backed by the US in view of the security situation in the Red Sea. Verma said the US-India relations are "surging forward at a pace and scale that many of us could not have predicted only a few years ago". He also suggested that the cooperation under the Quad framework is not to contain China and that the overarching goal is to ensure a peaceful Indo-Pacific region.



More broadly, that stands on its own and I think it sends a very powerful message around the world, he said, adding the threats in the Indo-Pacific are "real". "The threats we face are real, but building our collective capabilities, increasing our sharing of information and improving maritime domain awareness and interoperability, for example, will ensure India continues to be a provider of net security across the Indo Pacific region and beyond," Verma said. "And the US will continue to be a Pacific power for the decades ahead," he said, adding that Washington's work on protecting, preserving and strengthening democracy will continue.

The fight is even more important in view of the rise of autocratic and authoritarian leaders and movements that seek to undermine the rules based order, he said in comments seen as an oblique reference to leadership of China and Russia. "This includes continuing to strengthen a global rules based order, architecture, ensuring we bridge divides on income inequality and battling misinformation. Democracy must continue to deliver for our peoples," he said. On US-China rivalry, Verma said, "We are engaged intensively in strategic competition with China; cooperating where we can, but competing aggressively to protect the rules based (global) order." He also noted that former US presidents Harry S Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and John F Kennedy were all committed to seeing a strong US-India relationship. The senior American official said before Kennedy became President in 1961, as a Senator said the fate of Asia rests with India. Following the Chinese attack

on India in 1962, President Kennedy committed thousands of tonnes of ammunition, and even provided significant logistics and intelligence support to New Delhi. "He was committed to India's success and its defence. And then yes, somewhat rapidly and for reasons that I think are too complex to cover today in the short amount of time we have, India and the United States went their separate ways for nearly 25 years," he said. Verma said "We lost a generation of cooperation and the important lessons are to be learned from that period so that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past." He said President Bill Clinton's visit to India in 2000 marked the launch of "full scale partnership" between the two countries. "And in these 24 years, we have grown dramatically in every facet of our cooperation. We went from USD 0 in defence sales to now being major defence partners, co production partners and conducting the most complex exercises in every facet in defence," he said.

# Dispel myths surrounding new criminal laws: UGC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has directed universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country to publicise the new criminal laws and dispel "myths" surrounding them. Among the "myths" cited by the UGC are that the new laws "threaten" individual freedom and aim to establish a "police state", that sedition provisions have been retained under 'Deshdroh' and that these legislations enable "police torture". UGC Secretary Manish Joshi said, "The Higher Educational Institutions have been requested to publicise the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, The Bharatiya Sakshya Sanhita, 2023, The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023, and The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 were passed by



seminars and talks by lawyers, judges both serving and retired and their respective faculties in their institutions." The HEIs have also been asked to share the details of the activities undertaken to the Ministry of Education for sending them to Home Ministry, he added. The Bharatiya Sakshya Sanhita, 2023, The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023, and The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 were passed by

both Houses of Parliament during the Winter Session. They were enacted into law after they got assent from President Droupadi Murmu. They will respectively replace Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 and the Indian Penal Code (IPC). In its flyers, the UGC has mentioned the following "myths": "The new criminal laws threaten individual free-

dom, aim to establish a police state; (they) are mere repackaging of existing draconian provisions; the extension of custody from 15 to 90 days in the new criminal laws is a shocking provision enabling police torture; sedition is gone, but appears as 'Deshdroh' in Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 and harsh punishment in hit-and-run cases under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023". While 20 new offences have been added in the (BNS), 19 provisions that existed in IPC have been deleted. In 33 offences the punishment of imprisonment has been increased, in 83 the punishment of fine has been enhanced, while in 23 the mandatory minimum punishment has been introduced and in six offences the punishment of 'community service' has been introduced. The major changes proposed in the new criminal laws include

introduction of definition of child; inclusion of transgender in the definition of 'gender'; inclusion of electronic and digital records in the definition of document and widening of the definition of 'movable' to include property of every description. New chapters on offence against woman and child and 'inchoate offences' (attempt, abetment and conspiracy) have been introduced while beggary has been introduced as a form of exploitation for trafficking. New offences like organised crime, terrorist act, petty organised crime, hit-and-run, mob lynching, hiring child to commit offence, sexual exploitation of woman by deceitful means, snatching, abetment outside India, acts endangering the sovereignty, integrity and unity of India, publication of false or fake news etc have been introduced.

# Tejas prototype successfully flown by computer: Ministry

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

In a significant development towards Tejas Mk1A programme, the Digital Fly by Wire Flight Control Computer (DFCC) was integrated in prototype LSP7 and successfully flown on Monday, Defence Ministry said here on Tuesday. Giving details, they said the DFCC has been indigenously developed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru for the Tejas - Mk1A indigenously designed and manufactured fighter jet. Digital Fly by Wire Flight Control Computer features Quadraplex Power PC based Processor, high speed autonomous state machine based I/O controller, enhanced computational throughput and complex on-board software



complied to DO178C level- A safety requirements. All critical parameters and performance of the flight controls were found satisfactory. The maiden flight was piloted by Wing Commander Siddharth Singh KJM (Retired) of National Flight Test Centre. Aeronautical Development Agency, under the aegis of Department of Defence Research and development and Ministry of Defence has suc-

cessfully type certified Tejas-Light Combat aircraft (LCA). Indian Air Force has already operationalised Tejas LCA Mk1. The improved version of the aircraft, Tejas Mk1A features advanced mission computer, high performance Digital Flight Control Computer (DFCC Mk1A), Smart Multi-Function Displays (SMFD), Advanced Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) Radar, Advanced Self-protection Jammer, Electronic Warfare Suit etc. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh complimented joint teams from DRDO, IAF, ADA and industries involved in the development and successful flight test of this critical system for Tejas Mk1A and termed it as a major step towards Atmanirbhara with reduced count of special imports.

# Rights panel serves notice on DGCA over death of old man denied wheelchair at airport

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sent a notice to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) over reports that an 80-year-old man died at the Mumbai airport after he was refused a wheelchair despite prior request to an airline and forced to walk. Reportedly, the US-based Indian-origin man collapsed after walking for about 1.5 km on the way to the immigration area, the NHRC said in a statement. He was walking alongside his wife, who was in a wheelchair. The elderly couple was travelling from New York to India, the rights panel said, quoting the report. The NHRC said it "has taken suo motu cognisance of a media report that an 80-year-old man died at the Mumbai airport as he had to walk when not provided with a wheelchair despite prior



request to the airline." The Commission observed that the content of the media report, if true, raises a serious issue of violation of human rights of the victim. It has asked the DGCA for a detail report in four weeks. It should include the status of compensation if any, provided to the next of kin of the deceased, the statement said. The Commission said it would also like to know the steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure that such incidents do not recur. "There has been a significant increase in the number of air passengers as well as the air-

fare, but the standard of facilities doesn't seem to have improved proportionately resulting in several complaints reported in the media and posted on social media," the Commission observed. "According to the media report, there were 32 wheelchair passengers on the particular flight but there were only 15 available with accompanying staff on the ground to help them. The wife sat in the wheelchair while the husband followed her on foot and collapsed after some time. The elderly couple was travelling from New York to India," it said.

# India, New Zealand review maritime ties

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

India and New Zealand on Tuesday here reviewed the entire gamut of their maritime ties during talks between Royal New Zealand Navy chief Rear Admiral David Proctor and Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar, navy officials said. Giving details, they said during the interaction, the Principals discussed avenues to strengthen bilateral maritime cooperation, including increased operational engagements, training exchanges and information sharing. Proctor is scheduled to participate in Indian Navy's



flagship exercise 'Milan 24' at Visakhapatnam and also undertake high level engagements at Western Naval Command. Maritime cooperation between the two navies has witnessed significant growth since Admiral Kumar's visit to New Zealand in October 2022. The visit marked conclusion of Technical Arrangement on White Shipping Information Exchange. Further, warships from both the Navies have been making regular port calls at each other's ports, last being port calls by INS Kolkata and INS Sahyadri at Auckland and Wellington in September 2023.



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar greets Arunachal Governor Kaiwalya Trivikram Parmaik as he departs from Itanagar on Tuesday

# Thailand waits to pay homage to Indian Buddha relics

**ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Thailand, home to the world's second-largest Buddhist population, is eagerly awaiting to pay homage to the revered relics of Lord Buddha from the National Museum here, along with those of his esteemed disciples Sariputra and Moggallana from Bihar's Sanchi which are being tenderly transported via a specially arranged Indian Air Force aircraft to the spiritual neighbour. During an eleven-day exposition from February 22 to March 3, four of the twenty relics destined for Thailand will be showcased across four cities, including Sanam Luang, inviting devotees to offer their reverence. Thailand boasts the world's second-largest Buddhist popu-



lation, after China with approximately 64 million followers. Thailand has the second largest Buddhist popula-

tion in the world. Union Culture Ministry Secretary Govind Mohan shared during a press confer-

ence, "The relics will arrive in Thailand on February 22 and will be displayed for eleven days at Sanam Luang Pavilion, Bangkok, from February 23, 2024, to March 3. Subsequently, they will be showcased at Ho Kum Luang, Royal Rajapruek, Chiang Mai, and Wat Maha Wanarum, Ubun Ratchathani, each for the next five days, respectively, followed by Wat Maha That, Ao Luek, Krabi, for an additional five days until March 18." On March 19, the relics will be respectfully returned to India. The holy Buddha relics, currently housed in the National Museum, are renowned as the 'Kapilavastu Relics,' originating from a site in Bihar first discovered in 1898 in the Piprahwa, Siddharthnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, once

part of the ancient city of Kapilavastu. While twenty sacred bone fragments are housed in the National Museum, the remaining two are on display at the Indian Museum, Kolkata. These relics will be accorded the esteemed status of a State Guest and transported in the same climate-controlled case as they are presently kept at the National Museum. This journey to Thailand follows a similar exposition in Mongolia on the occasion of Mongolia's Buddha Purnima on June 14, 2022. Notably, the last international display of these relics occurred in 2012 in Sri Lanka, with subsequent guidelines restricting their movement due to their delicate nature, categorizing them under the 'AA' category of Antiquities and Art Treasures.

# Mega health screening in schools across several States to begin today

**ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI**

A national-level mega health screening and management project covering over 20,000 students across 55 Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in fourteen States across the country, is scheduled for launch on Wednesday. To be kicked off at an event here, the project is led by Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of Ayush and Ports, Shipping and Waterways, and Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs and Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. It integrates Ayurvedic interventions to address prevalent health issues among tribal youth, such as anaemia, haemoglobinopathies, malnutrition, and tuberculosis. With a focus on anaemia, A Memorandum of

Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Ayush and Ministry of Tribal Affairs in October 2022 to explore the areas of collaboration, convergence and synergy for tribal development. Accordingly, CCRAS developed 72 Poshan Vatikas in EMRS of 20 states. CCRAS Institutes also participated in the mega health camps during Janajati Mahotsav at Saraikela, Jharkhand. Tribal health in India is still an area of concern after more than seven decades of independence, despite various efforts. The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population; 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas.

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# Modi seeks support of women to make 1 crore lakhpati didis

PTI ■ JAMMU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday sought the support of the country's women folk and said he wants to make one crore women in India "lakhpati didis".

The prime minister lauded the beneficiaries of the Centre's major schemes in Jammu and Kashmir for setting an example for the rest of the country. He interacted with the beneficiaries during his visit to Jammu to ascertain how the schemes have transformed the lives of the people in the Union Territory.

During a public rally, the PM encouraged a self-help group (SHG) head Kirti of Basohli area of Kathua district to leverage the loan scheme under livelihood scheme and contribute to the success of rural women.

Kirti, whose SHG had purchased three cows and



People attend a programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jammu on Tuesday

repaid the loan, has now a big cowshed due to the efforts of several women. She said, "The lives of women are changing and they are becoming the engines of change in rural India. The credit of the changes goes to such schemes gifted to us by the prime minister".

Lauding Kirti for her contribution, the PM sought support from the country's women folk and said he

wants to make one crore women in India "lakhpati didis".

She replied saying she will fully support Modi's mission of "lakhpati didis". From farmers to SHG members, Modi interacted with five beneficiaries - including three from Jammu and two from Kashmir - to learn about the impact of schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), PM Kisan, Jal

Jeewan Mission, National Rural Livelihood Mission, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), Ayushman Bharat, PM Ujjwala and Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) on their lives.

The prime minister acknowledged the exemplary role played by Shaheen Begum, a post-graduate entrepreneur from north Kashmir's Bandipora area. Shaheen, a beneficiary of the Deendayal Antyodaya scheme, has transformed the lives of rural women in Kashmir by setting up SHGs and various units, including a poultry farm.

She credited the prime minister for her success, stating, "Your schemes have changed our lives. I never dreamt that such a change would take place. It was a difficult life for us but you changed it. We thank you, Sir." PM Modi praised Shaheen

for her entrepreneurship skills and also commended her parents for educating her. He said, "I bow before your parents for educating you. You are becoming a successful entrepreneur. That shows everything is possible under the Modi rule," he said.

Continuing the engagement, he greeted Lal Mohammad, a Gujar from Poonch district, who has successfully constructed a house under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G). Mohammad recited a poem in praise of Modi and India, expressing his support to them.

The prime minister extended greetings to Riyaz Ahmed Kohli from Pulwama and Veena Parihar from Atholi (Paddar) in Kishtwar district, the first time beneficiaries of the Jal Jeewan Mission and PM Ujjwala schemes which gave them piped water supply and gas connection respectively, in the remotest areas of J&K.

Kohli shared his story how his remote village got connected through piped water under Jal Jeewan Mission to provide water supply to their village.

"We have got water connections for the first time since Independence. We got benefitted from the forest rights law after the abrogation of Article 370. We thank you, Sir. I never thought about talking to the PM like this. We are fortunate to talk to you," he said.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to notify the public at large that our client, Mr. Ramchander Prop. Mahindra Seeds having its Registered office at Shop No.20, Ramdwara Mandir, Main Bazar, Opp. Indira Market, Old Subzi Mandi, Delhi-110007 declare that he and his product namely Mahindra Seeds has no concern with MAHINDRA and MAHINDRA. It is further notified that he is not associated with any member with MAHINDRA and MAHINDRA. Our client had used Mahindra Seeds name for starting his business and through this public notice he withdraw his product name with immediate effect.  
**ROHIT YADAV (Advocate)**  
Ch. no. 402, Civil Wings, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Known to all that my client Known to all that my client: Sh. Hukam Singh owner of the GROUND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS, PROPERTY BEARING NO. WZ-3123, AREA 60 SQ. YDS. PLOT NO. 52, MUSTAFI NO. 28, KILLA NO. 13, VILLAGE SHAKUR BASTI, DELHI, and Hukam Singh lost the following documents as below: 1. A/S and Will in favour of Sh. Sohan Lal & Om Prakash, 2. Will in favour of Kaushalya Devi, 3. Survivor Certificate of Chanderni. And it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim/right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 8 days of this publication.  
**AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION**  
Ch. No. 760, Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75 M. - 9899013913

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER & BASIN MANAGER,  
SUBARNAREKHA & BUDHABALANGA BASIN,  
AT/PO- LAXMIPOSI, DIST- MAYURBHANJ  
Mail Id: cebsmbb2019@gmail.com  
Government of Odisha "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE  
Bid Identification No. 44/ 23-24 of CEBM, SBB, Laxmiposi

1	Name of Work	A. Restoration and protection to right bank of river Budhabalanga near village Palusia, Rabaneswar, Kalyanpur, Alada, Makanda & Haldia. B. Raising and strengthening of Nida TRE Saline Embankment. C. Raising and strengthening of Parikhi Saline saline embankment.
2	Estimated Cost	A.Rs. 1256.85 Lakh B. Rs. 1110.85 Lakh C. Rs. 999.92 Lakh
3	Bid Security/ E.M.D	A.Rs. 12,57,000/- B.Rs. 11,11,000/- C.Rs. 10,00,000/-
4	Period of Completion	For S.I. No. A & B & C- 18 (Eighteen) Calendar Months
5	Class of Contractor	For S.I. No. A, B & C - 'A' Class and 'Special' Class
6	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	26.02.2024 at 10.00 AM
7	Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal	18.03.2024 up to 5.00 PM
8	Date of opening of bid	19.03.24 at 11:00 A.M.
9	Name & Address of the O.I. T	Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, O/O the CE&BM, Subarnarekha & Budhabalanga Basin, Laxmiposi, Mayurbhanj

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal "https://tendersodisha.gov.in".  
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Subarnarekha & Budhabalanga Basin, Laxmiposi, Mayurbhanj  
OIPR-32429/11/0007/2324

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform the Public at large that Smt. Kiran Shal W/o. Sh. Punit Jyoti Sibal is the Title Holder in possession of Society Built Up Freehold Property Bearing Flat No. 205, Ground Floor, Delhi Prashasan Adhikari C.G.H.S. Ltd., Plot No. 28, Matri Apartments, LP, Extension, Patparganj, New Delhi - 110092 addressing 71.44 sq. mtrs., hereinafter referred to as "Schedule Property" vide Sale Deed dated 06.08.2012, duly registered as Regn. No. 15686, Book No. 1, Vol. No. 6619, pp. 30 - 37 on 07.08.2012 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar - VIII, Geeta Colony, New Delhi. The original documents pertaining to the Schedule Property being (i) Letter of Possession of Flat dated 05.08.1989 in favour of Sh. R.D. Bir (ii) Registered Related Detail Page of registered Sale Deed dated 19.06.2008 executed by Sh. R.D. Bir in favour of Sh. Anur Kumar for the Schedule Property, have all been lost/misplaced and are untraceable as on date. In lieu of which Information Report dated 02.02.2024 bearing LR No. 145348/2024 has been filed with Delhi Police. This notice is thus issued to the Public at large, i.e., any Person(s), Company(ies), Authority(ies), Society(ies), Organisation(s), Financial Institution(s), Bank(s), HUFs etc. having any knowledge, custody or possession of the above mentioned lost/misplaced untraceable original documents for the Schedule Property or otherwise having any claim, right, title, interest, possession etc. in the Schedule Property by way of Ownership, Succession, Inheritance, Sale, Mortgage, Exchange, Charge, Lien, Gift, Trust, Encumbrance etc. or objection to the sale of the Schedule Property by the Title Holder, may come forward with supporting documents, to be delivered to the Office of the Sub-Registrar within the date of this Publication, post expiration of which any claim(s) or objection(s), if raised or received, shall be treated as null & void and as waived, and the Title Holder shall proceed to sell the Schedule Property, as is presently intended.  
Parvash Kumar (Advocate)  
Correspondence: Sheetha Bhatia, 29/29 Chamber Address: 363, Saket Cantt., New Delhi-110017. Phone: 9999228153

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
NOTICE is hereby given that Karamjeet Kaur & Shilpi Batra claims to be owner and in possession of Ground Floor of Prop. No. 14, Pocket-8, sector-23, Rohini, Delhi (hereinafter called the said property) by virtue of Sale Deed Doc. No. 3466 dated 26.07.2022 having purchased from Mahender Singh a legal heir of Late Parkash Kaur & Said Karamjeet Kaur & Shilpi Batra has agreed to sell the said Property to Braj Singh & Said Braj Singh has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients, IDFC FIRST BANK LTD, Rajendra Place Branch, New Delhi 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, lien or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.  
Vishal Diwan (Advocate)  
For Diwan and Company LLP  
H. No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi-19  
Mobile No. 9816399999

**GOVT. OF ODISHA**  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES  
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,  
DRAINAGE CIRCLE, CUTTACK, GANDARPUR-753003  
e-procurement Notice No. ACEDC-CTC-09/2023-24  
email id :- sedrainagecirclectc@gmail.com

1.	Name of Works	Area Development by Earth Filling at Bagapati Rehabilitation Colony.
2.	Total number of works	01 No.
3.	Bid Identification No.	ACEDC-CTC /DD-KPD - 24/2023-24
4.	Estimated Cost	Rs. 152.08 Lakhs
5.	Period of completion	12 (Twelve) Calendar months.
6.	Availability of Tender On - Line.	From 23.02.2024 at 11.30 Hours to 11.03.2024 upto 17.30 Hours.
7.	Date of Opening of Technical Bid.	12.03.2024 at 11.00 Hours in the O/o the Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Cuttack.
8.	Class of Contractor	"B" & "A" Class.
9.	EMD required	As per DTCN.
10.	Cost of Tender paper	Rs.10,000/-
11.	Procurement Officer	Additional Chief Engineer Drainage Circle, Gandarpur Cuttack, -753003.

\* Tender will be accepted if registered in the CDMS Portal.  
Further details can be seen from the Govt. web site [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in). Addendum / Corrigendum/ Cancellation if any required will be published only in Govt. web site [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)  
Additional Chief Engineer  
Drainage Circle, Cuttack  
OIPR-32518/11/0009/2324

**Government of Odisha**  
Office of the Chief Construction Engineer,  
Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur.  
E-mail id: [sewrcirclesbp@yahoo.com](mailto:sewrcirclesbp@yahoo.com)  
Bid Identification No. Road Tender Online RWCSBP-64/2023-24. No: 694 Dated: 17.02.2024  
The Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites online percentage rate Bid from experienced & eligible bidders for Transferred Road Improvement Programme (TRIP) & CMRL for the year 2023-24.

1	Name of work	Transferred Road Improvement Programme (TRIP) & CMRL for the year 2023-24.
2	No of works	04 Nos details as per DTCN.
3	Estimated cost	Approximately varies from Rs.93.47 lakhs to Rs.1635.93 lakhs.
4	Class of Contractor.	"A" and "Special"
5	Cost of tender paper and mode of deposit.	Rs. 10,000/- per set. ( to be deposited On-line) in favour of concerned Executive Engineer.
6	Mode of submission of tender	Tender should be submitted only On line in website <a href="http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in">www.tendersorissa.gov.in</a> ( <a href="https://tendersodisha.gov.in">https://tendersodisha.gov.in</a> )
7	EMD and mode of deposit	1% of estimated cost of the work to be remitted online as mentioned in DTCN.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	Last date & time for seeking clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur	Road Tender Online RWCSBP-64/2023-24	26.02.2024 From 11.00 A.M. To 05.00 P.M.	11.03.2024 Up to 5.00 P.M.	07.03.2024 31, 2022/ 5.00 P.M.	12.03.2024 at 11.00 AM	Will be intimated later

\* Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in) (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>)  
\* Subsequent modification/ corrigendum/Addendum if required shall appear in website only.  
\* The amount put to bid is exclusive of GST.  
\* Bidder should inspect the road before bidding and quote his rate accordingly.  
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur  
OIPR-25091/11/0096/2324

**SALE NOTICE**  
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. Kuldeep, CS (Comm) 2677/20	Vehicle No. HR51BW0444, Make and Model- TATA SAFARI, Manu Year- 2017
ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. Mohit, CS (Comm) No.1418/2020	Vehicle No. DL8CAY6543, Make and Model- MARUTI SUZUKI Vitara Brezza, Manu Year- 2019

**Auction Date: March 02, 2024 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.**  
**Place of Auction:** Codara Yard, Khewat No. 166/1, Near Atul Katania Chowk, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec - 17, Sukhrail, Gurugram - 122022  
**Contact Person: Swapnil Upadhyay (8126013708)/ Manu Anand (8928935040)**

Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI Bank Vs. Jitendara Bhatli and Others, CS (Comm) 2690/21	Vehicle No. UP16FT8014, Make and Model- ASHOK LEYLAND LTD PARTNER, Manu CS (Comm) 2690/21 Year- 2018

**Auction Date: March 02, 2024 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.**  
**Place of Auction:** Mahakal Parking yard, Kharsa No 527 Village Banthia Near Indane Gas Plant Loni Ghaziabad- UP, 201102  
**Contact Person: Swapnil Upadhyay (8126013708)/ Manu Anand (8928935040)**

**Terms of Sale**  
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself/ themselves/ itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at auction site with original KYC documents to participate in the auction. Successful bidder shall have to deposit sale amount within 5 days from the approval date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, Shal Tower Plot No. 23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005 for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicles.

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

**Whereas**  
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Umesh Kumar/ Ashu/ LBNOD00022885329	Flat No. 408, 4th Floor (Without Roof Rights), Tower C, Star Ramswaram, NH 58, Raj Nagar Extension, Village Noor Nagar, Ghaziabad/ Feb 19, 2024	August 28, 2023 Rs. 18,99,953/-	Delhi/ NCR & Moradabad
2.	Rajendra Narayan Dalai/ Dipak Narayan Dalai/ LBPUN0003210803	Flat No.812, 8th Floor, Wave City, Dream Homes- Tower 7, NH 24 Ghaziabad/ Feb 19, 2024	May 26, 2023 Rs. 14,72,202/-	Delhi/ NCR & Pune
3.	Farhat Hashmi/ Nazim Khan/ LBGHZ00001200397	Flat No. 10/11, 2nd Floor, G.D.A & Shipra Estate Ltd, Shipra Sun City-2, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad/ Feb 19, 2024	October 10, 2023 Rs. 1,18,376/-	Delhi/ NCR
4.	Farhat Hashmi/ Nazim Khan/ Inbait Ahmed Alvi/ LBGHZ00000946904	Flat No. 10/11, 2nd Floor, G.D.A & Shipra Estate Ltd, Shipra Sun City-2, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad/ Feb 19, 2024	October 10, 2023 Rs. 5,11,137/-	Delhi/ NCR
5.	Om Prakash Arya/ Rajendra Arya/ LBDEL00001384871	Flat No. S. 1, Plot No. 48 Second Floor (Hig), Sector 5, Rajender Nagar, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh/ Feb 19, 2024	October 16, 2023 Rs.1,90,301/-	Delhi/ NCR

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgage properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.  
Date: February 21, 2024  
Place: Delhi/ NCR  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

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

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

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Number (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN)	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Subhash Kumar/ Vikash Kumar / (19700040220) & QZGUR00005042407	Flat No- 218 2nd Floor, Wembly Estate E W.S, Rosewood City Sec 49-50, Gurgaon/ Feb 19, 2024	August 31, 2022/ Rs. 8,55,448/-	Delhi/NCR & Dabwali (Sirsia)

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgage properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.  
Date : February 21, 2024  
Place : Delhi/NCR  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**SALE NOTICE**  
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Case Details	Asset Details	Reserve Price	EMD
ICICI Bank Vs. Jalan Transport Pvt Ltd, TRC/18/79/2022/OA/389/2019 (DELHI DRT 3)	Vehicle No. UP13AT7301, Make and Model- TATA MOTORS 4923, Manu Year- 2017	Rs. 380000/-	Rs. 38000/-
ICICI Bank Vs. Sandeep Kumar, RC No. 90/2019, IN OA/ 43/2017	Vehicle No. UP16BE5195, Make and Model- Renault Fluence, Manf. Year- 2015	Rs. 380000/-	Rs. 38000/-
ICICI Bank Vs. Sanjay Kumar, CS (COMM) 2884/19	Vehicle No. UP14HT5870, Make & Model- Ashok Leyland Partner, Manu Year- 2019	Rs. 380000/-	Rs. 38000/-
ICICI Bank Limited vs. Prem Mohan Sharma, CS (Comm.) - 298/2018	Vehicle No. - UP14DJ5151, Make and Model- Maruti Udyog Baleno, Manf. Year- 2017	Rs. 380000/-	Rs. 38000/-

**Auction Date:** March 02, 2024 From 11:00 AM to 02:00 PM.  
**Auction Type:** Online Auction  
**Auction Portal Name & URL Link:** Car Dekho and <https://auctions.cardekho.com/#/>  
**Contact Person- Swapnil Upadhyay (8126013708)/ Manu Anand (8928935040)**  
Note: DD/PO of EMD amount is to be made in favour of ICICI BANK LIMITED payable at Delhi and all bidders need to submit original DD/PO along with self-attested KYC at the ICICI Bank Ltd, Shal Tower Plot no. 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005 on or before March 01, 2024 by 05:00 pm.  
**Terms of Sale**  
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself/ themselves/ itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. Successful bidder shall have to deposit sale amount within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. In case if you fail to make the payment of remaining sale amount within 5 days, your EMD amount will be forfeited (Where applicable). The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, Shal Tower Plot no. 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005 for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicles.

**ICICI Bank**  
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

**PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET**  
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]  
Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Konnection India Dotcom Pvt Ltd- (Borrower), Konnection India Dotcom Pvt Ltd, Nitin Kamboj, Aman Sahni (Guarantor/Mortgagor) Lan No. 002105014346/ 00216000714/ 00216000752	Unit No 524 5th Floor Silverton Tower Sector 50 Village Badshapur Gurgaon- 122001. Area: 725 Sq. fts	Rs. 1,18,00, 544/- as on February 13, 2024	Rs. 45,00,000/- Rs. 4,50,000/-	March 02, 2024 From 12:00 Noon to 02:00 PM	March 19, 2024 from 11:00 AM onwards

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com>) The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till March 18, 2024 before 05:00 PM failing which, this/these secured asset/s will be sold as per schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005 on or before March 18, 2024 before 05:00 PM and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before March 18, 2024 before 05:00 PM along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005 on or before March 18, 2024 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Delhi.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the e-auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Bank Limited On 8126013708/8584874809

Please note that Marketing agencies 1. M/s. NexXen Solutions Private Limited 2. Augeo Asset Management Pvt Ltd 3. Hecta Proptech Pvt. Ltd. have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit [www.icicibank.com/n4p4s](http://www.icicibank.com/n4p4s)  
Date : February 21, 2024  
Place : Gurgaon  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**ICICI Bank**  
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

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Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Travonation Holidays Private Limited- (Borrower), Mohd Faisal- (Co-Aplicant/ Mortgagor), Reena (Guarantor), Mohd Abbas, (Mortgagor/ Co-Aplicant & Guarantor) Sheeba Naqvi (Guarantor) Mohd Faisal (Guarantor) 629705015540	Shop bearing pvt no G-11, on Ground floor upto ceiling level without roof rights . A part of Property Bearing No A-1/B-1, situated in the abadi of Acharya Niketan, out of khasara no 63 in mayur vihar phase 1 in village kotala Delhi-110091 Area- 166.34 Sq Ft	Rs. 1,13,76, 625/- as on February 15, 2024	Rs. 37,43, 000/- Rs. 3,74, 300/-	March 02, 2024 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	March 19, 2024 from 01:00 PM onwards
		Shop bearing pvt no G-12, on Ground floor upto Extent of ceiling level without Roof rights . A part of Property Bearing No A-1/B, situated in the abadi of Acharya Niketan, out of khasara no 63 in mayur vihar phase 1 in village kotala, Illaqa Shahdara Delhi-110091 Area- 147.68 Sq Ft		Rs. 33,23, 000/- Rs. 3,32, 300/-		

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com>) The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till March 18, 2024 before 05:00 P.M failing which, this/these secured asset/s will be sold as per schedule.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Locking horns

Protesting farmers reject Government's offer on MSP, 'Delhi Chalo' march to resume today

Agitating farmers intend to intensify their 'Delhi Chalo' protest from Wednesday as their negotiations with the Government remain deadlocked. With both sides adamant on their respective positions, it seems unlikely that the stalemate will end in a hurry despite several rounds of dialogue. Foremost among the farmers' demand is the insistence on legal assurances for a minimum support price (MSP) across all crops, coupled with open-ended procurement of 23 key crops under MSP. Additionally, they seek complete debt waiver for both farmers and farm labourers, along with a reversal of policies perceived as detrimental to their interests. Central to their demands is the implementation of crop prices in line with the recommendations of the Dr MS Swaminathan Commission's report. Farmers are pushing for pensions to be extended to both farmers and farm hands, as well as a waiver on any increase in electricity tariffs. They also seek nationwide enforcement of the Land Acquisition Act of 2013. The demands extend



to the realm of international trade, with calls for India's withdrawal from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and a freeze on all Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). One may agree or disagree with their demands but these are not unconstitutional.

The latest development in the saga has the farmers rejecting the Government's MSP offer, signalling the resumption of the 'Delhi Chalo' march. The offer, which was made in the midst of ongoing negotiations, failed to meet the farmers' expectations. The MSP offer, though presented as a goodwill gesture by the Government, was perceived by farmers as insufficient and lacking concrete assurances. Despite assurances

from the Government side regarding the continuation of MSP, farmers remain sceptical that the lack of legal guarantees and deregulation could eventually lead to the dismantling of the MSP system. The 'Delhi Chalo' march posturing goes back to 2020, when thousands of farmers from various States converged on the outskirts of Delhi to protest against the farm laws. The march garnered widespread support and attention, both nationally and internationally, highlighting the gravity of the issues. The decision to resume the march underscores the farmers' plan to continue their struggle; it is also a flashback of farmers' siege of the Capital not very long ago. The Government seems to have made the Capital a fortress which, however, does not augur well for a democratic system. Dialogue, not confrontation, should be the way forward. The farmers must respect the law of the land while the Government should try to assuage their anger. It would be prudent to accept some, if not all, farmer demands so that a conducive atmosphere is built for the talks to continue in a congenial atmosphere. As the protest enters a new phase, it is imperative for both sides to engage in constructive dialogue to find a viable solution to the impasse. It is a call to action for all stakeholders to prioritise the nation's interests and work towards a fair and equitable resolution.

### PICTALK



Farmers harvest marigold flowers in Nadia

# India is on the right track in Nepal

Prachanda's adept balancing act and strategic positioning continue to shape the trajectory of Nepal's political future, with implications that extend beyond its borders



ASHOK K MEHTA

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) has completed 13 months of his third term, by far the most successful in leading Nepal with the Maoist party with just 32 seats. A seasoned and balanced Nepali journalist billed Prachanda's tenure as 'firm, polished and people-oriented'. About the power-sharing formula that has become a staple in coalition politics, his assessment was different from that of a senior Nepali Congress parliamentarian who, out of the three options - two-one-two; two and a half and two and a half; and Prachanda doing full five years - while not favouring the first option, was hugely critical of it. So was the journalist.

The figures indicate the number of years of premiership. The first set relates to Prachanda and Deuba doing two years each while Madhav Nepal would get one year. The second is minus Madhav Nepal. The parliamentarian said on any major coalition issues, the Big 3 were former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba (NC, 89 seats) and Prachanda and former PM Madhav Nepal of the United Socialist (with only ten seats and not recognised as a national party) ignoring Janata Samajwadi (National) Party with 14 seats. He went on to suggest that both Nepal and Yadav should share a year term, however wobbly the arrangement. The wily former Prime Minister KP Oli (CPN UML 80 seats) who did not honour power-sharing with Prachanda is determined to ensure Madhav Nepal does not become PM for even a day. Incidentally, Prachanda and Deuba have happily shared power earlier.

Astutely, Prachanda, while firing salvos at NC, indicating their alliance has not been rewarding for his party, is also suggesting that the option is open of returning to the CPN (UML) fold, a homecoming for which Chinese leaders will give their right arm and a contingency India will dread. This warning keeps alive the Prachanda premiership for five years. But nothing is done till everything is done. Prachanda's



scorecard shows the right boxes are ticked: corruption, the people's biggest concern, has been emphatically addressed with top guns or their wards in jail or on bail. Also being investigated is the Pokhara International Airport which involves China trying to inveigle Nepal into its BRI debt trap. It will turn out to be another white elephant like Matala Airport or Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka.

China's bullying of Nepal is legendary turned into in-your-face warrior diplomacy by former Ambassador Hou Yanxi who took Kathmandu for a royal ride. Nepal was browbeaten into accepting the One China policy at the drop of a hat, a former Nepalese diplomat told me. While Tibetans were cowed down in Kathmandu and Pokhara, China has closed down the border in the north since the pandemic. Chinese have indulged in salami-slicing in nine places on the Nepal-China border. A former Madhesi MP informed me that border pillars have been removed, water sources diverted and dual-use villages constructed. Encroachments are reported at Dharchul, Mustang, Gorkha, Sindhupal Chowk, Rasua, and Solukhumbu. He said the Government main-

ASTUTELY, PRACHANDA, WHILE FIRING SALVOS AT NC, INDICATING THEIR ALLIANCE HAS NOT BEEN REWARDING FOR HIS PARTY, IS ALSO SUGGESTING THAT THE OPTION IS OPEN OF RETURNING TO THE CPN (UML) FOLD, A HOMECOMING FOR WHICH CHINESE LEADERS WILL GIVE THEIR RIGHT ARM

tains silence, especially the ruling Communists. Ambassador Chen Song and other CPC leaders like Sun Haiyan are brazenly criticising India for "not being a friendly neighbour and not so beneficial for Nepal". Nepal mildly smacked China for violating diplomatic norms. President Xi first visited Nepal in 2019 resulting in the 20 agreements none of which materialised. In 2016, the Trade and Transit Treaty with China following the blockade resulted in China granting access to seven sea and land ports for third-country trade and commerce and promised of alternate source of petroleum. Not a litre was provided. India built a pipeline from Motihari to Amlekhgunj and provided Nepal with its fuel requirements in full. The rail link from Kirung to Kathmandu first mooted in 1973 was followed by a feasibility study in 2018-20. Total silence prevails on Chinese connectivity projects. India submitted the preliminary feasibility report on a rail link with Kathmandu two years ago. Funding has to be worked out. Nepal can sell power to India to the order of 452.6 MW plus 108 MW with an additional 10,000 MW in the next ten years. This will redress the trade balance. China export-

ed USD1.7bn worth of goods in 2022 while it imported USD5.11 mn and has just reopened some border trade posts. Protests were launched in the first week of February about BRI and the Chinese-built Pokhara airport. When I was in the VIP lounge of the Pokhara airport on 27 November 2023, the carpets were soiled with water leaking. It is also the only airport in Nepal with an aerobridge. But what's the use, since there are no international flights? Prachanda has managed foreign relations deftly balancing US and China and India and China. Kathmandu issued a statement that criticised Israel's humanitarian breaches in Gaza as well as called Russia's war against Ukraine an aggression that must stop. Further, he asked Russia to stop enlisting Nepalese nationals into its army. The villain of the piece is India's flawed Agniveer which has shredded the strategic strand in India-Nepal relations. Still, for Delhi, Prachanda is the right horse to back while keeping Deuba in the stable. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. Views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POLITICAL TURMOIL IN PAKISTAN

Sir — It was quite obvious that Imran Khan's inswingers and outswingers may not work wonders in the political field. The power of balance in Pakistan is poised on a fragile platform. Sharif, Zardari, and Khan constitute a lopsided triangle. All three are high-stakes gamblers in the no-limits political casino. The croupier owner is the army. All three know that this is their last throw of the dice.

The 2024 Pakistan elections will be remembered as one in which leaders fought to stay out of power after the results came in. The Sharifs and Bhuttos have turned the "etiquette" into a strained joke. Who is the first - is a question mark. Nawaz Sharif has stepped aside for his brother Shehbaz to become Prime Minister. He is still hoping to be promoted to saviour when history calls. The Pakistani people suffer forever.

CK Subramaniam | Chennai

### HISTORIC BADMINTON VICTORY

Sir — It refers to "Indian women clinch historic gold." Not many would know Anmol Kharb 3 years ago, but such is the nerves of steel this 17-year-old that three times last week she came to the rescue of her team and clinched the decider. She was playing in her first international tournament and world no. 472 beat many higher-ranked players from China, Japan and Thailand. India's men's team won the Thomas Cup 2 years ago, but the women's team could never win a team title, that long drought has ended in a style because the unseeded Indian women's team beat China, Japan and Thailand during their title win. One thing is certain the Indian Women's Badminton story is not going to end with P.V. Sindhu as Treesa, Gaytri and Anmol will carry on the legacy and take the baton ahead with much more hope and will bring many laurels for the country. Thousands of young girls should take up this sport after this inspiring performance.

Bal Govind | Noida

### Social justice key to peace



Though the world has tremendously taken off in all spheres of life, there are some races, classes, and religions that feel or are deprived of equal chances to education, health-care, employment, and privileges, among others. Social justice aims at correcting this, and a robust social justice system encompasses social integration, equal employment opportunities, and poverty eradication. Nations around the world are inter-linked socially and economically. Social development and social justice are inextricably linked to

each other and are crucial for fostering peace and security among nations. On the corollary, social justice and social development cannot be attained in the absence of peace and security or the absence of human rights.

"Global coalition for social justice: bridging gaps, building alliances" is a natural theme for World Social Justice Day on February 20. Social justice should be the pivot around which national and international policies have to revolve. But global prosperity has a big stumbling block: the injustice and insecurity faced by sections of society. Inclusive Governments fight for social justice and, consequently, national progress. Institutional reforms and better labour market outcomes are offshoots of effective governance. Every society should be transparent, honest, and accountable to promote much-needed social justice.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

### ELECTORAL BONDS NO LONGER VALID

Sir — The Supreme Court (SC) has declared the Electoral Bond (EB) Scheme unconstitutional and upheld the citizens' right to know, as enshrined in the Constitution and the Right to Information Act. The BJP government had concealed the details of the EBs through shrewd legislative manoeuvring. The Representation of the People Act was amended to exclude the EBs from the mandatory reporting requirements, as well as the IT Act and the Companies Act to ensure total secrecy. Bizarrely enough, the Government argued in the SC that "citizens do not have a right to know the funding of political parties." UIC Law Review published the scholarly work of Conrad Foreman, "Money in Politics: Campaign Finance and its Influence over the Political Process and Public Policy" (2018). He wrote, "Beyond being competitive in the race, fundraising superiority correlates with victories: the better-funded candidate tends to win Congressional races. Between 2010 and 2016, candidates who outspent their

opponents won ninety per cent of House elections." He further wrote, "After winning their seats, it would only be natural for legislators to consider how their decisions as lawmakers might affect their campaign donors." and how legislation tends to favour the interests of big business and wealthy individuals over average Americans. In September 2017, the Australia Institute published a report titled, The Tip of the Iceberg: Political Donations from the Mining Industry, which looked at patterns of political donations declared by the mining industry during the 10 years to 2016. The report found that "Donations correlate with the election cycle, timelines on project approvals, and debates on key industry policies such as the mining tax and carbon price." Nonetheless, the specifics of corporate funding of political parties are fully disclosed in these countries.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

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# How effective is the UN in conflict mitigation

From structural drawbacks to the intertwined interests of its members, the UN faces myriad obstacles in its quest for global harmony



RAMYA DUBEY

The United Nations (UN), established in 1945 as a successor to the League of Nations, set out with the ambitious objective of preventing global conflicts and maintaining international peace. However, throughout its history, the UN has encountered numerous challenges and criticisms, casting doubt on its effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate. This article delves into the journey of the UN, its shortcomings, and contemporary geopolitical conflicts that underscore its limitations.

The League of Nations, established after World War I (1914-1919), aimed to prevent future wars but ultimately failed to prevent World War II (1939-1945), leading to the creation of the United Nations. While inheriting the aspirations of its predecessor, the UN has faced its own set of shortcomings.

One major criticism lies in the structure of the UN, particularly the Security Council. The veto power and power imbalances among its permanent members often impede decisive



action, as seen in conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine dispute, highlighting the organization's limitations in addressing geopolitical crises effectively.

A significant limitation of the UN is its reliance on member states for military contributions. The absence of a standing UN military force has resulted in delays and compromises in responding promptly to crises, as evident in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's address to the UN Security Council in April 2022 emphasised the potential consequences of the UN's failure in resolving conflicts, raising profound concerns

about the organisation's efficacy.

Furthermore, the UN's dependence on member states for peacekeeping missions can lead to delays and compromises in crisis responses, as illustrated by the complexities of the Israel-Gaza conflict.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), responsible for global peace and security, has long been criticised for its exclusive permanent membership limited to five nations. The dominance of a select few countries within the UNSC raises questions about the organization's adaptability to the evolving global landscape. India, among other nations, has demonstrated the quali-

fications for permanent UNSC membership, yet the exclusive club remains closed, sparking debates on fairness and representation. Calls for UNSC reform have been ongoing, proposing solutions such as expanding permanent membership or including more rotating seats. However, resistance to these discussions highlights the challenge of diluting the power of existing permanent members.

In conclusion, while the United Nations strives to uphold its noble intentions, it faces significant hurdles in fulfilling its mission. Addressing structural issues within the Security Council, enhancing peacekeeping capabilities, and promoting diplomatic solutions are imperative for the UN to adapt to the demands of a complex global landscape. Criticism, though essential for improvement, must be met with a collective commitment to strengthen the UN's ability to foster international peace and security. (The writer is a political science student of Bharati college, Delhi University; views are personal)

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## FIRST COLUMN

## SEEKING TRUTH IN THE WORLD OF DECEPTION

When we shed body consciousness and identify ourselves as a soul, truth prevails



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

We all know that dishonesty is a part of life and the majority of us lie, cheat, and deceive not just to increase our gains but for a variety of reasons that relate as much to our own particular social and moral underpinnings as to the task at hand. A commonly accepted definition of the term lie is a false statement made by an individual who knows that the statement is not true. This definition emphasises the volitional nature of a lie, recognising that not only must the liar make a false statement, but that he/she must also know that the statement is indeed false.

Looking around would make us realise that we are living in a world where conditions are so fertile for falsehood to flourish that the very idea of truth is tainted. Isn't it? One of the reasons for this is that it is easier to climb down the ladder of values than climb up. There are several versions in which falsehood breeds. Corruption is rampant in every sphere. To tackle this menace, the governments are installing and sharpening anti-corruption machinery. However, as we can see, corruption is growing like a chain reaction.

Anti-social elements find newer ways of perpetuating corruption. Similarly, to ensure a just society, parliaments keep making new laws while the judiciaries keep guard, pronouncing more landmark judgements. But with changing times, more and more unique cases of crime and dispute come up and the current measures of justice fall short hence the chain continues. To ensure equity, governments give special privileges to women, scheduled tribes, backward castes, and others. There is no end to this list as groups demanding special status due to discrimination in the past have been increasing instead of reducing and laws fail to strike at the notion of separateness that causes this division.



Thus the whole idea of fairness or equity keeps getting fainter. The criteria of a healthy society today, paradoxically, is the number of hospitals, which is false in its very sense, because more hospitals are an indicator of more illness and greater physical and mental distress. A major percentage of a country's wealth that is spent in the name of security concerns proves the concept of security a sham because more and more sophisticated technologies are developed today to make weapons causing more destruction under the pretext of protection. It is a great irony of the age that while making weapons in the name of security, nations spread insecurity and hold to ransom the sea of humanity against which they may be used. In short, our every step towards progress is split and ends with several steps towards downfall. We fail to see that notions of equity, security, and peace have contradictory characteristics that perpetuate what they aim to restrain.

The need of the hour is to view the current state of affairs in totality from a broader perspective. It is not the result of individual problems cropping up together at the same time. In reality, all this is an indicator of the fact that the present time is in a state of spiritual crisis where values of mercy, kindness, humility and love have been replaced by cruelty, aggression, dominance and hatred. Concepts of happiness, joy and peace have become false & faithfulness and loyalty have become dubious. Remember! there will be no end to falsehood unless its root cause i.e. the identification of self as the body is not removed. We must realise that the soul is eternal. In other words, it is the truth. The body is prone to destruction and is hence transient. When we shed body consciousness and identify ourselves as a soul, truth prevails and other constructions, which were built on faulty foundations, collapse automatically.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

# An epitome of wisdom, service and compassion



NARENDRA MODI

Acharya Vidhyasagar Maharaj ji was one of the greatest saints of our times. He was a true tapasvi, whose life was dedicated to the ideals of Bhagwan Mahavir



Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri 108 Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji attained Samadhi and left us all saddened. His life is a spiritually rich epoch graced with profound wisdom, boundless compassion and an unwavering commitment to uplift humanity. I have had the honour of receiving his blessings on numerous occasions. Thus, I feel a deep sense of loss, akin to losing a guiding light that has illuminated the path for countless souls, including myself. His warmth, affection and blessings were not just gestures of goodwill but profound transmissions of spiritual energy, empowering and inspiring all those fortunate enough to have come in contact with him.

Pujya Acharya Ji will always be remembered as a Triveni of wisdom, compassion and service. He was a true Tapasvi, whose life epitomised the ideals of Bhagwan Mahavir. His life exemplified the core principles of Jainism, embodying its ideals through his own actions and teachings. His care towards all living beings mirrored Jainism's profound respect for life.

He lived a life of truthfulness, reflecting Jainism's emphasis on honesty in thought, word, and deed. He also led a very simple lifestyle. It is due to stalwarts like him that the world continues to be inspired by Jainism and the life of Bhagwan Mahavir. He stood tall among the Jain community but his impact and influence were not limited to only one community. People across faiths, regions and cultures came to him and he worked tirelessly towards spiritual awakening, particularly among the youth.

Education was an area very close to his heart. His journey from Vidhyadhar (his childhood name) to Vidhyasagar was one of deep commitment to acquiring and imparting knowledge. It was his firm

belief that education is the cornerstone of a just and enlightened society. He championed the cause of knowledge as a means to empower individuals, enabling them to lead lives of purpose and contribution. His teachings emphasised the importance of self-study and self-awareness as the pathways to true wisdom, urging his followers to engage in lifelong learning and spiritual growth.



MAHARAJ JI BELIEVED THAT A STRONG NATION IS BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF ITS CITIZENS' COMMITMENT TO THEIR DUTIES — TOWARDS THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILIES, SOCIETY AND THE COUNTRY

At the same time, Sant Shiromani Acharya Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji wanted our youngsters to get an education that is also rooted in our cultural ethos. He often said that it was because we drifted away from the learnings of the past that we were not able to find solutions to key challenges like water scarcity. He also believed that a holistic education is one that focuses on skilling and innovating. He took immense pride in India's linguistic diversity and encouraged youngsters to learn Indian languages.

Pujya Acharya Ji himself wrote extensively in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Hindi. The heights he reached as a saint, and how grounded he was on the earth, is seen clearly in his iconic work Mookmati. Through his works, he gave a voice to the downtrodden.

In the domain of healthcare too, Pujya Acharya Ji's contributions were transformative. He was associated with several efforts, especially in underserved areas. His approach to healthcare was holistic, integrating physical well-being with spiritual wellness, thereby addressing the needs of the per-

son as a whole. I would especially urge the coming generations to study extensively about Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji's commitment to nation building. He would always urge people to rise above any partisan considerations and instead focus on national interest. He was one of the strongest votaries of voting because he saw it as an expression of participation in democratic processes. He advocated healthy as well as clean politics, even saying that policy making has to be about people's welfare, not self-interest (Lokneeti is about Loksangrahnat Lobhsangrah). He believed that a strong nation is built on the foundation of its citizens' commitment to their duties towards themselves, their families, society, and the country. He encouraged individuals to cultivate virtues such as honesty, integrity and self-reliance, which he saw as essential for the creation of a just, compassionate, and thriving society. This emphasis on duties is of great importance as we work towards building a Viksit Bharat.

In an era where environmental degradation is rampant world over, Pujya Acharya Ji called for a way of life which would minimise the harm being inflicted on nature. Likewise, he saw a paramount role for agriculture in our economy, also stressing on making agriculture modern as well as sustainable. His work towards reforming jail inmates was also noteworthy. The beauty of our land is that for thousands of years, our soil has

produced greats who have shown light to others and made our society better. Pujya Acharya Ji stands as a towering figure in this illustrious lineage of saints and social reformers.

Whatever he did, he did not just for the present but also the future. In November last year, I had the opportunity to visit the Chandragiri Jain Mandir in Dongargarh in Chhattisgarh. Little did I know that this visit would be my last meeting with Pujya Acharya Ji. Those moments were very special. He spoke to me for a long time, blessing me for my efforts in serving the nation. He expressed joy on the direction our nation is taking and the respect India is getting on the world stage. He was filled with enthusiasm while talking about the work he was doing. Then and always, his gentle gaze and serene smile were enough to instill a sense of peace and purpose. His blessings felt like a soothing balm on the soul, a reminder of the divine presence within and around us.

Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri 108 Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji's void is deeply felt by all who knew him and were touched by his teachings and his life. However, he lives on in the hearts and minds of those he inspired. In honouring his memory, we commit to embodying the values he espoused. In this way, we not only pay tribute to a great soul but also take forward his mission for our country and people.

(This is an exclusive article by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi)

# Making nuts accessible to the common population

As the demand for premium quality dry fruits continues to soar, Indian farmers and manufacturers are exploring innovative techniques to increase productivity

Picture this: you're savouring the sweet crunch of almonds as you delve into your morning granola, or perhaps you're relishing the delicate chewiness of raisins in your favourite trail mix during an outdoor adventure. Across India, from bustling city streets to serene countryside landscapes, the allure of dry fruits is woven into the fabric of daily life.

These tiny, nutrient-packed powerhouses are not just snacks; they're a symbol of health, vitality, and tradition. In a nation where culinary delights are as diverse as its landscapes, dry fruits stand as a timeless treasure, cherished for their flavour, versatility, and myriad health benefits. Let's embark on a



GUNJAN JAIN

journey to uncover the captivating world of dry fruits and explore their profound significance in the lives of people across India. No wonder India's dry fruit industry is experiencing significant growth and is poised for even greater heights in the coming years. With the Indian Nut and Dry Fruit market currently standing at a staggering 56,000 Crore, it's evident that this sector holds

immense potential for economic growth and employment generation. Notably, the industry employs over 10 lakh individuals and is growing at a commendable Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 13-15%. Several factors contribute to the promising trajectory of India's dry fruit industry. Firstly, growing health consciousness among consumers has led to a surge in demand for nutritious and natural food products like dry fruits. These products are rich in essential nutrients, vitamins, and antioxidants, making them a preferred choice for health-conscious individuals. Furthermore, the rise of e-commerce platforms has made it easier for consumers to access a wide variety of dry

fruits and nuts from the comfort of their homes. This accessibility has not only expanded the consumer base but has also facilitated market penetration into remote areas.

Additionally, initiatives by the Government to promote agricultural exports and improve infrastructure facilities for food processing and storage have provided a significant boost to the dry fruit industry. Schemes such as the Agricultural Export Policy aim to enhance the competitiveness of Indian agricultural products in the global market, including dry fruits.

One recent event that highlighted the burgeoning potential of the dry fruit industry in India was the

MEWA 2024 exhibition held in Delhi. MEWA showcased the finest dry fruits and nuts from India and around the world. The exhibition witnessed participation from numerous foreign companies representing several countries, signifying the global interest and recognition of India's dry fruit market. With more than 200 exhibitors and 3000 participants, this event promised to elevate the industry by fostering advancements in research, innovation, production, trade, and consumption.

Noting the relentless efforts of the National Dry Fruit Council of India (NDFCI) Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla during the address underscored the transforma-

tive role of platforms like MEWA 2024 in fostering the growth and consolidation of the sector. He emphasised the urgent need to bolster the production of nuts and dry fruits in India, noting that the sector employs over 10 lakh individuals. Recognizing the potential for export growth, the Government of India is actively pursuing tech-enabled agritech solutions to enhance farmers' productivity.

He urged associations like NDFCI to increase the interaction with the farmer groups to explore the possibility of cultivating nuts & dry fruits as per the various Indian state's diverse climate conditions. The success of MEWA 2024 underscores the increasing demand for high-

quality dry fruits and nuts both domestically and internationally. India's rich agricultural diversity, coupled with advancements in processing and packaging technologies, positions the country as a leading player in the global dry fruit market.

As the demand for premium quality dry fruits continues to soar, Indian farmers and manufacturers are exploring innovative techniques to increase productivity and ensure the highest standards of quality and hygiene. From traditional varieties like almonds, cashews, and raisins to exotic imports like dried apricots and cranberries, India's dry fruit industry offers a diverse range of products to cater to varied consumer preferences.

Indeed with the promotion of dry fruits, it could be the revival of Indian agriculture as dry fruit is a high ticket premium product, at least ten times more costly than rice and wheat which can be a game changer for Indian farmers.

All they need is a little training, input and motivation. This would not only bring down the cost of dry fruits in the country and provide them with much-needed proteins to a largely vegetarian population but also raise the income levels of the farmers. The day is not far when dry fruits will not be beyond the reach of the common man and not a privilege of the rich.

(The writer is President NDFCI, views are personal)

# South Africa accuses Israel of apartheid against Palestinians

AP ■ THE HAGUE

South Africa argued at the United Nations' top court on Tuesday that Israel is responsible for apartheid against the Palestinians and that Israel's occupation of land sought for a Palestinian state is "inherently and fundamentally illegal." Israel rejects such claims. The South African representatives were speaking on the second day of hearings at the International Court of Justice into a request by the General Assembly for a non-binding advisory opinion on the legality of Israel's policies in the occupied territories.

"South Africa bears a special obligation, both to its own people and the international community, to ensure that wherever the egregious and offensive practices of apartheid occur, these must be called out for what they are and brought to an immediate end," the country's ambassador to the Netherlands, Vusumuzi Madonsela, told the panel of 15 international judges.

Israel rejects accusations of apartheid and usually dismisses UN bodies and international tribunals as unfair and biased against it. Israel is not making a statement during the hearings, which are taking place against the backdrop of the war in Gaza that has killed more than 29,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Israel sent a written submission last year in which it argued that the questions put to the court are prejudiced and "fail to recognize Israel's right and duty to protect its citizens," address Israeli security concerns or acknowledge past agreements with the Palestinians to negotiate "the permanent status of the territory, security arrangements, settlements, and borders."

Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek all

## Israel orders new evacuations in northern Gaza

Rafah (AP): Israel ordered new evacuations from parts of Gaza City on Tuesday, as a study led by the UN children's agency found that one in six children are acutely malnourished in the isolated and largely devastated north of the territory, where the city is located. The report finds deepening misery across the territory, where Israel's air and ground offensive, launched in response to Hamas' Oct 7 attack, has killed over 29,000 Palestinians, obliterated entire neighborhoods and displaced more than 80% of the population.

Israel has vowed to expand the offensive to the Gaza Strip's southernmost city of Rafah, where more than half of the territory's population of 2.3 million has sought refuge from fighting elsewhere. Many have crowded into sprawling tent camps and overflowing UN-run shelters near the Egyptian border. On Tuesday, the military ordered the evacuation of the Zaytoun and Turkoman neighbourhoods on the southern edge of Gaza City, an indication that Palestinian militants are still putting up stiff resistance in areas of northern Gaza that the Israeli military said had been largely cleared weeks ago. Residents said there have been airstrikes and heavy ground fighting in eastern parts of Gaza City over the past two days. "The situation is very difficult," said Ayman Abu Awad, who lives in Zaytoun. "We are trapped inside our homes." The report by the Global Nutrition Cluster,

three areas for an independent state. Israel considers the West Bank to be disputed territory

and says its future should be decided in negotiations. Israel has also built settle-

ments across the West Bank, many of which resemble fully developed suburbs and small towns. The settlements are home to more than 500,000 Jewish settlers, while around 3 million Palestinians live in the territory. Israel annexed east Jerusalem and considers the entire city to be its capital.

The international community overwhelmingly considers the settlements to be illegal. Israel's annexation of east Jerusalem, home to the city's most sensitive holy sites, is not internationally recognized. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement Monday that Israel does not recognize the legitimacy of the discussions at the International Court of Justice. He called the case "part of the Palestinian attempt to dictate the results of the political agreement without negotiations."

South African representative Pieter Andreas Stemmet told the court on Tuesday that the settlements have extended the "temporary nature of the occupation into a permanent situation in violation of the Palestinian right to self-determination."

South Africa's legal arguments echoed those made a day earlier by Palestinian representatives as six days of hearings opened before the Netherlands-based court. After the Palestinians opened hearings, a total of 51 nations and three international organizations are scheduled to address the court, which will likely take months to issue its advisory opinion. The Palestinians argue that Israel's open-ended military occupation has violated the prohibition on territorial conquest and the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and has imposed a system of racial discrimination and apartheid.

"This occupation is annexation and supremacist in nature," Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki said Tuesday.

Julian Assange's lawyers began their final UK legal challenge Tuesday to stop the WikiLeaks founder from being sent to the United States to face spying charges, arguing that his actions had exposed serious criminal actions by US authorities that were "of obvious and important public interest". Assange himself was not in court. Judge Victoria Sharp said he was granted permission to come from Belmarsh Prison but had chosen not to attend. Assange's lawyer, Edward Fitzgerald, said he was unwell.

The 52-year-old has been fighting extradition for more than a decade, including seven years in self-exile in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London and the last five years in a high-security prison.

Dozens of supporters holding "Free Julian Assange" signs and chanting "there is only one

decision - no extradition" held a noisy protest outside the High Court in London, where Assange's attorneys will ask two High Court judges to grant a new appeal hearing, his last legal roll of the dice in Britain.

He is being prosecuted for engaging in ordinary journalistic practice of obtaining and publishing classified information, information that is both true and of obvious and important public interest,"

Italy again prosecutes Egypt officials

Rome (AP): Four high-level Egyptian security officials went on trial in absentia before a Rome court on Tuesday, accused in the 2016 abduction, torture and slaying of an Italian doctoral student in Cairo. The parents of the slain student Giulio Regeni, Paola and Giulio Regeni, were on hand for the opening court session and posed outside the tribunal with a banner "Truth for Giulio Regeni". Regeni's body was found on a highway days after he disappeared in the Egyptian capital on January 25, 2016. He was in Cairo to research union activities among street vendors as part of his doctoral thesis. His mother has said his body was so mutilated by torture that she was only able to recognise the tip of his nose when she viewed it.

# Assange starts legal battle to avoid extradition to US on spy charges

AP ■ LONDON



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Fitzgerald said in court. In written submissions, the lawyer said that "Julian Assange and Wikileaks were responsible for the exposure of criminality on the part of the US government on an unprecedented scale." Fitzgerald also said there is a "real risk he will suffer a flagrant denial of justice" if sent to the US. If the judges rule against Assange, he can ask the European Court of Human Rights to block his extradition — though supporters worry he could be put on a plane to the US before that happens. Supporters plan to demonstrate outside the neo-Gothic court building on both days and march to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Downing Street office at the end of the hearing.

Judges Victoria Sharp and Jeremy Johnson could deliver a verdict at the end of the two-day hearing on Wednesday, but they're more likely to take

several weeks to consider their decision. "This hearing marks the beginning of the end of the extradition case, as any grounds rejected by these judges cannot be further appealed in the UK — bringing Assange dangerously close to extradition," the press freedom group Reporters Without Borders said. Assange, an Australian citizen, has been indicted on 17 charges of espionage and one charge of computer misuse over his website's publication of classified US documents. US prosecutors say he helped US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published, putting lives at risk. To his supporters, Assange is a secrecy-busting journalist who exposed US military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan and is entitled to First Amendment protections.

to act after delaying the move for more than 1 1/2-year since admitting a new country to the military alliance requires unanimous approval.

On Sunday, a bipartisan group of US senators visited Hungary and announced they would submit a joint resolution to Congress condemning alleged democratic backsliding in the country and urging Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to move forward on approving Sweden's accession as soon as possible.

Sen. Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, said in Budapest on Sunday that members of the Hungarian government and Fidesz had refused to meet with the delegation — something he called "strange and concerning" — but said that the onus was on the long-serving leader to push for a vote.

"We are wise enough about

politics here to know that if Prime Minister Orbán wants this to happen, then the parliament can move forward," he said.

Orbán has faced isolation over his obstruction of key decisions by his international allies, including putting up roadblocks to EU funding for cash-strapped Ukraine. But in a state of the nation speech in Budapest on Saturday, Orbán indicated that Hungary's legislature might soon relent. "It's good news that our dispute with Sweden is nearing a conclusion," he said. "We are moving towards ratifying Sweden's accession to NATO at the beginning of the spring session of Parliament." Reacting to the news of the vote, Sweden's Defence Minister, Pål Jonson said in Stockholm that Sweden "naturally welcome this."

"It is of course very welcome," Jonson said.

# Hungary's governing party ready to approve Sweden's NATO accession

Budapest (AP): A vote in Hungary's parliament on ratifying Sweden's bid to join NATO could come as early as Monday, according to a senior member of the country's governing Fidesz party. It would bring an end to more than 18 months of delays by the nationalist government that have frustrated Hungary's allies. In a letter on Tuesday to the speaker of the parliament, the head of the Fidesz caucus, Máté Kocsis, requested that a vote be scheduled for the opening day of the spring session, which begins on Monday. Kocsis wrote that Fidesz, which has repeatedly blocked a vote on the matter, will opt to support Sweden's bid to join the trans-Atlantic military alliance. Hungary is the only one of NATO's 31 existing members not to have ratified Sweden's bid. The Hungarian government faces mounting pressure

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# US vetoes Gaza ceasefire

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The United States vetoed an Arab-backed UN resolution on Tuesday demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war in the embattled Gaza Strip. The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 13-1 with the United Kingdom abstaining, reflecting the wide global support for ending the more than four-month war that started with Hamas' surprise invasion of southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people and saw 250 others taken hostage.

Since then, more than 29,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants but says the majority are women and children. It was the third US veto of a Security Council resolution demanding a cease-fire in Gaza. The Biden administration had said it would veto the resolution because of concerns it would interfere with efforts to arrange a deal between the

warring parties aimed at bringing at least a six-week halt to hostilities and releasing all hostages.

In a surprise move ahead of the vote, the United States circulated a rival UN Security Council resolution that would support a temporary cease-fire in Gaza linked to the release of all hostages, and call for the lifting of all restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid. Both of these actions "would help to create the conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities," the draft resolution obtained by The Associated Press says.

US deputy ambassador Robert Wood told several reporters Monday that the Arab-backed resolution is not "an effective mechanism for trying to do the three things that we want to see happen — which is get hostages out, more aid in, and a lengthy pause to this conflict."

With the US draft, "what we're looking at is another possible option, and we'll be discussing this with friends going forward," Wood said. "I don't think you can expect anything to happen tomorrow." A

senior US official said later Monday that, "We don't believe in a rush to a vote." The official, speaking on condition of anonymity ahead of council discussions on the US draft, said, "We intend to engage in the coming days in intensive negotiation around it. ... That's why we're not putting a timeline on a vote, but we do recognize the urgency of the situation." Arab nations, supported by many of the 193 UN member countries, have been demanding a cease-fire for months.

Tunisia's UN Ambassador Tarek Ladeb, this month's chair of the 22-nation Arab Group, told UN reporters last Wednesday that a cease-fire is urgently needed.

He pointed to some 1.5 million Palestinians who sought safety in Gaza's southern city of Rafah and face a "catastrophic scenario" if Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu goes ahead with his announced plan to evacuate civilians from the city and move Israel's military offensive to the area bordering Egypt where Israel says Hamas fighters are hiding.

sions but insisted his centre-right government wanted to continue discussions with the protesters. The government

took back a threat to block the protest and police assisted with efforts to avoid disruptions to highway traffic.

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# Nikki Haley sharpening contrasts with Trump

AP ■ COLUMBIA

Nikki Haley is using the closing days of her South Carolina Republican primary matchup with Donald Trump to hone her argument that she is the lone remaining candidate who can unite Americans, despite the former president's electoral wins thus far and his popularity in her home state.

It's a tall order for Haley as South Carolina prepares to vote on Saturday. Trump's 2016 primary win helped cement his front-runner status, and he boasts support from all of the state's top elected leaders and all but one of its congressional Republicans.

But Haley has maintained that her ability to stick it out in the race, having outlasted a dozen also-ran candidates, means that she's in it for the long haul. Her amped-up fundraising could keep her going despite her earlier losses to Trump.

Part of Haley's argument is her continued showcase of her foreign policy knowhow, having served as Trump's United Nations ambassador for two



years, as more and more of her campaign appearances feature areas in which she says she would have acted differently than her former boss.

"I will absolutely put the hammer on our NATO countries that they do have to carry their weight, but you do that behind closed doors," Haley said Sunday during a town hall on Fox News with John

Roberts, broadcast from a venue in downtown Columbia, South Carolina.

It was a reference to Trump's warning to NATO allies during a campaign rally earlier this month that he "would encourage" Russia "to do whatever the hell they want" to countries that are "delinquent" — nations that in his view are not doing their part in that alliance. NATO's leader said Trump's attacks on longstanding international alliances and foreign aid could undermine security and put American and European forces at risk.

"We should make sure we tell our partners it's in their best interest to hold their own weight," Haley said Sunday. She said "Trump did it by saying he was going to encourage Putin to invade our allies. That's the wrong way."

She sharpened those comments during a Monday morning campaign stop in the central South Carolina city of Sumter, home to an Air Force base as well as many military veterans. She said Trump is "siding with a thug" in

Vladimir Putin, whom she called "a dictator who killed his political opponents."

It's an argument she makes in a new television ad, part of a \$6 million advertising flurry Haley has released in the final weeks of the campaign across her state.

In "Unite," which begins airing Monday and was shared before its launch with The Associated Press, Haley argues she is the only choice among the remaining candidates who can handle disputes with foreign leaders in a way that will keep America on solid footing abroad.

"When your enemies think you're weak, your leader must be strong," a narrator says, over images of foreign leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping and Putin. "When your country is divided, your president must unite us."

The ad argues that Haley "provided moral clarity during our darkest hours," over headlines from coverage of the racist slaying of nine Black parishioners at a Charleston church in 2015, during Haley's second term as South Carolina

governor. "What's next? That's up to you."

Saying Sunday — as she has throughout her campaign — that she's "OK being the underdog now," Haley has been firm in saying that she has never lost a race and believes voters will see her as the right choice to shift away from the "chaos" she says follows Trump. She also frequently notes that, while Trump has won the earliest contests, she has been ascendant, pointing to the shrinking margins between her totals and Trump's in the Iowa and New Hampshire contests.

But over the weekend, Haley also began making an appeal to South Carolinians who typically vote in Democratic primaries, for Saturday's vote, a message she also echoed during campaign events on Monday.

She noted that anyone who didn't vote in the Feb. 3 Democratic primary — which attracted under 5% of eligible voters statewide — can vote in this one, as she bid for crossover support from people who want to cast a vote against Trump.

# Protesting Greek farmers head to Athens

AP ■ ATHENS

Farmers from around Greece were travelling to Athens in tractor convoys on Tuesday to demand more financial concessions from the government as the cost of living increases. Some 200 tractors formed the main convoy in central Greece heading southward, while thousands of protesters were expected to travel to the capital on chartered buses and ferries. The Greek farmers — whose demands are similar to those at widespread farmer protests elsewhere in Europe — have spent weeks staging sporadic blockades along highways and in rural towns. With horns blaring, the slow-moving main convoy headed out from the central Greek town of Kastrol, 120 km (75 miles) northwest of Athens, with Greek flags, black flags and protest banners fastened to the tractors. One banner read: "Without us you don't eat." Prime Minister



Kyriakos Mitsotakis, in a television interview late Monday, said he could not support additional tax breaks and conces-

sions but insisted his centre-right government wanted to continue discussions with the protesters. The government

took back a threat to block the protest and police assisted with efforts to avoid disruptions to highway traffic.

# British Indian teen murderer's lenient sentence to be reviewed

PTI ■ LONDON

London (PTI): The UK government on Tuesday approached the Court of Appeal over the "unduly lenient" sentence imposed on a 32-year-old man guilty of killing a British Indian teenage student, her friend and a school caretaker in Nottingham last year. Valdo Calocane was sentenced to a mental health order to be detained in a high-security hospital following a hearing at Nottingham Crown Court over the stabbing spree in the central England city in June 2023.

Grace O'Malley Kumar, 19, was a medical student who was returning to her university with Barnaby Webber when accosted by Calocane, who then went on to murder Ian Coates nearby.

# UK govt revamps logo with King Charles III's chosen domed crown

PTI ■ LONDON

In a move that symbolises a new royal era for the country, the UK government has updated the logo on its official GOV.UK digital services used across all departments for official day-to-day business with the chosen crown of King Charles III. When the 75-year-old acceded to the throne in September 2022, he chose to use the Tudor Crown in his Royal Cypher, marking a shift away from the St. Edward's Crown used by his late mother Queen Elizabeth II.

The design of the Tudor Crown can be distinguished by its slightly more domed appearance, which will now become the iconic image across British government notices. "Following the accession of His Majesty The King, we are updating the symbols of state to reflect the new design of the Tudor Crown," Deputy Prime Minister Oliver

Dowden said as he announced the change on Monday. "The digital realm is now an integral part of our lives, and as His Majesty's Government we take pride in the logo on its official GOV.UK today, honouring the chosen crown of our King," he said. The GOV.UK logo begins its transition this week to recognise the chosen crown of the King on its homepage and website menu bar. The transition is covered within the usual operating costs of the GOV.UK website, the UK Cabinet Office said.

It added that it is important people are aware of this change given that GOV.UK digital services are used by millions of people every single week — from passport and tax services to other official government information. "GOV.UK is an essential part of living, studying and working in the UK. It is used by millions of people weekly for both routine and sometimes life-

changing reasons such as getting access to benefits or finding a job," said Alex Burghart, Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office.

"Whilst we are importantly updating the GOV.UK logo to reflect the new monarch's choice of crown, this site remains the same trusted and official digital home of the UK government," he said. While the new domed shape can be easily identified, the public are encouraged to report any misleading and fraudulent GOV.UK styled websites via its dedicated reporting page during the course of the transition.

The new logo has been created collaboratively between the Government Digital Service (GDS), the Government Communication Service (GCS) and the Royal Household and the majority of changes to replace the St. Edward's Crown with the Tudor Crown logo on GOV.UK are expected to have taken place by March 1.



# Stalemate in formation in Pakistan Government

## PML-N, PPP fail to agree on power-sharing deal

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

There was no progress in the formation of a new coalition government in Pakistan on Tuesday as top leaders of the PML-N and the PPP failed to agree on a power-sharing deal in their latest round of talks, indicating deepening fissures in the country's political landscape. The fifth round of the meeting, held at the residence of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Senator Ishaq Dar here on Monday, saw the participation of prominent leaders from both parties, who have pledged to work together in the interest of the cash-strapped country.

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) delegation comprised senior leaders Murad Ali Shah, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Nadeem Afzal Chan, and others, the Express Tribune newspaper reported on Tuesday.

After a three-hour deliberation on Monday, the negotiation hit a snag prompting a temporary halt, with both PML-N and PPP agreeing to reconvene at 10 pm on Monday. However, the meeting did not take place. Eventually, at 11 pm, the PML-N concluded their meeting, announcing that discussions with PPP would resume on Wednesday.

In an informal conversation with reporters after the first round of the meeting, PML-N leader Azam Nazir Tarar conveyed a positive trajectory in the ongoing discussions. "Some things have already been decided on the matter of PPP's inclusion in the cabinet," Tarar was quoted as saying by Geo News. The PPP

is reportedly asking for key constitutional positions of President, Chairman Senate, and Speaker of the National Assembly for its support to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's PML-N.

Sources said PPP Chairman Bilawal Zardari-Bhutto was playing smartly and trying to bring PML-N to a point where it withdrew from making a coalition government and then launching himself as prime minister and form a government with the support of independents of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who have now joined the Sunni Ittehad Council.

But it will not be easy for the 35-year-old former foreign minister as PTI has already rejected the possibility of supporting the PPP.

Meanwhile, Bilawal on Tuesday said he foresees a "stalemate" in the formation of a coalition government "if someone is not ready to change their stance." "If someone else wants to change their stance, there can be progress. If they are not ready to change it, I foresee a stalemate," he said, adding that this would not benefit democracy or the parliamentary system.

"If I want to give the PML-N a vote, I will have to give it on my terms and not theirs," the former foreign minister told reporters at the Supreme Court.

"The delay [in forming the government] is because of non-seriousness," he said, adding that the situation is harming Pakistan's democracy.

## Anti-terror bill needs national referendum unless amended, says SL court

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka's Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that the proposed anti-terrorism bill would need a national referendum to be passed unless amendments recommended by it for some clauses are incorporated into it.

The apex court's determination on the constitutionality of the bill was read out in Parliament on Tuesday morning by Deputy Speaker Ajith Rajapaksa. Rajapaksa, reading the apex court's order, said eight clauses in the bill had been "deemed inconsistent" with the Constitution. Therefore, it needs a two-thirds majority and in some cases needs to be approved by a referendum to become law, he said. If amended in line with the top court's recommendations, the bill can be adopted with a simple majority in the 225-member Parliament, Rajapaksa added.

Over 30 petitions had been filed against the controversial bill in the Supreme Court to verify its constitutionality. The bill, gazetted in March 2023, sought to replace the much-maligned Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) 1979. The PTA, had come under fire from international human rights groups for its draconian nature.

### PARADIPPORT AUTHORITY e-TENDER CALL NOTICE (TCN)

No. FA/EDP/POS-06/2023/32  
Name of the work "Facility Management of Integrated Port Operation System (POS) and SagarSetu". Estimated cost: Rs.1,51,53,037/-. Last date & time of submission of bid: dt.11/03/2024 up to 17:00 Hrs.  
Refer our website for details https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.  
Sd/- Dy. Director, EDP Cell, F&A  
PPA/PR/88/2023-24 dtd.19.02.2024

# Money sought for Ukraine would be spent in US, says Joe Biden

AP ■ MESQUITE

At a bustling construction site outside of Dallas, there are hopes that Congress can finally pass nearly USD 95 billion in foreign aid including funding for Ukraine — because factory jobs in the United States depend on that money. Aerospace and defence company General Dynamics' new factory in the Dallas suburb of Mesquite is expected to initially employ 150 people to produce munitions. Set to open in June, construction is nearing completion, with newly planted trees and shrubs already in place at the complex overlooking one of the area's busiest interstates.

"We want to increase our wages and increase our skill levels and job opportunities," said Kim Buttram, Mesquite's director of economic development, who added that the factory is expected to have over 300 jobs when it's at full production. As President Joe Biden pushes House Republicans to pass needed aid, he wants voters to understand that nearly two-thirds — or nearly USD 40 billion — of the money for Ukraine would actually go to US factories spread out across the country including plants in Lima, Ohio and Scranton, Pennsylvania as well as Mesquite. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has refused to put the bill up for a vote on the House floor on the premise that it does not meet the needs of the American public.

The supplemental spending measure contains a total of USD 95 billion in foreign aid, including money for Ukraine, Israel and other countries. Of the USD 60.7 billion for Ukraine, USD 38.8 billion would go to US factories that make missiles, munitions and other gear, according to figures provided to The Associated Press by the Biden administration. "While this bill sends military equipment to Ukraine," Biden said on Tuesday, "it spends the money right here in

the United States of America in places like Arizona, where the Patriot missiles are built; and Alabama, where the Javelin missiles are built; and Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Texas, where artillery shells are made."

The president's argument challenges criticism by some Republican lawmakers that the federal government should be spending more money at home instead of supporting overseas wars. In this case, most of the money goes to US companies and workers, funding assembly lines to refill depleted stockpiles of weapons and gear that have already gone to Ukraine.

The Democratic president is openly channelling Franklin Delano Roosevelt and resurrecting the World War II-era concept that America is the "arsenal of democracy." His sales pitch to the public is that his foreign policy is also about jobs for the US middle class. But Biden is brushing up against opposition from former President Donald Trump, the Republican front-runner who ascended to the White House in 2016 on the promise of reviving US manufacturing.

Trump opposes the US package to help Ukraine and has openly expressed a willingness to let Russia invade NATO allies who do not spend enough of their own budgets on defence. Many Republicans in Congress have taken their lead from Trump, with the party's right flank increasingly questioning the value of US interventions around the world and long-standing alliances built in the aftermath of World War II.

Johnson has refused to bring the foreign aid bill up for a vote because it also lacks provisions to secure the US southern border where immigrants are crossing illegally. But he previously rejected a bipartisan Senate bill that did provide funding to address immigration challenges, saying that the border measures would not solve the problem in the way that he wanted.

**Central Tribal University of A.P.**  
Vizianagaram (A.P.) 535003  
**Recruitment Notification**  
Applications are invited from the prospective & eligible candidates for the posts of Registrar and Private Secretary. Visit University website [www.ctuap.ac.in](http://www.ctuap.ac.in) for qualifications, eligibility criteria and other details.  
Last date to apply online : 11/03/2024 (23:59 hrs)  
Adv't.No. CTUAP/Adv't-NT/2024/414 dt. 19/02/2024 Registrar (I/c)

**STATE INFRASTRUCTURE & INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF UTTARAKHAND LTD.**  
29, IIE, SAHASTRADHARA ROAD (IT PARK), DEHRADUN  
Ph No. 0135-2708100 Fax 0135-2708109 Web site : www.sildcl.com  
**Tender Notice**  
सिस्कुल के औद्योगिक आस्थान हरिद्वार में बीओ साईट / आरओओ अथवा फ्लू स्टेशन के निर्माण कार्य हेतु इच्छुक बोलीदाता के चयन हेतु 01 नम निविदा दिनांक 07.03.2024 के अपराह्न 02.00 बजे तक e-tendering द्वारा आमंत्रित की गयी है। निस्सृत निविदा नोटिस सिस्कुल की वेबसाईट [www.sildcl.com](http://www.sildcl.com) एवं [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर दिनांक 16.02.2024 से देखी जा सकती है। इस सम्बन्ध में यथा आवश्यक Corrigendum केवल उक्त Website पर ही upload किये जायेंगे।  
Managing Director

**APPENDIX IV-A**  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**  
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 26.03.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 13,96,749/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Ninety Six Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Nine only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLK000172740, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 13.02.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 14.02.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from SATISH SINGH and SONI.  
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 8,95,000/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Ninety Five Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 89,500/- (Rupees Eighty Nine Thousand Five Hundred only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
FLAT NO. GF - 3, GROUND FLOOR REAR RHS, PLOT NO. B - 6/4, DLF ANKUR VIHAR, LONI, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201001.  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 15.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : GHAZIABAD Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

**APPENDIX IV-A**  
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E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 26.03.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 27,50,791/- (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakh Fifty Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety One only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLN000308787, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 13.02.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 14.02.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from DHARMENDER KUMAR and PRIYANKA DHAMA.  
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 14,50,000/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Fifty Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,45,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Forty Five Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
FLAT NO. GF - 03, GROUND FLOOR, ADMEASURING AREA 65.03 SQ MTR, REAR RIGHT HAND SIDE, PLOT NO. B - 59, BLOCK - A, SLF VED VIHAR, KHASARNA - 409, LONI GHAZIABAD - 250601, UTTAR PRADESH.  
BOUNDED AS :  
NORTH : PLOT NO. B-60 WEST : ROAD  
SOUTH : PLOT NO. B-58 EAST : PLOT NO. B-51  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 15.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : GHAZIABAD Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

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E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 26.03.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 16,80,942/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakh Eighty Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Two Only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLRH00296244, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 15.02.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 16.02.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from DEEPAK KUMAR and BILLA.  
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 16,90,000/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakh Ninety Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,69,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Sixty Nine Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
PLOT NO. A-22 (BACK SIDE) ON FIRST FLOOR ADMEASURING 50 SQUARE YARDS I.E. 41.81 SQUARE METERS (WITHOUT ROOFTERRACE RIGHTS), GALI NO. 2, PURI OF KHASRA NO. 104/1, SITUATED IN VILLAGE PALAM, BLOCK-A, RAJA PURI, UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059, ALONGWITH PROPORTIONATE RIGHTS OF THE LAND UNDERNEATH, TOGETHER WITH ONE TWO-WHEELER PARKING SPACE AND WHICH IS BOUNDED AS UNDER:-  
EAST :- PORTION OF PLOT NO. 22 NORTH :- LANE 10 FEET  
WEST :- PLOT NO. 23 SOUTH :- PORTION OF BUILDING  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 16.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : NEW DELHI Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

**APPENDIX IV-A**  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**  
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 11.03.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 24,03,987/- (Rupees Twenty Four Lakh Three Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Seven only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLJK00368516, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 15.02.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 16.02.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from AMIT KUMAR and SARDA.  
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 20,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
FLAT ADMEASURING 55 SQ YARDS (SUPER BUILT UP AREA) ON FIRST FLOOR OF NORTH PORTION), SITUATED ON PLOT BEARING NO. A-17/2, TOGETHER WITH PROPORTIONATE UNDIVIDE OWNERSHIP RIGHTS IN THE LAND UNDERNEATH ADMEASURING 100 SQ. YDS., KHASRA NO. 7, SITUATED AT A BLOCK, JAWAHAR PARK, DEVI ROAD, NEW DELHI - 110062.  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 16.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : NEW DELHI Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

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The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 15,40,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Forty Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,54,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Fifty Four Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
RESIDENTIAL FLAT NO. SF - 4, MIG, ON SECOND FLOOR WITH ROOF RIGHT, REAR RHS (S + G + 2), HAVING TOTAL COVERED AREA 57.74 SQ. MTS., BUILT UP ON PLOT NO. B - 52, WARD NO. 01248R, PARGANA LONI, SLF VED VIHAR, LONI, GHAZIABAD - 201001, UTTAR PRADESH.  
THE SAID FLAT IS BOUNDED AS UNDER:-  
EAST : PLOT NO. B-58  
WEST : COMMON PASSAGE AND FLAT NO. SF-29 (HIG)  
NORTH : FLAT NO. SF 3 (LIG)  
SOUTH : PLOT NO. B-53  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 15.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : GHAZIABAD Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

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The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 9,30,000/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Thirty Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 93,000/- (Rupees Ninety Three Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
RESIDENTIAL FLAT BEARING NUMBER S. F. - 1 (L. I. G) ON SECOND FLOOR WITH ROOF RIGHTS, (RIGHT HAND FRONT SIDE), HAVING TOTAL COVERED AREA OF 325 SQUARE FEET EQUIVALENT TO 30.19 SQUARE METERS, CONSTRUCTED UPON RESIDENTIAL PLOT NUMBER B-1/22A, SITUATED IN "DLF ANKUR VIHAR", VILLAGE LONI, PARGANA AND TEHSIL LONI, DISTRICT GHAZIABAD, GHAZIABAD - 201012, UTTAR PRADESH AND WHICH IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS :-  
EAST : STAIRCASE  
WEST : ROAD 12 METER WIDE (ON GROUND FLOOR).  
NORTH : COMMON PASSAGE AND FLAT NUMBER S. F. 2 (M. I. G).  
SOUTH : PLOT NUMBER B-1/22B.  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 15.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : GHAZIABAD Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

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The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 22,45,000/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Forty Five Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 2,24,500/- (Rupees Two Lakh Twenty Four Thousand Five Hundred only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
RESIDENTIAL FLAT NO. G-2 (M. I. G) HAVING COVERED AREA 61.31 SQ. MTRS. ON THE GROUND FLOOR, REAR SIDE, SITUATED ON PLOT NO. B-169, SHALIMAR GARDEN EXTENSION - 2, HADABAT VILLAGE PASONDA, TEHSIL LONI, DISTRICT GHAZIABAD - 201001, UTTAR PRADESH.  
BOUNDED AS UNDER:-  
EAST : SERVICE LANE NORTH : PLOT NO. B-170  
WEST : 40 FT. WIDER ROAD SOUTH : PLOT NO. B-168  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 15.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : GHAZIABAD Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

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The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 6,90,000/- (Rupees Six Lakh Ninety Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 69,000/- (Rupees Sixty Nine Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
PLOT NO. B-3/24, FLAT NO. FF - 4, FIRST FLOOR REAR RHS, LIG, DLF ANKUR VIHAR, LONI, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201012.  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 15.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : GHAZIABAD Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

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The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 8,60,000/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Sixty Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 86,000/- (Rupees Eighty Six Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
FLAT NO. SF - 12, SECOND FLOOR WITH ROOF RIGHTS, REAR RIGHT HAND SIDE, PLOT NO. B - 8/1, DLF ANKUR VIHAR, LONI, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201012.  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
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**APPENDIX IV-A**  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**  
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN : L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 26.03.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 1,84,87,693/- (Rupees One Crore Eighty Four Lakh Eighty Seven Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Three only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLN000290335, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 08.02.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 09.02.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from Mr. Ajay Grover, Mrs. Charu Grover and Mrs. Kamla Grover.  
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 1,05,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Five Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 10,50,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakh Fifty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
PROPERTY BEARING MUNICIPAL NO. XV/936 (NEW) MEASURING ABOUT 79 SQ. YDS. BUILT UP ENTIRE FIRST FLOOR, ENTIRE SECOND FLOOR, ENTIRE THIRD FLOOR WITH ITS TERRACE / ROOF RIGHTS AND ABOVE UPTO SKY, ALONGWITH PROPORTIONATE UNDIVIDE SHARE IN THE LAND, COMPRISED IN KHASRA NO. 2244/1215/1140, GALI NO.-2, BLOCK-QQ, SITUATED AT NAIWALA, KAROL BAGH, NEW DELHI - 110006. THE SAID PROPERTY IS BOUNDED AS UNDER:-  
NORTH : GALI EAST : PROPERTY NO. XVI/934-935  
SOUTH : PROPERTY NO. XVI/937 WEST : PROPERTY NO. XVI/937  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
Sd/-  
Date : 15.02.2024 Authorized officer  
Place : NEW DELHI Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
We, Radhey Buildhome Pvt. Ltd. in collaboration with Adani M2K Realtors LLP having its office at Adani Realty, Miracle Mile, 3rd Floor, Sector 60, Gurugram 122005 has proposed for migration of part area of Licence No. 24 of 2012 from Group Housing Colony to Commercial Colony (into two nos. of Licences of area measuring 2.05 Acres and 2.83125 Acres respectively), situated at Sector 102/102A, Gurugram under the migration policy of Town and Country Planning Department dt. 18.02.2016 and also proposed to change the Developer from Adani M2K Projects LLP to Adani M2K Realtors LLP in the said Licence No. 24 of 2012.  
We declare that we have not created any third party rights on the land pertaining to the Licence No. 24 of 2012. Any general public/allottees (if any) of the licenced colony (under Licence No. 24 of 2012 dated 27.03.2012) has any objection to the above said migration and change of Developer, the same may be submitted in the office of Senior Town Planner, Gurugram within 30 Days from the date of issue of this Public Notice.  
Place: Gurugram For M/s Radhey Buildhome Pvt. Ltd.  
Date: 21.02.2024 in Collaboration with  
M/s Adani M2K Realtors LLP

# 'India AI market to touch \$17 billion by 2027'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's AI market, growing at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 25-35 per cent is projected to reach USD 17-billion by 2027, according to a report.

This growth is fueled by multiple factors including increasing enterprise tech spending, India's growing AI talent base and a significant increase in AI investments, the report titled "AI Powered Tech Services: A Roadmap for Future Ready Firms; AI & GenAI's Role in Turbocharging the Industry." The Nasscom report in partnership with BCG was released on Tuesday at the sidelines of the Nasscom Technology & Leadership Forum 2024 here.

Globally, investments in AI have seen 24 per cent CAGR since 2019, with 2023 seeing



close to USD 83-billion investment, it said.

Majority of investments were made in data analytics, GenAI, and ML algos and platforms, as per the report. Notably, around 93 per cent of the investments made by Indian tech services and made-in-India product players focus on digital

content, data analytics and supply chain, according to the report.

With increasing enterprise tech spending, technology service providers are developing a wide array of innovative AI-based services and solutions, expanding their offerings beyond traditional IT services, it

stated. This includes the development of proprietary AI & GenAI platforms, tools for automation, data analytics solutions, and bespoke AI applications for specific industry verticals such as healthcare, banking & finance, and retail, the report said.

According to the report, India has the second highest installed talent base with 420,000 employees working in AI job functions.

India also has the highest skills penetration with three times more AI skilled talent than other countries. The country ranks among the top five nations with a 14 times growth in individuals skilled with AI in the last seven years, it said.

As the investments in AI continues to increase, the demand for AI talent in India is also expected to grow at 15 per cent CAGR till 2027, the Nasscom-BCG report said, adding the tech industry in India is already seeing more than 15 per cent growth in AI/ML jobs over the past 12 months with positions such as AI engineers growing at 67 per cent year-on-year.

Recognizing the importance of human capital in the AI journey, leading firms have invested heavily in upskilling and reskilling their workforce in AI and related technologies, with some organizations allocating USD 1-billion over the next three years dedicated to upskilling. "Indian tech companies, with the advent of Generative AI, are expanding their portfolios beyond traditional IT and business process management to include AI-driven analytics, intelligent automation, and personalized customer interactions," said Debjani Ghosh, President at Nasscom. These companies are not just adopting AI; they are redefining their service offerings, creating more value for their clients, and setting new industry standards, she noted.

## Draft AI regulation framework by July, says MoS IT

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The government will come out with a draft regulatory framework for artificial intelligence (AI) by June-July, Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Tuesday. Addressing the opening session of the two-day Nasscom leadership summit here, he said, "the government is working on a draft AI regulation framework that is set for release in June or July this year. The intention is to harness AI for economic growth and address potential risks and harms." Chandrasekhar further said

the government is also determined to build AI-skilled individuals. "We will fully exploit the potential of AI but set up the guardrails as well to prevent misuse. We are today seen by the world at the forefront to harness AI technology. We are all for deploying AI across use cases, from farm to factories and we want to use AI for economic growth, healthcare, agriculture, and farmer productivity," the minister said. The government has been planning to release an AI regulation framework for long now. Even in May 2023, he had shared plans to release the first draft of the framework. However, the same is yet to be released.



## Government mulls Maritime Development Fund

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering setting up a maritime development fund with a view to providing low cost, long-term financial support to the shipping sector, a senior government official said on Tuesday.

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Secretary T K Ramachandran at an event organised by industry body CII said, the government is also looking at granting infrastructure status to the shipping sector. "The government is working to set up Maritime Development Fund (MDF) for low-cost, long-term financing support," Ramachandran said.

According to him, the two options for setting up MDF are -- setting up dedicated maritime vertical under the newly proposed development finance institution, or constituting standalone MDF as a company with majority ownership by multilateral/bilateral agency.

Ramachandran further said the government is also considering notifying guidelines for setting up NBFCs at International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) to undertake vessel financing/leasing from IFSC. The government is also looking at removing restriction on foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) investing in category I and category II AIFs and amend Alternate Investment Fund (AIF) regulations to create a separate category of AIFs for investments in ship leasing companies.

According to the secretary, the government is also considering removing restriction on investment in ship leasing by insurance companies. He also said the ports ministry is planning to extend the shipbuilding financial assistance policy for another 10 years and that it is working for development of shipbuilding & repair clusters at Mumbai, Kochi and Chennai.

# Markets rally extends for sixth day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex spurted by 349 points while Nifty scaled a fresh lifetime high on the sixth straight day of gains on Tuesday, driven by buying in banking and select FMCG shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex reversed its early losses and closed higher by 349.24 points or 0.48 per cent at 73,057.40 in a volatile trade. As many as 18 Sensex shares closed in the green while 12 settled in the red.

The broader Nifty of the NSE rose further by 74.70 points or 0.34 per cent to close at a new record level of 22,196.95. Intraday, the 50-share index touched lifetime high of 22,215.60.

The key indices opened lower but renewed buying in private lenders helped the barometers reverse losses and closed in the green for the sixth consecutive session. In six days, Nifty jumped 580 points while Sensex rallied 1,984 points.

"Amidst market volatility, the domestic market is once again poised to approach record highs. The latest upward trajectory is bolstered by gains in the banking sector, with private banks witnessing a rebound from a recent sharp correction," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Among Sensex gainers, Power Grid jumped the most by 4.16 per cent after its board approved an investment of Rs



656 crore in transmission projects. Private lenders HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Bank, IndusInd Bank and ICICI Bank were also among lead gainers. NTPC, Nestle and Hindustan Unilever also ended the session with gains.

IT pack continued to decline with TCS being the biggest loser among Sensex shares, dropping by 1.75 per cent. HCLTech, Infosys and Wipro also declined.

Kotak Mahindra Bank shares rose by 1.83 per cent after the newly-appointed managing

director Ashok Vaswani announced major leadership changes at the bank.

Tech Mahindra defied a negative trend in IT shares and closed higher by 0.86 per cent after it bought a 100 per cent stake in Orchid Cybertech Services for USD 3.27 million.

In the broader market, Zee shares closed higher by 8 per cent after market reports suggested efforts were being made by Zee and Sony to salvage their failed merger deal. Meanwhile, Vibhor Steel Tubes had a bumper listing on stock exchanges as shares made their debut at a premium of 181 per cent over the IPO price. The stock closed at Rs 442, up 192 per cent from the issue price.

However, the BSE Midcap index dropped by 0.17 per cent and Smallcap by 0.18 per cent. Analysts said that the decline in midcap and smallcap indices suggests that investors are continuing to exercise caution due to higher valuations. Among sectoral indices, BSE Bankex rose the most by 1.23

per cent, followed by BSE Realty at 1.13 per cent and Financial Services at 0.87 per cent. BSE Utilities, Oil & Gas, and Capital Goods also rose up to 0.66 per cent. BSE IT fell the most by 0.92 per cent, followed by BSE Auto (0.82 per cent) and BSE Metal (0.74 per cent). Market breadth was positive with 1,949 shares closing in the green, 1,887 in the red and 95 settling unchanged.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies was at Rs 391.50 lakh crore (USD 4.72 trillion). Asian shares traded mixed on Tuesday. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.2 per cent while the Shanghai Composite rose 0.4 per cent. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 closed 0.1 per cent lower.

## Fresh round of private investment to fuel growth: RBI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian economy continues to sustain the momentum achieved in the first half of 2023-24 and expectations of a fresh round of capex by the corporate sector is likely to fuel the next

leg of growth, the Reserve Bank Bulletin said on Tuesday.

"The likelihood of the global economy exhibiting stronger than expected growth in 2024 has brightened in recent months, with risks broadly balanced," said an article on

'State of the Economy' published in the bulletin. It further said the Indian economy continues to sustain the momentum achieved in the first half of 2023-24, going by high frequency indicators. "Expectations of a fresh

round of capex by the corporate sector is likely to fuel the next leg of growth," said the article authored by a team led by RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra.

The central bank has projected the GDP growth

for 2024-25 at 7 per cent. On inflation, it said consumer price inflation came off its November-December spikes in its January 2024 reading, while core inflation is at its lowest since October 2019.

The Reserve Bank has

projected the Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation at 4.5 per cent for 2024-25 financial year.

It, however, said the views expressed in the bulletin article are of the authors and do not represent the views of the Reserve Bank of India.

## Thousands of debtors resolving their cases before admission under insolvency law: IBBI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 27,500 applications for resolution process against corporate debtors have been withdrawn before their admission, with regulator IBBI emphasising that the credible threat of the insolvency law that ownership of debtors might change has changed the behaviour of debtors.

These Corporate Debtors (CDs) had an underlying default of Rs 9.74 lakh crore. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), introduced in December 2016, provides for a time-bound and market-linked resolution of stressed assets.

"The credible threat of the Code, that a CD may change hands, has changed the behaviour of debtors. Thousands of debtors are resolving distress in early stages of distress.

"They are resolving when default is imminent, on receipt of a notice for repayment but before filing an application, after filing application but before its admission, and even after admission of the application,



and making best effort to avoid consequences of the resolution process," the IBBI said in its latest newsletter.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) is a key institution in implementing the IBC. According to the newsletter, 27,514 applications for initiation of CIRPs (Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process) of CDs having underlying default of Rs 9.74 lakh crore were withdrawn before their admission till October 2023. Till December 2023, IBC has helped in rescuing 3,050 CDs -- 891 were through resolution plans, 1,124 through appeal or review or settlement, and 1,035 through

withdrawal.

The resolved CDs resulted in realisation of around 32 per cent, as against the admitted claims and more than 169 per cent compared to the liquidation value.

Creditors have realised Rs 3.21 lakh crore under the resolution plans till December 31 last year. The fair value and liquidation value of the assets available with these CDs, when they entered the CIRP, was estimated at Rs 2.97 lakh crore and Rs 1.90 lakh crore, respectively, as against the total claims of the creditors worth Rs 10.07 lakh crore, the IBBI said.

As many as 2,376 CDs have been referred for liquidation.

"Till December 2023, 830 CDs have been completely liquidated. These 830 CDs together had outstanding claims of Rs 1.83 lakh crore but the assets valued at Rs 0.09 lakh crore," the newsletter said.

In his message in the newsletter, IBBI Chairperson Ravi Mital said that while the CD is reorganised during CIRP, the insolvency resolution process for the PGs (Personal Guarantors) prioritises debt restructuring.

This is the opportunity the IBC affords over outright bankruptcy, with bankruptcy serving as a last resort should the debtor's repayment plan falter, he said and stressed that "by cooperating in the process and submitting a repayment plan for approval by creditors, debtors can effectively discharge their debt liabilities instead of initiation of their bankruptcy process". It is seen that CIRP proceedings are often delayed due to excessive litigation. The debtors' attempt to prolong the admission or the resolution process leads to erosion in CD's value, he noted.

## Zee reaches out to Sony to revive terminated merger

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) is seeking rapprochement with Sony Group as it makes a last-ditch effort to resurrect a USD 10 billion merger, according to industry sources.

After the Japanese multinational firm pulled the plug on its USD 10 billion merger deal in January, the Indian company reached out again to Sony to reconsider the termination and offered for talks this month, a source said.

On the other hand, Sony is understood to be evaluating the proposal from Zee. Comments from Sony Picture Networks India could not be obtained as an e-mailed query remained unanswered.

A Zee spokesperson said, "Since the matter is subjudice we have no comments to offer."

Another source said ZEEL never stopped working for a possible reconciliation dialogue citing that it was ZEEL that moved to NCLT to make the merger happen. "The ball is in Sony's court. They need to respond if the deal has to be revived," the

source said. The development comes amidst the two parties filing cases against each other after the deal collapsed. Sony had initiated arbitration proceedings before The Singapore Arbitration Center (SIAC) claiming USD 90 million (around Rs 748.5 cr) as a termination fee.

On the other hand, ZEEL filed a petition before the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), seeking a direction to Sony Group to implement the merger scheme. SIAC also denied Sony Group's plea seeking interim relief against ZEEL to restrain it from moving NCLT to enforce the failed merger of its subsidiary Culver Max with the Indian media house. ZEEL also initiated appropriate legal actions to contest the claims of USD 90 million filed by Sony Group before SIAC.

More than two years after announcing their proposed merger, Sony on January 22 announced the termination of the deal while accusing ZEEL of not meeting closing conditions even after extending their closing period by a month.

## EV startup Vidyut raises USD 10 million

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Electric vehicle startup Vidyut on Tuesday said it has secured USD 10 million capital funding comprising equity and debt in Series A fundraising for expanding its bouquet of services.

The Series A funding round was led by 3one4 Capital along with participation from new and existing investors such as Saison Capital, Zephyr Peacock, Force Ventures, Alteria Capital and CEO of Udaan Capital Sujet Kumar, the company said in a statement. Vidyut said it will now offer EV insurance, lifecycle management, and EV resale, and it is also looking to expand its presence to 40 cities.

The company said it aims to double the headcount by the end of next fiscal as it prepares to build a full-stack EV ecosystem and that it will utilise the fresh capital to scale its offerings to the EV ecosystem.

"Our focus is not just on financing but on elevating the entire EV ownership journey for India's SMBs, who are the backbone of our economy," said Gaurav Srivastava, Co-founder of Vidyut. Founded in 2021, Vidyut offers financing to EV customers through its subscription ownership plan powered by proprietary asset-underwriting algorithms. "The company currently offers ownership solutions for a host of EV makers. "Electric vehicles pose new underwriting and product structuring challenges to financiers.

# Indian companies bullish on business prospects at Singapore Airshow

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Indian-origin companies are bullish on business prospects from the five-day Singapore Airshow, which began on Tuesday with global aviation industry stakeholders, including many from India like Brahmos Aerospace.

Returning to a full-scale edition, the Singapore Airshow is making a strong comeback from February 20-25 with over 1,000 participating companies from more than 50 countries and various regions.

Indian heavyweight Brahmos Aerospace is in talks with several Southeast Asian countries for supplying its supersonic missiles which is globally renowned for its success rate.

"We are discussing the supply of Brahmos missiles, and are hopeful that our participation in the Singapore Airshow would lead to more fruitful opportunities," Praveen Pathak, Director for Market Promotion and Exports at Brahmos told PTI on Tuesday. Expecting more delegates from the region at the

Brahmos display showroom, he underlined the importance of being at the show in Singapore, which is strategically located in the prosperous Southeast Asian region.

"We feel there is vibrancy in the Asian markets, recovering from the pandemic," Pathak said as he elaborated on prospects, following the successful supply of Brahmos missiles to the Indian armed forces, and an ongoing contract with the Philippines marines. From the StartUp business segments, KeepFlying is



working in the ecosystem that is transforming a USD 170 billion Aircraft Asset Management Industry.

The Singapore-based Aviation AI StartUp has built the first of its kind GenAI powered aviation data

platform that helps make airworthiness and maintenance data sets S/LLM ready and in a usable format for commercial insights generation by unleashing their AI agents, said Chandrasekhar Jayaramakrishnan, Chief Product Officer, who is leading the KeepFlying team from both Singapore and Chennai technologists. KeepFlying is enabling a new era of the Aviation Digital FinTwin\* (Financial Twin) through its Aviation Language Model-driven data-to-dollar platform to help

Airlines, Lessors, and MROs save on these additional spends, he said at the Singapore Airshow.

"Our Indian business is set to grow by a good 30 per cent by the end of this year," added Tarun Mathur, Senior Sales Manager for India at the Hong Kong-headquartered Topcast, a global supplier of parts, services, and solutions for the aviation industry. Speaking at the Airshow, Mathur said Topcast's Indian business grew in 2023 by 5.5 per cent on the year and future prospects are good. Topcast's Indian business

comes from civil aviation and original equipment manufacturers with HAL, Tata Advanced, and Wipro among leading customers. Mathur sees future business driven by Maintenance and Repair and Overhaul (MRO) Organisations, pointing out Air India's new MRO being set up in Bengaluru, in addition to two operated by GMR MRO and Airworks. Norman Lazarus, President of Texas-based Aviva Metal, also has good growth prospects in India as well as in the global aviation and oil and gas industry.

# Gulveer loses 3000m gold in Asian Indoor Championships due to lane infringement

**PTI ■ TEHRAN**  
India's Gulveer Singh lost his men's 3000m gold medal in the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships here after he was disqualified for 'lane infringement'. Gulveer had clocked 8 minutes 07.48 seconds to finish on top of the podium in the 3000m final, a non Olympic athletics event, late on Monday. He was later disqualified for lane infringement and a late night 'appeal' by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) was also rejected. "Yes, it was ruled that Gulveer committed lane infringement. Of course, AFI protested but the protest was rejected," a coach, who is with the team, told PTI.



"The jury said they have enough evidence to conclude that Gulveer made lane infringement." Various clauses of technical rules 17.2 and 17.3 provides for how an athlete can commit lane infringement and under what circumstances he or she may not be disqualified. Technical Rule 17.2.3 says: "In all races run in lanes (or any part of a race run in lanes), each athlete shall keep within their allocated lane from start to finish and, when running on a bend, shall not step or run on or inside the left-hand lane line or in the case of the inside lane, the kerb or line marking the border of the inside of the track." Keneshbekov Nursultan of Kyrgyzstan, who had finished second with a time of 8:08.85s, was awarded the gold. Jalil Naseri (8:09.39) of Iran, the original third-place finisher, took the silver and Frolovskiy (8:17.17) of Kazakhstan bagged the bronze. With the loss of the gold won by Gulveer, India ended their campaign with three gold and one silver. Ace shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraji and Harmilan Bains (1500m) had won a gold medal each on the first day of competitions on Saturday. Toor and Yarraji had smashed their own national records. On Monday, Ankita had won a silver medal in women's 3000m race with a timing of 9:26.22s. India had won one gold, six silver and one bronze in the last edition in Astana, Kazakhstan.



## 8 years old Indian origin boy from Singapore beats Polish grandmaster

**PTI ■ SINGAPORE**  
An eight-year-old Indian-origin boy defeated Polish chess grandmaster Jacek Stopa at the Burgdorfer Stadthaus Open in Switzerland on Sunday, becoming the youngest player to defeat a GM in classical chess. Ashwath Kaushik, who represented Singapore, defeated Stopa, who at 37 is nearly five times older than him, according to a Channel News Asia report. The previous record was set only a few weeks earlier when Serbia's Leonid Ivanovic, who is several months older than Ashwath, beat 60-year-old Bulgarian grandmaster Milko Popchev at the Belgrade Open. Currently ranked world No. 37,338 on FIDE, the international chess federation, the Indian citizen, who moved to Singapore in 2017, said, "I felt proud of my game and how I played, especially since I was worse at one point but managed to come back from that." Singaporean grandmaster and CEO of the Singapore Chess Federation Kevin Goh lauded Ashwath's feat on 'X', saying, "Dad is super supportive, boy is dedicated, school allows flexibility and of course he has natural talent." "Remains to be seen how far he can go as interests can change as the boy gets older. Still, we are hopeful." Goh also joked that as he is only eight years old, Ashwath still "needs a booster cushion to reach the other side of the board". He also attributed Ashwath's success to the "many other coaches and supporters" on his journey. Goh also hopes that Ashwath's success can inspire more children to pursue chess at a competitive level. "I think his achievement shows that with the right amount of talent and support, a young player has every chance of achieving success in chess," Goh said. Ashwath made waves in 2022 after emerging as a triple champion in the chess variations — classic, rapid and blitz — at the under-8 Eastern Asia Youth Championship. Sriram Kaushik said in a post on 'X' that his son's upset win over Stopa was "one of the proudest moments of my life". "Special thanks to Ashwath's true pillars and his long-term, and often long-suffering coaches who have put up with him for many years through thick and thin," he was quoted as saying. "Puzzle solving certainly (is) at the core of his board success as well," he added. According to Goh, Ashwath's next goal is to improve his ratings and earn the title of candidate master in chess. He also aims to do well in FIDE's World Cup for youngsters later in the year.

## Nandal outlasts Chaufla to win 4th Racketlon Open

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Siddharth Nandal edged out Vikramaditya Chaufla in a gruelling battle to win the elite singles event at the 4th Racketlon Open in Mumbai. The A category final between Nandal and Chaufla was held at Willingdon Catholic Gymkhana on Sunday with the former prevailing 21-23, 21-16, 21-9, 7-3. Both Nandal and Chaufla have represented India at the World Racketlon Championship multiple times. Chaufla, a former badminton player, has also represented India in the World University Badminton Championships. Racketlon is a combination sport in which the competitors are required to play four racket sports: table tennis, badminton, tennis and squash. In the final of the 55 plus category, Krishna Kotak got the better of Sugato Thakur 21-9, 15-21, 11-21, 21-16. In the 55 plus doubles category, Kotak teamed up with Merwyn Fernandez, a member of the gold-winning hockey team at the 1980 Olympics, to win the title. Varun Motasha defeated Aayush Bhanjali 21-14, 21-11, 6-21, 21-7 in the B category final.

# Napoli fires coach Mazzarri

**PTI ■ NAPLES (ITALY)**  
Still struggling in Serie A, defending champion Napoli made its second coaching change of the season just two days before facing Barcelona in the Champions League. Napoli fired Walter Mazzarri after training on Monday and appointed Slovakia coach Francesco Calzona, who was the former assistant at the Serie A team but has never managed at club level. Mazzarri replaced Rudi Garcia only in November and Napoli, which is emerging as one of the worst defending champions in the history of the Italian league, became the first Serie A team to change coaches twice in the season after winning the league. "Mazzarri is a family friend and it is always painful to fire a friend," Napoli president

Aurelio De Laurentiis told Italian television channel Sky Sport. "I thanked him also for his readiness to come help us in a difficult moment for us. "You need to manage to give something extra to Napoli and its fans, however." The 55-year-old Calzona has been given a contract until the end of the season and will be allowed to continue with his duties as Slovakia coach in the meantime, having helped the team qualify for the upcoming European Championship. Calzona was assistant coach to Maurizio Sarri at Napoli from 2015-18, when the team was much lauded for its style of play despite not winning anything. He was also part of Luciano Spalletti's staff before leaving in 2022 for the Slovakia post, his first role as a head coach. "Now we have to give space and support to Francesco Calzona,



who has worked with us before both in Sarri's time and with Spalletti and know 80% of this group," De Laurentiis said. "Time... Will tell us if this was the right choice." Napoli is set to face Barcelona on Wednesday in the round of 16 of the Champions League. Mazzarri replaced Garcia in November and collected only 15 points in 12 Serie A matches - worse than his predecessor. Garcia was fired after amassing 21 points from 12 matches and with Napoli in fourth place in Serie A, 10 points behind league leader Inter Milan. Saturday's draw at home to Genoa left Napoli 27 points behind Inter, in ninth place and out of the European qualifying places. Since the end of World War II, only five times has a defending champion finished 20 points or more behind the Serie A champion. Juventus has the worst record, finishing 24 points behind champion AC Milan in 1962, a year after winning the title. Napoli looks a far cry from the team that won Serie A last season, thrilling at home and in Europe. Garcia took over last offseason from title-winning coach Spalletti, who left to take a year-long sabbatical and then was named coach of Italy following Roberto Mancini's resignation.

# Girona loses to Athletic Bilbao

**AP ■ MADRID**  
Second-placed Girona missed a chance to cut into Real Madrid's lead of the Spanish league when it lost to Athletic Bilbao 3-2 on Monday. The Catalan side could have reduced the gap to three points but was sunk by an Alex Berenguer double and an Iñaki Williams goal and remained six

adrift of Madrid. It was another stumble for a side that matched Madrid blow for blow in the first half of La Liga. After going more than three months without defeat Girona has taken just one point from its last nine. The poor run included a 4-0 defeat to Madrid on Feb. 10. Alex Berenguer put Athletic ahead in the second minute

when he skilfully turned the home defense and fired home a left-foot shot from outside the box. Viktor Tsygankov equalized four minutes into the second half for Girona, but Berenguer finished superbly seven minutes later to give Athletic the lead again. Williams made it 3-1 when he took advantage of poor defending and scored with a low shot

in off the post. Eric Garcia got the second for Girona with 15 minutes remaining when he stooped to head in a wicked cross from Aleix Garcia. But although they pushed hard in the final minutes, the visitors could not equalize again. The result opened up a nine-point gap between Athletic in fifth and Real Sociedad in sixth.

Athletic was only two points behind fourth-placed Atletico Madrid and an automatic spot in the Champions League. "Of course we're going to dream about the Champions League," Williams said. "We're taking it step by step, as we've been quietly saying. We're working and pushing ourselves to the max so that the success makes the noise."

## Bayern Munich lacking full backs as Mazraoui out injured

**AP ■ MUNICH**  
All three of Bayern Munich's specialist right backs are out injured after the club confirmed Noussair Mazraoui has a hamstring strain on Tuesday. The Moroccan defender went off injured in a 3-2 loss to Bochum on Sunday, which left the German champion eight points off Bundesliga leader Bayer Leverkusen and piled more pressure on coach Thomas Tuchel. It was Bayern's third loss in a row. Bayern said only that Mazraoui will be out "for the time being" after a medical examination, without specifying a timeframe. He joined fellow right backs Sacha Boey - who played just twice since signing for Bayern last month before tearing his hamstring - and Bouna Sarr on the sidelines. Also injured was midfielder Konrad Laimer, who

often covered the right back role earlier in the season. Central defender Dayot Upamecano stepped in for Mazraoui against Bochum but was sent off and is suspended for Saturday's game against Leipzig. That could mean Eric Dier, signed on loan from Tottenham last month, could be asked to fill the right back role, potentially against Leipzig's on-form winger Xavi Simons. Tuchel has more selection concerns with left back Alphonso Davies recovering from a strained knee ligament and forwards Kingsley Coman and Serge Gnabry both out injured. Bayern said on Tuesday that Davies was "completing exercises with the ball for the first time" since his injury in training the day before, and Laimer "has been working individually with the ball for the last few days."

## Swimmers give Jain University head start in Khelo India University Games

**PTI ■ GUWAHATI**  
Swimmer Shubhant Patra clinched the men's 200m butterfly individual gold with a dominating performance and then returned to help Jain University claim the 4x100m freestyle relay crown in the Khelo India University Games here on Tuesday. Kalyani Saxena of Sarvajani University, Surat and Danush S of Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences also won a gold each on the second day of swimming competitions at the Dr Zakir Hussain Aquatic Complex. With 32 gold medals decided in two days of competition, Jain University topped the standings with four gold, one silver and two bronze medals while Utkal University is second, thanks to three gold from swimmer Pratyasa Ray. She also claimed the yellow metal



in women's 200m backstroke on Tuesday. Patra, who is originally from Odisha but now trains and studies in Bengaluru, bagged the 200m butterfly gold with a timing of 2:06.94s, finishing over half a second ahead of Chandigarh University's Harsh Saroha. Shubham Dhaygude of Savitribai Phule University clinched the bronze with a timing of 2:11.18s. He then returned to the pool for the 4x100m freestyle relay, swimming the third leg, as he

teamed up with Xavier Dsouza, Dhyam Balakrishna and Sambhav R to bag the gold with a time of 3:37.76s. Anna University (3:39.35s) and University of Kerala (3:41.65s) bagged the silver and bronze respectively. Earlier, Kalyani Saxena and Danush S clinched the women's 400m medley and men's 50m breaststroke gold medals respectively. On Monday, Kalyani had won the women's 200m breaststroke gold while Dhanush

topped the men's 200m breaststroke race. Elsewhere, in the basketball competition, University of Madras will take on Jain University in the women's final. In the semifinal, the team from Tamil Nadu hammered Guru Nanak Dev University 105-48, while Jain University got the better of Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science 85-61. In the men's category, Panjab University upset defending champions Jain University 89-87 to reach the final, where they will face University of Madras, who got the better of University of Rajasthan 79-76. In weightlifting competition, being held in Itanagar, KIIT's Sneha won the gold in 55kg category with a total lift of 172kg with Punjabi University's Ramandeep (165kg) and Kurukshetra University's Shalu (159kg) taking home silver and bronze medals respectively.

## Chelsea targets Brighton again to bring in its head of recruitment

**AP ■ BRIGHTON (ENGLAND)**  
Chelsea has targeted English Premier League rival Brighton once again to strengthen its technical staff. Brighton said on Tuesday its head of recruitment, Sam Jewell, was placed on leave after accepting a new position at Chelsea. Jewell took up the role with Brighton in 2022 following the departure of Paul Winstanley, who also moved to Chelsea to become its co-sporting director. Other Brighton staff who have joined Chelsea in recent years include Graham Potter, who lasted six months as manager before being fired, and his assistant Bruno Salter, who was the interim manager after Potter's departure. Chelsea also spent nearly \$250

million on signing goalkeeper Robert Sanchez, defender Marc Cucurella and midfielder Moises Caicedo from Brighton inside the last two years. Jewell, the son of former Premier League manager Paul Jewell, joined Brighton in May 2016 as the recruitment manager for the men's under-21 side and became the emerging talent manager in March 2019. He continued the work of Winstanley as Brighton's head of recruitment, with the club having established a strong reputation for its scouting network in Europe and South America. "Sam has now commenced a period of gardening leave," Brighton said. "We thank him for his long service to our club."

# India look to continue recent domination over Netherlands in Pro League

**PTI ■ ROURKELA**  
The Indian men's hockey team would look to continue its recent domination over the Netherlands with an outright win when the two sides meet in the return leg match of the FIH Pro League here on Wednesday. India had a good run in the Pro League so far with the team led by drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh winning two out of their five games in regulation time. India's resilience saw them defeat the Dutch and Spain in shootouts, earning valuable bonus points. Their solitary defeat came at the

hands of Australia but that too from a winning position. India are currently placed fourth in the Pro League standings with 10 points from five matches. The Netherlands are leading the chart with 18 points from nine games ahead of Argentina (13 points from 8 matches) and Australia (12 points from 4 games). But having said that the Indians, ranked third in the world, have had to face a tough time in their last two matches against world No.12 Ireland and world No.8 Spain. India were made to toil to register a 1-0 win over Ireland



through a last-minute goal from Gurjant Singh and then overcame a resilient Spain 8-7 in a marathon shoot-out after both sides were locked 2-2 at the end of the regulation 60 minutes. And come tomorrow, the Indians will need to raise their game a few notches to finish off the match in regulation time and secure full three points from the encounter. The last three matches might not have gone the way they would have wanted, but vice-captain Hardik Singh said the confidence in the camp is high on the eve of the meeting against the world No.1 side.

Reflecting on the home team's performance against the Dutch in the previous outing in Bhubaneswar on February 11, Hardik felt India could have given a far better account of itself. India rallied to level the scores at 2-2 in regulation time before winning 4-2 in shootout. "Our performance in the first half fell short of expectations, but we made a strong comeback in the second half, pushing the game to a shootout. We were confident about our chances from that point onwards, especially given that we have really good goalkeepers in our ranks," said the midfielder.

India had started their Pro League campaign in Bhubaneswar with a crushing 4-1 win against Spain, followed by a thrilling 2-2 (4-2) shootout win against the mighty Dutch, where Hardik scored the opening goal. India suffered a setback, losing to Australia 4-6 but bounced back to conclude the Bhubaneswar leg on a high with win over Ireland. "The confidence in the camp is quite high with the way we have been performing in back-to-back events and I am sure we will carry this momentum forward in the tournament," he added.

# IPL set for March 22 start

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The much-anticipated Indian Premier League is set to begin on March 22 and will be held entirely in the country despite the coinciding general elections, league chairman Arun Dhimal told PTI on Tuesday.

The elections are expected to be held in April and May and that is the main reason why the schedule for the IPL's 17th edition has not been unveiled yet. Speaking to PTI, Dhimal said to begin with, only the schedule of the first 15 days will be announced and the roster for the remaining games will be decided after the announcement of the general election dates.

The dates of the Lok Sabha polls are expected to be announced early next month. "We are looking at a March 22 start for the tournament. We are working closely with the government agencies and we will first release the initial schedule. The entire tournament will be held in India," said Dhimal.



Only in 2009, the IPL, in its entirety, was held overseas (South Africa) while the 2014 edition was partially held in the UAE due to the general elections. However, in 2019, the tournament was held in India despite the elections.

Considering the T20 World Cup begins within days of the cash-rich league's conclusion, the final is likely to be held on May 26.

India will play their opening World Cup fixture against Ireland in New York on June 5 while the ICC showpiece begins with the USA and Canada clash on June 1.

As is the norm, the IPL opener will be played between the last year's finalists, the winners Chennai Super Kings in this case and runners-up Gujarat Titans.

The players' auction for the 2024 season was held in December last year and Australian pacer Mitchell Starc became the most expensive player in the history of the league after being bought by Kolkata Knight Riders for Rs 24.75 crore.



## England captain mulls bowling against India

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Back-to-back heavy defeats against India have compelled England captain Ben Stokes to consider an early return to bowling with head coach Brendon McCullum admitting that although it's a good sign, they don't want the all-rounder to play himself unnecessarily.

Stokes, who is still recovering from a knee surgery, hasn't bowled since the second Ashes Test in June last year. "Well, it's good that he's actually getting into a state where he thinks he might bowl," McCullum was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo on Monday.

"But Ben is clever; he's really clever as well. He won't bowl unless he thinks he's legitimately able to bowl. The problem would be if he starts getting into a spell and then he can't get out of the spell. So we'll see what unfolds.

"If he does get that bit between his teeth, then let's see where the danger lies there and try and pull him away from it. But it's a good sign," McCullum added.

Ahead of the Rajkot Test, Stokes had said he "pinkly promised" his physiotherapist he won't be bowling in the ongoing series. But when asked if he will be reprising his all-rounder's role after the 434-run defeat in the third Test on Sunday, Stokes said, "I'm not saying yes, I'm not saying no."

"Me being me, I'm always

very optimistic about most things. That will be a more detailed chat with the medical team about what workload I have done to pass me off as not being a massive risk."

During the Rajkot Test, Stokes had even trained at 100 per cent intensity and conceded that he felt pretty good. "I managed to bowl at 100 per cent in one of the warm-up days here which made me feel pretty good. I felt like I could have bowled in the game but that would have been stupid."

After winning the series opener by 28 runs, England fell to a 106-run defeat followed by one of their worst losses in Rajkot to go 2-1 down in the series with matches left in Ranchi and Dharamsala.

The England team would benefit immensely if the pace all-rounder started bowling again. The visitors opted to field just one seamer in the first two Tests. They dropped Shoaib Bashir to pick both James Anderson and Mark Wood in the third game.

England's "Bazball" approach has also backfired big time in the third Test which they lost by a massive 434 runs, their largest defeat in terms of runs since 1934.

But McCullum said while the defeat is definitely hurting the visitors, they will continue with their attacking 'Bazball' approach in the remainder of the five-match series.

## I have worked really hard to reach this level: Ashutosh

PTI ■ MOHALI

IPL side Punjab Kings' new pick Ashutosh Sharma says he wants to make an impact with the bat for his franchise if he gets the opportunity, given that he has worked really hard — even punished himself — to reach this stage of his cricketing career.

Ashutosh, who has so far played four first-class games for Madhya Pradesh and scored a century, was picked up by the Punjab franchise for ₹20 lakh ahead of the upcoming IPL.

During his days of struggle, Ashutosh, who hails from Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh, even started umpiring so that he could afford lunch.

"When I left home, I did not have enough money. I used to go to a camp and I started umpiring in matches to afford lunch. We were a family of limited means, and it was hard to do everything on my own so early. But I never let it affect my family about my struggles as I did not want them to worry," he said.

Ashutosh began his cricketing journey at a young age but due to lack of opportunities in Ratlam, he moved to Indore when he was just eight years old and started to train at the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association's residential academy.

Such was his determination to excel that the youngster even punished himself by doing household chores if he hit a rough patch while playing U-19 cricket.

He felt the "punishment" would bring discipline in his life and remind him of the "sacrifices" he had made to reach this level.

"After doing so (household chores) for a month, I scored a hundred," he said.

Last year, during the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy tie against Arunachal Pradesh, the right-handed batter smashed an 11-ball fifty, breaking Yuvraj Singh's record for the fastest half-century in the shortest format.



was one of the most memorable moments of my career, along with getting picked for Punjab Kings," Ashutosh said.

Now with an IPL contract in hand, Ashutosh wants to excel in the lucrative league and help the franchise win its maiden title.

"I want to express myself. I have worked so hard to reach here. I will work even harder now so I can help Punjab Kings win their first trophy," the right-handed batter said.

Recalling the day of the auction, Ashutosh said the atmosphere in his house was tense and the moment he was picked in the "acceleration round", he immediately switched off the TV set and went into a celebration mode.

"Even though I was confident I would be picked, I was unable to sit in one place and completely skipped lunch. I stayed up with my friends till 5 am. My phone kept ringing and eventually stopped working.

"Our relatives and family brought crackers and sweets. It was a great atmosphere. I called my coach and told him that the hard work has paid off," he said.

Ashutosh is happy that he can now train with his childhood hero and former India cricketer Sanjay Bangar, who is the head of cricket development at PBKS.

"He (Bangar) was delighted when I showed my 12-year-old selfie alongside him," said Ashutosh, of the picture taken when Bangar was a part of the now-defunct Kochi franchise over a decade-and-a-half back when he was a ball boy.

## Chappell urges Root to play his natural game

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell has urged out-of-form England batter Joe Root to shun the 'Bazball' approach and get back to playing his natural game.

Senior batter Root has struggled for runs in the ongoing five-match series against India, registering a set of low scores across six innings.

Keeping up with England's aggressive Bazball approach, Root has mostly lost his wicket playing outlandish shots in India.

"Root had a bloody fine record playing normally, and he was a quick scorer playing normally," Chappell told 'Wide World of Sports', describing Bazball as "bullshit".

"I don't see why he's trying to change things drastically, and



I've never believed you should play premeditated shots," Chappell added.

Root, who has over 11,000 Tests runs, copped up a lot of criticism for his dismissal in England's first innings in the third Test, as he attempted to reverse sweep Jasprit Bumrah but only ended up edging to slip.

His dismissal led to a batting collapse. England were 224/2 when Root got out. The tourists then lost eight wickets for 95 runs to be bowled out for 319, handing India a 126-run first-innings lead.

England eventually lost the Test by a mammoth 434 runs, their largest defeat in terms of runs since 1934.

Chappell argued that while a top-order batter must look to score aggressively, the players must adjust according to the match situation.

"You can't always do it -- it's got to be according to the conditions and also who's bowling," he said.

Bumrah has dismissed Root on nine occasions in Test cricket now.

"Some bowlers you can score off a lot quicker than others, but when a really good bowler is bowling a good spell, you've got to be prepared to try and battle it out and think to yourself 'Well, when he goes off, it'll get a bit easier'."

"You're always trying to score runs -- that's got to be your prime aim. But, you've also got to realise in some conditions, against some bowlers you can score quicker than others."

## Jaiswal has learned from his upbringing and not from Bazball, says Nasser

PTI ■ LONDON

Former captain Nasser Hussain has lashed out at Ben Duckett for suggesting that Yashasvi Jaiswal's aggressive batting in the Rajkot Test was influenced by England's 'Bazball' strategy, saying it is the visitors who need to learn from the young Indian sensation.

At the end of the third day's play in Rajkot, Duckett had praised Jaiswal for his attacking century and suggested that the current England team should receive credit for influencing teams to bat more aggressively in Tests.

England eventually went on to lose the match by a record margin of 434 runs to concede a 1-2 lead to India in the five-match series.

Reacting to Duckett's remark, Hussain said, "His (Duckett's) comment on Jaiswal that he has learned from us, I am going to touch on that. He (Jaiswal) has not learned from you (Duckett), he has learned from his upbringing and all



the hard yards he has put in while growing up, he has learned from the IPL.

"If anything, I would look at him and learn from him," Hussain said during a discussion with another former England captain Michael Atherton on Sky Sports.

Hussain urged the England players to do some self-inspection and make necessary adjustments ahead of the fourth Test in Ranchi.

"Whatever they are saying in public and in that dressing

room, I hope they are going back to their rooms, do a little bit of self-inspection game, like I can look back and learn and make improvement.

"Otherwise, it becomes a cult, doesn't it? At times, Bazball in this regime has been described as a cult where you cannot criticise either within or externally. Even in this regime, there is room for learning and improving," Hussain said.

"I can go back to the Ashes series, and I reckon they (England) changed (strategy)."

## Pant on course for comeback in IPL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rishabh Pant remains on course for a much-anticipated comeback in the IPL after taking part in a practice game organised by his franchise Delhi Capitals in Alur, Karnataka.

Pant, who met with a horrific car accident in December 2022, has been undergoing rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy and is working hard to regain match fitness before the start of the IPL in the second half of March.

The southpaw had also featured in an exhibition game last year.

"The match was part of assessing his mobility basically. He has been batting at nets for a while and playing in a practice game was more like an extension of it," said a NCA source referring to the intra-squad game in Alur near Bengaluru.

Earlier this month, Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting had given a major update on Pant, saying the game changing cricketer was confident about his return in



the IPL.

However, Pant may not be ready for wicketkeeping duties in the competition, as suggested by Ponting at an event in Melbourne.

"Rishabh is very confident that he's going to be right to play. In what capacity we're not quite sure yet," Ponting had said.

"You would have seen all the social-media stuff, he's up and about and running well. But in saying that we're only six weeks away from the first game as well. So we're not sure if we'll get wicketkeeping out of him this year.

"But I'll guarantee if I asked

him now he'll say, 'I'm playing every game, I'm keeping every game and I'm batting at No.4. That's just what he's like, but we'll keep our fingers crossed,' he added.

Pant is also expected to lead Delhi Capitals. David Warner had captained in his absence last year.

"He's such a dynamic player. He's obviously our captain. We missed him incredibly last year," Ponting said.

"If you understand the journey he's been on the last 12-13 months, it was a horrific incident. One that I know he feels very lucky to have even survived, let alone have the chance to play cricket again.

"We'll just keep our fingers crossed and hope that he can be out there and play. Even if it's not all the games, if we can manage him through 10 of the 14 games or whatever that might be then whatever games you can get out of him will be a bonus," the former Australia captain had said on the sidelines of an MLC event.

## Final round of Santosh Trophy to begin with match between Meghalaya and Services

PTI ■ ITANAGAR

The final rounds of 77th National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy 2023-24 will begin with a match between Meghalaya and Services here on Wednesday.

A total of 12 teams will compete in the final rounds of the Santosh Trophy, which is being held in Arunachal Pradesh for the first time.

While hosts Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Goa,

Assam, Services and Kerala are clubbed in Group A, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi, Manipur, Mizoram and Railways are placed in Group B.

The tournament will take place in Yupia, Itanagar from February 21 till March 9.

The final four stage of the nation's premier state tournament last year was held in Saudi Arabia where Karnataka won the title after 54 years.

A total of 37 matches will be



played due to the expansion of the knockout stage. The top four teams from each group will progress to the quarter-finals.

The ongoing I-League 2 season has taken a break to allow players to represent their states in the Santosh Trophy.

In other matches on the opening day, Assam will take on Kerala while Goa will play hosts Arunachal Pradesh.

"The importance of the

Santosh Trophy cannot be stressed enough as it gives young players the chance to shine. Clubs can identify and unearth talent. It's great to see the tournament spread to new places, and I can't wait to come to Arunachal Pradesh and witness the excitement," AIFF Technical Committee chairperson IM Vijayan said.

While head coach Khlain Pyrkhat Syiemlieh will miss a few key names who are part of Shillong Lajong squad in the I-League, Meghalaya still have a

bunch of players from last year's team like Sheen Stevenson, Sohktung, Dawanchwa Carlos Challam, Damonlang Pathaw and Brolington Warlaphih.

The group also contains strong sides like Goa and Kerala. Goa have one of the most experienced squads in the final round, with most of their players coming from I-League 2 sides Sporting Clube de Goa and Dempo SC.

Services and Assam will also

hope to make it to the knockouts.

Karnataka, like Meghalaya, also have lost some important names from last year like Robin Yadav, Bekey Oram and M Sunil Kumar.

Maharashtra, who led the goal-scoring charts in the group stage with a whopping 24 goals in five matches, are one of the favourites in Group B.

Manipur have been another free-scoring side, netting 21 goals in the first round.